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AMERICA/PERU - "Your smile is the best gift for your mother": thousands of children born with cleft lip

San Bartolomé (Agenzia Fides) - Every year thousands of children in Peru are born with a cleft lip and cleft palate. Also this year, the hospital of San Bartolome of the Ministry of Health has launched a free campaign concerning surgery for this type of malformation. With the motto "Your smile is the best gift for your mother," the doctors involved in the project want to improve the quality of life of the poorest children affected by the disease. Surgery will be compensated with a complete treatment, which lasts a year, ranging from speech therapy to the child's emotional support. Since 2010 210 needy children across the country suffering from cleft lip, cleft palate, broken nose and facial clefts have benefitted freely from this campaign, including the transport of patients from the province. According to experts, the first operation on a child with cleft lip should be done at 3 months after birth, while that of the palate towards the first year of age, before the baby begins to speak. Data shows that in Peru children born with this problem must undergo surgery 2 or 3 times in the first year to be able to smile and talk like any other peer. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 09/05/2012)

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