

December 1, 2010

Ellen DeGeneres
World Wide Helper
Soon to be: Smile Train Recipient

Dear Ms. DeGeneres,

“The Key to realizing a dream is to focus not only on success but significance - and then even the small steps and little victories along your path will take on greater meaning.” – Oprah Winfrey.

I understand this quote because I feel like I can relate to in so many ways.

My name is Grace Peters and I'm a fourteen year old girl, who is currently in 8th grade. As I continue to grow and mature, I'm starting to see and understand life's gifts and how to turn a dream into reality! A dream that I have had for many years is to help children everywhere with cleft lips and/or palates. Having both a cleft lip and palate, I feel like I can relate to others around me with this birth defect. The Smile Train is run only by donations from people all around the world to help families that can't afford the surgery for their cleft lip and/or palate child. Their mission is to provide free cleft surgeries for millions of poor children in developing countries. My family and I have donated by a house yard sale, and I have also done fundraising at my elementary school, however, they were not as successful as I hoped. I'm hoping you can help.

After my family and I send an amount of money towards the Smile Train, they send a letter back saying who you've helped, and a bit of the patient's background life before, and after the surgery. To add on, each letter I get in return from the Smile Train brings back its own feeling to it. Babies to teenagers up to my age all have their own life story; some bring me to tears, but in the end, I know how much I have helped them.

This surgery would make their future so much brighter, because they could eat and speak without any problems, giving them a better opportunity for a healthy education.

I remember this past year or two the Smile Train sent me a video about a little girl who lived in India and couldn't go to school because she couldn't speak properly. As this video clip was turned into an Oscar winning movie, it brings you into an unbelievable excursion of her life changing experiences due to the changes the Smile Train brought to her. I learned so much from just that, including that in India alone, around 35,000 children are born with clefts each year.

"There are millions of children with unrepaired cleft lips and palates who have little to no prospect of ever being helped. Their parents are so poor and they could never afford surgery. So they wait and they hope and they pray that someday, someone will come along and help them."

We could all be that someone.

Each surgery costs as little as \$250, with the help of so many people, change is possible. We will give these kids not only a new smile, but also a new life. Having seen the before and after pictures of so many young kids, it's nothing more than a work of art.

How can you help me with my dream?

I am a huge fan of Justin Bieber and I saw him recently on your show in November as he talked about bullying and the difference it makes just by being a bystander or by stepping in which makes a big change. Seeing how he made people realize that change can be made just by an act of kindness got me thinking.

You are so famous for your generosity and supporting good causes, and Justin is already famous with his music, especially with young teenagers.

The combination would make a great fundraising team for the Smile Train, just as important, together, we could raise the awareness of this birth defect. Once more people know about it, they'll see how easy it is to help.

Will you help me?

The pictures that I am sending to you are of me when I was 6 months old, 1 year old, and just recently at 14 years old.

Anything is possible, even your dreams. This is mine, and I will never give up.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Grace Peters

Grace Peters

P.S. This is for you to visit. Click to see more!!

<http://www.smiletrain.org/site/PageServer>

Age: 6 weeks old

Before cleft lip and palate surgery



Age: 1 year old

After cleft lip and palate surgery

