

## The Dallas Morning News

### Surgeons of Hope Perform First Ever Open Heart Surgery in the History of Afghanistan

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Groundbreaking Procedure Performed on 13 Year Old Girl at The Medical Institute for Afghan Children

NEW YORK, April 10 /PRNewswire/ -- Surgeons of Hope, a non-profit organization that brings surgery and medical care to indigent children while training local surgeons in developing countries, performed the first ever open heart surgery this week in the history of Afghanistan. The revolutionary procedure was completed on a 13 year old Afghani girl named Elaha at the Medical Institute for Afghan Children in Kabul.

According to Dr. Alain Deloche, founder of Surgeons of Hope in the U.S. and one of six medical professionals who conducted the operation, Elaha was born with a ventricular septal defect, a heart malfunction which would usually have resulted in death within two or three years. "Correction of this condition is a routine heart procedure," said Deloche. "But it is exclusively done before a patient has reached age two. Elaha is a survivor! She managed to live to the age of 13 without this crucial intervention, allowing blood flow between the chambers of the heart."

Deloche continued, "The symbolic value of this event outweighs its technical aspect. We have verified that this is the first open heart surgery in Afghan history."

About Surgeons of Hope

Surgeons of Hope is a non-profit organization that brings surgery and medical care to indigent children while training local surgeons at state-of-the-art hospitals built by the organization in developing countries. While other programs fly a single child to an international city for surgery to face additional hardship of adjusting to a new culture, Surgeons of Hope sends surgical teams to developing countries to perform multiple pediatric surgeries. During the surgical missions the group trains local doctors on the procedures to promote self-sufficiency at the local hospitals.

With over 15 years experience in the field of pediatric surgery, Surgeons of Hope has operated on more than 7000 children in developing countries. The organization has established centers and trained local doctors in Senegal, Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Mozambique.

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