

# USING YOUR TALENTS TO GIVE BACK

By Evan R. Ransom, MD

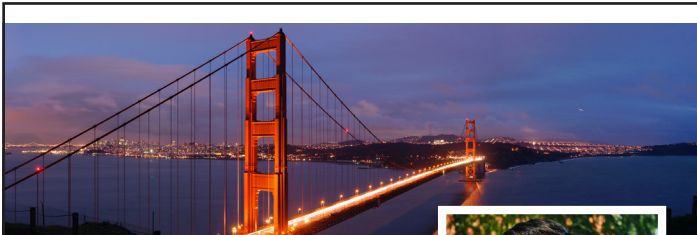
Growing up, my father had a few memorable “dad-isms” that would pop up frequently in conversations. Some of these were funny, others maybe a little alarming, and still others were truly gems that remain insightful and useful today. The most important of this last group is “make your vocation your avocation.” The first few times I heard this, I don’t think I really understood what he meant. (Also, no one says “avocation,” right?) But as I started thinking more seriously about a career, and especially when I entered medical school, these words became very important. Along the way, I had considered design, then engineering, and basic science research, but found that surgery was the best synergy of vocation and avocation for me. Doing the things that you love to do as a job is pretty great. What is even better is when you can use the skills that you have honed in your career to give back.

Each spring I lead a group of volunteers to Peru for a week of pro bono medical and surgical care. Our work is focused on facial birth defects, including cleft lip, cleft palate, and microtia (external ear deformity). The volunteers come from around the country, with many coming from Marin County and the greater Bay Area. Over the past five years, a colleague and I have developed a medical mission site in Ica, a few hours south of Lima and at the edge of the Atacama Desert. The team has grown steadily and now numbers more than 30 medical and support staff, including surgeons, anesthesiologists,

pediatricians, nurses, surgical techs, speech therapists, and administrators. We work closely with a local medical school and regional hospital to coordinate care for up to 100 babies and children over a week of 12-hour-plus days. It certainly isn’t a vacation, and I often come home from the mission physically exhausted. But there is a different kind of renewal that occurs with this work – as much as we give to the patients, we receive even more in their kindness and gratitude and a sense of personal fulfillment.

While medical missions abroad are great, it’s important to act locally as well. At home, I work with two groups that help underserved patients find specialty care. The first, Operation Access, is a Bay Area organization that has been pairing people in need with surgical specialists for 25 years. Second is Face to Face, the charitable arm of the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. This group specifically works with victims of domestic violence who are seeking reconstructive procedures for trauma or injuries suffered at the hands of their abusers.

It’s very (very) easy in this country, and particularly in Marin County, to get caught up in the endless competitions and comparisons of careers and schools and the trappings of success. Which is why it is so important to find ways to release stress and to be a part of something that is larger than yourself. There is so much talent in the Bay Area, and so many opportunities to give back locally and globally. Nonprofit organizations need logistics managers and accountants. Charities need web designers, fundraisers, and marketing strategists. Schools need mentors and coaches and career counselors. Whatever your talents or skills may be, putting them to use in service of others is a great way to give back and maximize your impact. And as a side benefit, it usually makes you feel good, too.



## *Uniquely You.*

We know that everyone wants to look their best. Our philosophy is natural-appearing rejuvenation – making an individualized treatment plan that enhances your unique beauty. We provide honest advice and expert care to help you achieve your goals.



Dr. Evan Ransom is an Ivy League-trained, double-board certified facial plastic surgeon. His practice includes surgery for the aging face, rhinoplasty (nose reshaping), and reconstruction after trauma or skin cancer removal. Dr. Ransom also provides minimally-invasive treatments, including Botox®, fillers, laser resurfacing, IPL, non-surgical tightening (ThermiTight™), and non-invasive body sculpting (SculpSure®).

Community service is very important to Dr. Ransom. He performs pro bono cleft lip and palate surgery with Healing the Children. Our next mission, to Peru, is in April 2018.

**Union Square:** 450 Sutter St., Suite 1212, San Francisco, CA 94108

**Marin:** 655 Redwood Hwy., Suite 250, Mill Valley, CA 94941  
415-550-1077

[www.SanFranciscoFacialPlasticSurgery.com](http://www.SanFranciscoFacialPlasticSurgery.com)

[www.SFcosmeticlaser.com](http://www.SFcosmeticlaser.com)

[www.SculpSure-SF.com](http://www.SculpSure-SF.com)

[www.HTCNorCal.org](http://www.HTCNorCal.org)

