

Bring the World Into Focus

VOSH - Indiana Chapter™

Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity



The Reunion

Three Generations Of Nolans Join VOSH Mission to Honduras

Dr. Jim Nolan, retired optometrist, and his wife, Bernice, have been hooked on helping the poor since the early 1970's when they participated in a trip to the Dominican Republic. There, they worked with lepers and struggled to fit eyeglasses on lepers whose ears had been destroyed by the disease.

Through the years, their children watched, and then assisted the couple as they prepared for their yearly missions. They collect used eyeglasses, hospital equipment, medicine, school supplies and toys. They present slide shows of their work to civic and church groups as often as possible. The grandchildren are now involved in preparation for missions.

A few of the Nolan children have traveled with them to Honduras and had the opportunity to see why they have dedicated their lives to helping others, but there has been no mission that could top the one they took in February. Last fall, their children decided it was time for them to work along side of their parents, and the Reunion Trip plans began.

The Nolan's four grown children, Marilyn Ziegler, 48, of Columbia, IL.; Ronald Nolan, 50, who is also an optometrist in New Albany, IN, his wife Angela and their two children Gregg, 16, and Matt, 23; Alan Nolan, 45, of New Albany, his wife Beth and all three of their children, Jim, 18, Gary, 16, and Laura, 14; and Brian Nolan of Pasadena, CA. Brian had spent 2 1/2 years teaching English in Honduras.

"I never thought it was possible," said Jim Nolan. Bernice was "honored that they would want to be with us." Bernice sent out prayer requests that it would be possible for all of them to go. Each family member paid approximately \$1200 for transportation, food and lodging.



Dr. Jim Nolan, back row center, is surrounded by family members on a mission trip to Tela, Honduras. Kneeling in front are sons Alan Nolan, left, and Brian Nolan. Standing, left to right, are grandsons Gary and Jim Nolan; daughter-in-law Beth Nolan; granddaughter Laura Nolan; daughter Marilyn Ziegler; wife, Bernice; daughter-in-law Angela Nolan; grandson Gregg Nolan; son Ronald Nolan and grandson Matt Nolan.

On the mission, the Nolan family worked together to set up the operation, served as interpreters, registered patients, sorted and dispensed glasses and even performed crowd control. "It was an unscheduled dream come true," said Dr. Nolan.

"This is their life. It was fantastic to be able to share that with them," said Marilyn Ziegler. "It's a legacy that Mom and Dad have," said Ronald Nolan. "It's nice that the grandchildren get to see it."

At the farewell party thrown at the end of the mission, each of the volunteers received a certificate of thanks from the Hondurans. "To see the looks on Mom and Dad's faces as each family member's name was called at the party was worth the trip," Ronald Nolan said.

Brian Nolan probably said it best, "They are my heroes."

Guanajuato Rotation Evolves from Indiana University's SVOSH Activities

Optometry students from IU School of Optometry have participated in an annual VOSH trip to Guanajuato, Mexico for many years. Now the school has a permanent optometric presence in the area.

During last year's trip, the host agency, DIF (Department of Infants) showed faculty members from IU approximately 1200 square feet of usable space in a Guanajuato state hospital. Architectural plans for converting the area to examination lanes and an estimate of the cost involved were completed before the team returned home.

Construction is now nearing completion and two students have been assigned there. When it is fully operational, four 4th year students will serve 12 week rotations at the site.

Dr. Cindy Foster, a 1995 graduate of the Indiana University School of Optometry, has been tapped to serve as director of the program. Dr. Foster participated in VOSH trips to the area as a student. Then in 1995, she served a four-month stint as Mission Doctor for DIF in Guanajuato.

Prior to coming to live in Guanajuato full-time, Dr. Foster practiced in Corpus Christi, Texas for three years. From her many VOSH experiences, Dr. Foster is fluent in Spanish.

Both the school and the town benefit from the external rotation. It will provide increased healthcare in the Guanajuato community and is an educational opportunity for Indiana University optometry students.

85 Trips and Counting

At the November VOSH meeting in Boston, Dr. Dale Cole of Kansas noted the following statistic: In 1999, with a few more trips still unaccounted for, VOSHers participated in over 85 trips to 33 foreign countries including: Nicaragua (9), El Salvador (6), Guatemala (4), Dominican Republic (3), Jamaica (3), Mexico (14), Haiti (2), Peru (4), Russia, Gaza Strip, Ukraine, Samoa, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia (2), Granada, Bolivia, Costa Rica (4), Guiana (2), Bulgaria (2), Honduras (6), Belize (3), Chile, Panama Canal, Cuba (2), Kenya, India, Argentina, Zimbabwe, Dominique and St. Lucia. Bravo to all.

www.VOSH.org Goes online

If you haven't seen it yet, check out VOSH International's new website, www.VOSH.org

The site includes information about the organization, a bulletin board of upcoming trips and links to VOSH Chapter websites. Also included are links to other related groups such as the Lions Club. You can expect to see more clinic photos as the site is refined and Chapters send in photos for display.

