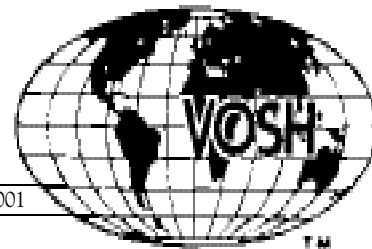


VOSH/INTERNATIONAL

Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity

www.VOSH.org

Volume XV No.1 Spring/Summer 2001



VOSH/INTERNATIONAL Annual Meeting, Oct. 26, 27

How about combining a long weekend getaway with the opportunity to meet fellow VOSHers, whether for a few hours or for every scheduled event? VOSH-Florida will be hosting this year's V/I Annual Meeting, in Bradenton, Florida on Oct. 26, 27 and 28, 2001.

Indomitable event organizer Jeff Marshall, OD is in charge of the weekend. He has scheduled two half-day meeting sessions so that participants have adequate time for relaxed discussion. On Friday evening there will be a

poolside wine and cheese party. Saturday evening's social event will be at the Roaring 20s Pizza and Pipes, where Jeff will introduce you to one of the great US theatre organs. This one hails from the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, CA.

In a curious twist of fate, prior to coming to Florida, the organ was housed in Indiana, near Jeff Marshall's office; both organists were his patients.

For further annual meeting info: drjcm@att.net



Traditional dancers from the Philippines perform at an Eye Ball.

Annual Eye Ball realizes thousands for VOSH Chapter in BC

TWECS (Third World Eye Care Society), a VOSH Chapter based in British Columbia, initiated an Eye Ball five years ago in a comfortable site with a maximum capacity of 150 people. The event sold out.

Since that time, the Eye Ball has become an annual event, earning a total of \$78,000 for the British Columbia chapter.

In its first year, organizers had just 28 items for a silent auction, solicited through telephone marketing alone.

Live entertainment was provided by "Malpractice," an 11-member band of medical doctors. They were a hit, as were featured cultural dances from the Philippines, site of the VOSH Chapter's then most recent eye care project.

For the second Eye Ball, singer Elton John donated a pair of his concert stage prescription sunglasses which sold for \$2,000.

The fundraiser has consistently grown. This past year the group held their fifth Eye Ball at a larger ballroom with seating for 300. The event sold out again. Tickets were \$85 per person, the actual cost of putting on the event.

Monies raised -all \$19,000 - came solely from the sale of over 100 auction items. The event received considerable newspaper coverage the day after the party.

The Eye Ball is now a major annual event where the three Os (optometry, ophthalmology and opticianry) come together for a greater cause.

Funds have been used to purchase major project equipment and general supplies.



Lifetime Achievers

At a farewell party in San Pedro Sula, Honduras in February, Jeff Marshall, OD, organizer of annual eye care clinics in this area for more than twenty years, presented

Jim Nolan, OD and his wife Bernice, a "Lifetime Achievement Award" for their ongoing efforts. Jeff made the presentation on behalf of both VOSH-Indiana and VOSH-Honduras.

The Indiana couple has a 30-year history of helping people in Central America. At times their efforts have been a family affair, especially a year ago when a grand sum of thirteen Nolans turned out to help in Tela and held a family reunion at the same time. It was a special week for Jim and Bernice.

Besides participating in VOSH clinics, the Nolans continually collect used eyeglasses, hospital equipment, medicine, school supplies and stuffed animals for missions. They are frequently called on to present slide shows of their efforts.

Jim Nolan's motivation to help may stem from his childhood in Loogootee, Indiana, where his family didn't have enough money for food or clothing. "I learned that you should never look down on anyone," says Jim.

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From the President's desk

For the past several days I have been reflecting back to almost 30 years ago to when VOSH-Kansas was founded by Dr Franklin Harms. In this short period of time VOSH



has grown into a major organization whose primary goal is to take Optometric eye care to the less fortunate of the world. It was in 1973, that my father, Dr Walter Marshall read about VOSH in the AOA Journal. It was not long before he was on his first mission with VOSH-Kansas. He returned to our office determined to start a VOSH chapter here in Indiana. The rest is history.

