

her overseas ministry and family

tures in her pockets, little pieces of love and compassion that had been held back for only herself, away from God, even things for her four children. She says she knew that, at the end of life she wanted to be empty, to have spent all she had to give while on earth - all of it.

Still in her pajamas, Mellon says she drove to the hospital and walked with the government workers through four or five different offices, signing papers. Then, they took her upstairs to a floor she'd never seen before, the cleft floor. Lying on a green mattress by himself was a six-pound baby boy with what Mellon could immediately see was a very serious problem. His mouth and nose were unformed, a gap stretching almost up to his eye on the left side. His birth parents had made the decision to save his life by bringing him to the hospital. Mellon says she considers their action a great act of love. They could have thrown the baby away, but chose life for him instead. Her only question when she saw him was, "Can he eat?" She learned that he could swallow, with help, in spite of having no palate and no upper lip. Five minutes later, they were headed home.

Scotty had a severe cleft lip, cleft palate, and a facial cleft. Mellon had never heard of a facial cleft before, as they are quite rare. During the birth

process, the skull does not come together properly, leaving a cleft or gap. In Cambodia, children who are born with any type of physical or mental difference are not accepted by society at large. Mellon says people have literally shrieked and jumped back when they've seen Scotty's face at the mall in Cambodia.

Scotty was five months old on May 11, and Mellon brought him to Mississippi for a second opinion. She had been working with Smile Train in Cambodia, who she says were great, but two of Scotty's Smile Train doctors suggested she get a second opinion. His clefts were so severe, and they were unsure if he had a facial cleft. Mellon brought Scotty to University Medical Center in Jackson, where she says Dr. Ian Hoppe confirmed that Scotty had a facial cleft. After talking to Smile Train and Operation Smile, it became evident

that Scotty's surgeries would not be possible in Cambodia, where the procedures for a simple cleft lip or palate would have been free.

On May 6, Scotty had the first of many surgeries at UMMC.

Dr. Hoppe specializes in plastic and cranio-facial surgery, and Mellon said he and his team fit Scotty into their tight schedule.

Dr. Hoppe had warned that the surgery would be very difficult, as Scotty's clefts are so wide, but the result is that Scotty now has a mouth that opens and closes. Mellon reports that he looks amaz-

ing, and says this is only the beginning of his transformation. Scotty returned to UMMC seven days later to have some deep stitches removed. Mellon and Scotty have now returned to Cambodia.

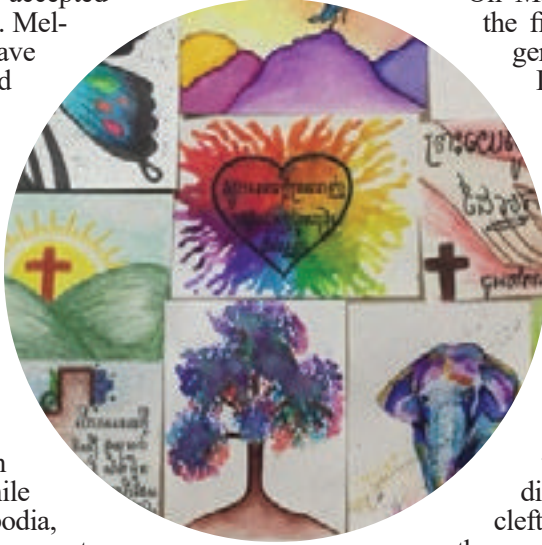
The Clinton community has been a breath of fresh air to Mellon, she says,

as people have greeted Scotty with love and acceptance. She said she loved walking into the Clinton Walmart and having people play and talk to Scotty instead of shrinking away. Clinton residents are a loving, welcoming example of true Southern hospitality, Mellon says.

For any Clintonians who would like to help be a part of Scotty's healing, donating funds for Scotty's medical bills can be of assistance. Mellon reports that his first surgery alone cost more than \$30,000. Scotty does not have insurance and does not qualify for Medicaid, as he is not an American citizen. While Mellon and Scotty have returned to Cambodia for now, they will return in December for Scotty's second surgery on his palate.

Contributions to Scotty's medical bills can be sent by check to International Outreach Ministries, Attn: The HPC Emergency Medical Fund, P.O. Box 2140, McComb, MS 39649. Donations online using pushpay or paypal can be accepted at iom-online.com or www.thehardplacescommunity.org. Select "DONATE NOW."

For those with questions or wanting additional information about Mellon's work, visit www.TheHardPlacesCommunity.org or email hardplacesalli@gmail.com.



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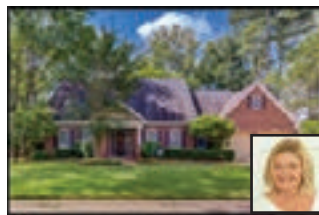
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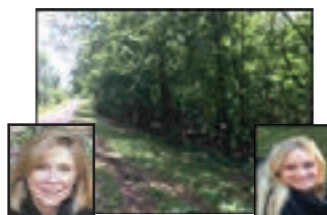
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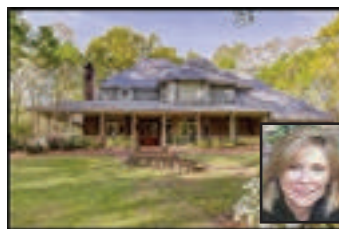
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