

Everyday Hero

As a poor Peruvian child born with a cleft lip and palate, the simplest things in life such as, eating, talking, and even smiling had been a challenge for Efer. Now he has a new lease on life, thanks in part to his recent cleft lip and palate repair surgery. He smiles softly at the man responsible for his recent good fortune, Dr. Joseph Benacci. Transforming lives as a skilled, dedicated, and compassionate plastic surgeon is what Dr. Benacci does every day.

Dr. Benacci's skills as a plastic surgeon are much the same as an artist to his canvas. His skills allow him to unleash his creativity and produce a masterpiece. For example, after enduring years of ridicule for having protruding ears, a very happy, young girl was finally able to wear a ponytail after Dr. Benacci reconstructed her ears. Dr. Benacci also performs many other types of surgeries such as tummy tucks, breast augmentation, breast reduction, breast lifts, and liposuction. His main focus, however, is on reconstructive surgeries following trauma or cancer which tend to be more complex type surgeries. Many grateful patients, young and old, have been given renewed self esteem through Dr. Benacci's talents. In fact, he keeps a list of satisfied patients willing to discuss their experience with others contemplating having a similar procedure. "This is especially helpful," he states, "with new breast reconstruction patients who are scared and don't know what to do." He also notes that having a satisfied patient is essential to achieving a successful practice. Dr. Benacci has many happy, satisfied patients whose lives have been touched by his remarkable surgical skills and personal dedication to each of them.

Without a doubt, Dr. Benacci's dedication to his patients is unsurpassed. He always puts his patients first. He has spent many of his afternoons off consulting a frightened new breast cancer patient on her options. Dr. Benacci constantly goes above and beyond for his patients, for example, he frequently sees new patients with an urgent medical need and works them into his already busy schedule. He is always on call for his patients and has come in to Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center at all hours to perform a surgery or offer assistance. Dr. Benacci's dedication to his patients ensures that all questions are answered as thoroughly as possible before ending a visit. When he is not performing surgery or seeing patients in clinic, he will frequently be educating new medical residents. There is not a more dedicated and compassionate physician than Dr. Benacci.

The compassion that Dr. Benacci shows to his patients is praiseworthy. He approaches his patients with an unbiased, nonjudgmental, and respectful attitude. In fact, he is so accepting of all types of people he traveled to Peru to help underprivileged children with cleft lips and palates in less than ideal conditions. The first trip he made, he became very ill from something he had eaten while in Peru. What draws him to perform surgeries on these impoverished children in dirty conditions with no pay? He responds, "I enjoy seeing the gratitude on the faces of the children and their parents. It keeps me humble and thankful for what I have. It is an honor to bring joy to them and positively change their lives." In addition to these mission trips, he also volunteers at St. Clare's Mission to assist those unable to pay for medical care. These are only a few examples of how Dr. Benacci's compassion has made a difference in patient's lives.

Making the world a more beautiful place, one person at a time, is a play on words for a plastic surgeon, but no truer words could be said, especially when in reference to Dr. Benacci. His top notch surgical skills have made a significant impact on his patients' lives. His dedication to his patients has proved to be a very endearing quality. Dr. Benacci's compassion to all humanity is a humbling experience. The countless number of patients he has helped by means of his surgical skills, dedication, and compassion is commendable. I feel honored to have known such a dedicated and compassionate individual both professionally, as well as personally. The life skills he has shown over the years can not be learned in a book, and I will be forever grateful for the wisdom and expertise that he has passed on to me.

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