The webmaster is Chuck Covington, a familiar name to longtime VOSHers. He is the son of VOSH International Vice President, Charlie Covington of Florida.

Chuck is an active-duty staff sergeant in the

US Air Force. His current assignment is at Vandenberg Air Force Base in Lompoc, California. Chuck and his wife Jeanette have a son named Chip (Charles Henry Covington).

Chuck's primary hobby has been restoring old Volkswagens, but with the VOSH assignment he's discovered the world of web authoring and is fascinated with its challenges. He needs, help, he says, so he'd like to hear from individuals who have experience with HTML or graphics. He welcomes suggestions for making it the best site it can be in meeting the needs of VOSHers and in making the general public aware of VOSH efforts to provide eyecare to those in need.

Whenever anyone asks you for information about VOSH, be sure to refer them to www.VOSH.org



Rex Teeple, O.D., fits a young man with his first pair of eyeglasses during a VOSH trip to Honduras.

Cuba: A Mission of "Firsts"

By Dr. Jeff Marshall

VOSH-Indiana's historic mission to Cuba in October, 1999, was not the first VOSH mission to the island. VOSH Minnesota had paved the way several years earlier. Without those earlier contacts, the October mission would not have been possible.

Why then do we call this trip a mission of "firsts"? On the prior trip, optometrists were only allowed to dispense glasses from prescriptions written by Cuban doctors. This time around, optometrists were able to practice full-scope Optometry. Additionally, team members flew nonstop to Havana from a city other than Miami since the embargo. Our flight flew direct from Indianapolis.

Plans for this mission began almost eighteen months in advance. Given the names of Cuban contacts, many months of FAXing and E-mailing got underway. Finally, in March 1999, ten volunteers from the Indiana-based organization "Ambassadors for Children" and VOSH-Indiana travelled to Cuba. The group met with the government agencies responsible for such humanitarian missions and laid the groundwork for the October trip.

On a bright Sunday in mid-October, nearly 170 volunteers boarded the plane for Cuba. Three groups collaborated in the effort: approximately fifty VOSH-Indiana volunteers provided eyecare to about 1500 patients; a team of 35 from the Timmy Foundation provided medical care to nearly 300 individuals; and over 100 representatives of Ambassadors for Children visited several schools and orphanages. Everywhere the group went, it was met with a warm smile and a gracious welcome. The Cuban people truly appreciated our efforts to serve them.

One evening the team went to the famous Tropicana Night Club. No, we did not find Lucy and Ricky, but performers did sing "babalou." Those old enough to know the song had goosebumps.

We rounded out the mission with an evening tour of the fort that guards Havana harbor and

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SCHEDULED MISSIONS

KENYA, AFRICA

November 18 - December 2, 2000

HONDURAS - February 17 - 24, 2001

CUBA - April 22 - 26, 2001

Honduras - February 2002

VIETNAM - 2002

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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Bob Mirriam, veteran of many VOSH trips, examines a patient using the Retinomax hand-held autorefractor.

ADOPT-A-MONTH

VOSH Indiana has a new Retinomax hand-held autorefractor purchased with a no-interest contract through Nikon. It's a wonderful addition to our mission work.

We need your help to continue payments and continue its use on our missions. If you would like to Adopt-A-Month, please send a check payable to VOSH Indiana in the amount of \$266.58. We will endorse the check to Nikon. Thanks for your help!

dinner at a local restaurant. Like most VOSH-Indiana missions, it was hard to leave. Knowing we would return again made departing easier.

Editor's Note: Unfortunately, a return mission scheduled to take place in March, 2000 had to be cancelled just a few weeks prior to departure. The political climate, particularly in the case of young Elian Gonzales in Miami, was certainly a factor. While we regret this setback, another mission has been arranged for April 2001.



The children watch and wait (left) as the doctors and volunteers set up an open-air mission exam room. An elderly patient (right) proudly displays her new cataract eyewear.

Below left, Dr. Jim Nolan gets a little language assistance from son Brian, who spent 2 1/2 years teaching English in Honduras.

It never ceases to amaze mission volunteers how patient the children can be (below) while waiting in line to see one of the VOSH doctors.



The Official Cuban Clean Up Committee



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