As I come to the end of my term as president of VOSH-INTERNATIONAL, I am pleased with what we've accomplished during these past two years. The addition of a fantastic website and the renewal of our newsletter have helped get the message of VOSH out, not only to our membership, but to people all over the globe.

As I see things, to take VOSH-INTERNATIONAL to the next level we need more involvement from our individual chapters. VOSH-INTERNATIONAL is here to help coordinate the activities of the chapters, yet it is difficult to get information for our website or newsletter from many of you.

My own experience as president of VOSH-Indiana has been that the more information I get to the website and newsletter, the more interest I have in our missions.

I have appreciated the support and the hard work of the Executive Committee who have helped make my term successful. Special thanks goes out to the newsletter editor and the webmaster who have worked diligently to help me accomplish my goals in these two vital areas.

Jeffrey C Marshall, O D
President, VOSH-INTERNATIONAL

VOSH notes from Etzatlan, Mexico

By Gary Wolf, OD, VOSH-WI

There have been very few changes in our mission to Etzatlan, Mexico, since it began in 1986, but all are significant and positive. The first is that we are now seeing many more children.

School teachers are bringing entire classes. This speaks well to the education of the community by our group leaders who have emphasized the need. It's like a field trip of sorts for the students.

Many would-be amblyopias were prevented. The vast number of unioocular high cylinders were staggering. Additionally, a lot of low plus children came in with major complaints of difficulty with near work, which we were able to alleviate with glasses we brought with us.

Secondly, many more high-end myopes

Spread the word and read our newsletter online

Please share your V/I newsletter. Display it in your office and/or send it to interested people. And, don't forget to mention our website to others: www.VOSH.org

As of this issue, the entire V/I newsletter will be posted on our website.

To view the newsletter online, you will need Adobe Acrobat Reader. Don't have it? Simply download it from the Adobe website: www.adobe.com

More articles on our website

The following in-depth articles have been posted on our website as

Word documents:

- "Tips on the use of the Nikon Retinomax Autorefractor on VOSH Missions," (3 pages), by VOSH'er Bob Merriam of VOSH-Indiana.

- "Lumbini Eye Care Project in Nepal and Northern India"- a Case Study developed by David Green of the Seva Foundation and William LeClere of the Institute for Development Research, under sponsorship of the Sustainable

came in, undoubtedly by word-of-mouth. There was a run on minus in the teens that wouldn't quit. Several each day and all first time Rx's.

Finally, glaucoma patients were given enough meds to begin treatment. Hopefully, they filled the prescriptions subsequently and we were able to halt or minimize the severity of the disease.

Having our boxes of eyeglasses and autorefractor confiscated by Guadalajara customs, was, for me, a recurring nightmare. This happened on two of the three trips I've been on so far. Better luck next time.

Editor's note: Turn to page 4A for excerpts from accounts of this trip submitted by two young VOSH'ers, brothers Sam Pierre, age 13, and Aaron Pierre, age 11.

From our Mailbox

To the Editor:

I am the VOSH-Ohio secretary/mission coordinator. We are wondering if any VOSH groups have gone to Puerto Rico. Any information will be appreciated.

Barbara Plaughter arliss@wcoil.com

To the Editor:

Once again, I'd invite anyone to join VOSH-PA in our Cycle for Sight 2001 fundraiser to benefit VOSH clinics.

Dr. Doug Vilella, doogie@erie.net

Keep in touch

Have an interesting feature, photo or anecdote regarding recent missions or other items of interest to VOSH'ers? E-mail the editor at eyeclam@aol.com or mail news to: V/I Newsletter Editor, PO Box 41, Holden, MA 01520.

When sending VOSH photos (good quality only) be sure to include basic outline information (who, what, where, when, how).

Keep those letters and e-mails coming. We'd appreciate your letters to the editor, comments regarding what you like, what you dislike, suggestions for future issues, etc. eyeclam@aol.com.

Alf Vogel with a young Filipino schoolgirl he's just fit with glasses. She was afraid to admit that she had worn glasses before, fearing it would make her ineligible for a new pair.



