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### THINK BITS

# Think Bits : Kids will smile

By Ricky Poca  
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An international humanitarian mission will be back in Cebu on November 9 to 17 to provide free surgeries for persons suffering from harelip and cleft palate. The Rotaplast International Medical Mission, in cooperation with the Rotary Club of Cebu Port Center, will be here for the fifth time to do reconstructive surgeries on patients aged one and up.

I know now how it feels to have a child who has a facial deformity. In one of our previous missions, a mother who came in late for the screening pleaded that we help her daughter get operated on. We told her that the screening was already over and that we could no longer entertain her and her daughter. She cried unabashedly, begging us to reconsider.

She told me that she pitied her daughter who had stopped going to school and hid away from the public because people in her barangay would stare rudely at her daughter and taunt her. The mother told me that her daughter practically had no future because she refused to do anything at all, ashamed of her deformity.

All told, we included her daughter as one of the beneficiaries of the Rotaplast mission, and truly, I tell you, no word could describe the joy on the child's face upon seeing herself in the mirror after the surgery – the same expression we saw on the countless faces of people who benefited from the graciousness and generosity of Rotaplast's doctors, nurses and staff.

Like in the previous missions, members of the medical team will shoulder their plane fares and hotel stay. The Rotary Club of Cebu Port Center will facilitate the medical mission in Cebu City.

I call the attention of those who have children, relatives or friends suffering from cleft lip and palate to bring them to the JICA Building of the Vicente Sotto Hospital on September 15, Saturday, at 8 a.m. to 12 noon, for the screening. Remember, it is necessary that patients undergo screening before they are operated on.

I also call on local government units in Cebu Province and other provinces in the Visayas and Mindanao to help constituents who want to avail of Rotaplast's free surgeries.

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The Banilad-Talamban flyover issue might have some political repercussions in the 2010 election in Cebu City.

There is no question that Banilad businessmen and residents of plush subdivisions in the area are not happy with the decision of Mayor Tomas Osmeña, Representative Raul del Mar and the Cebu City Council. They are dismayed at how their valid concerns and counter-proposals were dismissed by these government officials, despite a study that shows the proposed Bantal flyover will not solve the traffic problem in the area.

Many of the businessmen who attended the Cebu City Council's session were so disappointed with the councilors, especially those whom they thought were "brilliant professionals" and "promising politicians." It became very clear to the businessmen that the councilors never conducted a serious study about the traffic situation on Banilad-Talamban Road.

They were aghast by the council's justifications, which merely parroted those of Mayor Osmeña's and Congressman Del Mar's. The council's failure to conduct a serious study only aided the people's belief that the council is the mayor's rubber stamp.

The businessmen were hurt by the mayor's dismissal of their concern that the flyover would kill businesses in the area. They have invested a lot and they now feel betrayed by the mayor. They believed in Osmeña's leadership and that was why they invested millions of pesos in Banilad in the first place. City officials have surely gotten the ire of businessmen and some of these businessmen will surely withdraw their support for BO-PK come 2010.

Knowing Mayor Tommy, what is important to him is the welfare of the majority of his constituents, and being unable to please some businessmen may not bother him at all. As they say, Osmeña knows his politics quite well.

Keen observers say, however, that BO-PK should be wary of their chances in 2010 because they may be in for a difficult political battle. The united Garcia family is never too far from grabbing Cebu City from the clutches of BO-PK. And to whom do you think will

the Banilad businessmen throw their support?

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I have observed that vehicular flow on the Banilad Road has been kind of smooth for the past number of days. Apparently, the factors that helped ease the traffic in the area is the conspicuous presence of traffic enforcers along the road and the prohibition of left turns on certain areas.

I traverse the Banilad-Talamban Road, going to USC Talamban Campus, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, at 9 a.m., and returning at 11:30 a.m. The 11:30 a.m. travel is now a bit smoother compared to the past months when there were no traffic enforcers present and left turns were still allowed at crucial junctions. On Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Before, I would always experience heavy traffic going out of USC-TC, because jeepneys would pick up passengers right at the pedestrian entrance of the university, blocking half of the lane. The next choke area was at the UV Medical School. Again you would see five to six jeepneys waiting for passengers on the side of the road.

Lesson learned: If only we strictly enforce our traffic rules, traffic on the Banilad-Talamban Road would tremendously improve.

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