

Surgeon repairs faces for people in all corners of globe

By Jane Gilman

"It's my psychic income," says Dr. Susan Downey of the lip and palate surgery she has performed on hundreds of children worldwide.

Downey recently returned from her 14th international trip to improve the lives of others through plastic surgery.

The trip to Cuenca in Ecuador in November was her first with Women for World Health. "It was an all-women team composed of myself and another surgeon, nurses, anesthesiologists, a pediatrician and coordinators.

"Our hosts were the Rotary Club of Cuenca, and they were wonderful."

The club members met the group at the airport, shuttled them to the hotel, gave discounts on the hotel and meals, and provided vans.



DR. SUSAN DOWNEY

"On our last day we each received Panama hats as thank you gifts from a woman who ran a hat factory in the city."

Fifty-five surgeries were performed in Cuenca, mainly on youngsters, one as young as three months. Most of the children had been looked on as if a curse had been laid upon their family for past sins. Some of them had been hid-

den away.

The mission of the medical team is also to teach the native doctors how to perform the surgery, said Downey.

She credits the several organizations that make these trips possible. They include Women for World Health, an organization run by women but not limited to women's issues.

Another group is Rotary. Downey has worked with Rotary clubs in other countries as well, and they provide the support needed to insure success of the mission.

She has also traveled with Operation Smile and Interplast.

Downey has performed surgeries during four missions to Ecuador; some of the other countries she has volunteered in include Brazil, Viet Nam, Russia, India and Honduras.

"I find so much to be grateful for when I return home from these trips."

She has been in the practice of plastic surgery in Los Angeles for 20 years. She is a graduate of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and was a member of the faculty at USC.

Her office is in the Larchmont Medical Building where her practice covers cosmetic and reconstructive surgery of the face and body. She has special interest in helping patients who have undergone massive weight loss.



PARTICIPATING in operation in Ecuador with Women for World Health is local doctor Susan Downey, right.

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