TWECS in the Philippines

by Alf Vogel, VOSH-British, Columbia

I went to the store and bought a lottery ticket today and on the way home it occurred to me that I need not have bothered – I have already won the lottery of life – by virtue of where I was born and the country of which I am a citizen. I have never had to worry about food, shelter, clothing and basic health care. What provoked these feelings was the privilege of participating in an eye care mission to Tacloban City, Leyte, Philippines with twelve other VOSHers.

Our team included an ophthalmologist, 3 optometrists, a cardiac surgeon, 3 opticians (including myself), 2 optometric assistants, a student and a retired hydrologist.

After 18 hours and 3 separate flights, we arrived in Tacloban City to a splendid welcome hosted by the local Rotary Club on Sunday, October 31. The next two days were public holidays – All Saints Day and All Souls Day. I was touched seeing people spend this time visiting and remembering departed friends and loved ones at their final resting-places. Local cemeteries were overflowing with these well-wishers. They lit candles and shared meals on individual gravesites. I could not help but admire this tradition as it provides a sense of history and family connection; it must go a long way towards easing the fear of death.

Wednesday was the first day of the clinic and what a day it was! We were situated in the City Hospital and each member of our team was provided with a nurse to assist us so, much to our delight, we doubled our manpower. As the days of clinic went on, the most promising candidates for cataract surgery were identified and scheduled for surgery during the

last week of the two-week mission.

Overall, we saw 3,500 people, many of whom received recycled glasses we brought with us. Eighty-five cataract surgeries were performed, but the numbers do not tell the whole story. They don't give the emotional impact of fitting a 60-year-old with simple reading glasses and watching her face light up as she realizes she will be able to read her bible again for the first time in 15 years – all for the want of what you or I might purchase for less than \$20.00.

Nor do statistics tell of the 32-year-old laundry woman who could not see across a room and probably never could. When fitted with glasses she was startled at first, then she started to cry and could not stop. They were tears of joy because the difference was that profound.

As remarkable as these personal victories were, there was also inspiration to be had watching fellow team members. They worked hard and fast, without losing their humanity, never forgetting that across from them was an individual deserving of dignity and respect, no matter how rushed or tired they might feel.

Of the nurses and social workers of Tacloban City Hospital, I can only wonder at their dedication, understanding and patience, for whenever we arrived at the clinic they were already there. They would not break for meals until the team had, and they were generally the last to leave at night.

I have returned home with a new appreciation for my gifts and talents as an optician and as a human being, knowing with certainty I can make a difference ... and so can you!

From our Webmaster

by Chuck Covington

Hopefully, you're aware that the VOSH/INTERNATIONAL website has undergone some changes in the last few months, including a new, more dependable host.

Periodically every chapter having a vested interest in the accuracy of our website (particularly in upcoming mission listings) should take a look at the updates to insure correctness and completeness. Updates for this page should be e-mailed to me immediately.

The V/I website also has a new Message Board that has the capacity to send you an e-mail when someone responds to messages you post here. With this service, when someone responds to your desperate need for an OD or whomever, you will be notified immediately. The new board still has random flashing advertisements, a mild inconvenience for the free service.

The old Message Board may be still linked but please post all new messages to the new one. Instructions for posting are listed right on the page.

The way the Message Board is set up now, the information you post yourself is listed immediately so I'm not needed to post information on the Message Board, although I do periodic updates.

However, continue to check your "Upcoming Missions" listings at frequent intervals and e-mail me information you want posted here. Lately it's been diminishing in size, yet I know of many trips in the planning stages.

www.VOSH.org is the only source for near real-time VOSH mission announcements. Except for a short period of time in early May when I will be relocating, you can continue to reach me by e-mailing notes, questions, concerns and suggestions to the same address: chuck.jan@cyberdude.com

Calendar of upcoming VOSH missions

For further information about the following upcoming missions, contact the trip organizer whose telephone and/or email is noted. Trips are listed in order by country and nearest upcoming date. Additional info/photos regarding some clinics are available through links on the V/I website: www.VOSH.org

Mission leaders: We want to do a better job of serving you and VOSHers alike. Please help us by e-mailing updated trip information as soon as it becomes available. With your continued input, we can inform potential VOSHers of opportunities as early on as possible. E-MAIL: eyeclam@aol.com

chuck.jan@cyberdude.com

- MOLDAVA, May 5-13, 2001

SVOSH-PCO/Amigos eye care, Nicole Negarta, 503-357-8399 ngoitan@pacificu.edu

- CANCUN, MEXICO, May 14-21, 2001

NSUCO, Julie Ott, ott_julie@hotmail.com

- MONTE PLATA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, June 8-17, 2001

Ulrick Gaillard: bateyrelief@mindspring.com

- LA ENTRADA DE COPAN, HONDURAS, June 30-July 8, 2001

Sight for the Blind, VOSH-Northwest, Dr. Dana Cocke, cajuneyedr@aol.com

- COSTA RICA, July 14--22, 2001

Vision/Dental trip organized by Americans Ray & Lidia Zirkle who live and work there.

Team leader is Pat Boleman of TN.

e-mail: margaret_cox@baylor.chattanooga.net and bolemanp@yahoo.com

- LA MERCED, PERU, July 16-24, 2001

VOSH-FL Dr. John Gehrig
orlandoe@worldnet.att.net

- WISE, VIRGINIA, July 20-22, 2001

VOSH-Northeast, Dr. Vicki Weiss,
DVCClear@aol.com

VOSHers needing place to stay can stay at Dr. Weiss's home in Charlottesville, VA. There is a Holiday Inn, etc. near mission site.

- CROATIA, July 28-Aug. 8, 2001

VOSH-FL Charles Covington, 407-330-5261

VOSHFlorida@msn.com

- PUERTO VAILLARTA, MEXICO Sept., 2001

VOSH-Northwest, Drs. Ed Rich and Stuart Frank. Contact: frank.s@ghc.org

- REYNOSA, MEXICO, Sept., 2001

VOSH-Utah, Dr. Ronald Pugh
801-798-2244

- BOSNIA, Sept. 7-16, 2001

VOSH-FI/VOSH-IN, Charles Covington
charlescovington@hotmail.com

- SANDY BAY, NICARAGUA, Sept. 24-Oct. 4, 2001

Interdisciplinary medical group being organized by a Granada couple.
Ugogirl@tmx.com

- SUCHITOTO, EL SALVADOR, Nov., 2001

VOSH-NECO, Dr. Jenifer Ambler (see feature p. 6) amblerj@sover.net 802-254-9181

- PETEN, GUATEMALA, Nov. 10-19, 2001

- Nov. 10-19, 2001

VOSH-PA, Dr. Doug Villella,
doogie@erie.net

Work at the Vincent Pescatore Eye Clinic

- PUERTO VALLARTA, MEXICO, Nov., 2001

VOSH-NW, Dr. Forrey,
rich@cque.net

- ROATAN BAY ISLANDS, Dec., 2001, Sight for the Blind/VOSH-NE,

Dr. Dana Cocke, cajuneyedr@aol.com

- OMETEPE, NICARAGUA, Jan., 2002

VOSH-NECO, Dr. Joseph A. D'Amico,
eyeclam@aol.com 508-829-6731 (w)

- CANGREJO, NICARAGUA, Jan., 2002

VOSH-NECO, Dr. Jay Jordan,
JFeyecare@aol.com

Site accessible by horseback ride over rugged terrain. Group will then join another nearby VOSH-NECO team for rest of week.

- SAN JUAN DEL SUR, NICARAGUA, Jan., 2002

Dr. Matt Blondin, VOSH/NECO
wp_abb@yahoo.com 860-489-2781

- NICARAGUA, Jan., 2002

Dr. Carl Sakovitz, Northeast VOSH
401-423-1377 islandDoc5@aol.com

- SANTA ANA, EL SALVADOR, February, 2002

Contact Dr. Harry Zeltzer, VOSH-NECO
978-356-0447 harryzeltzer@mediaone.net

WORKING JUST FINE: Dr. Jay Jordan of New Hampshire (l) and Dr. Joseph D'Amico of MA, test equipment with the assistance of patient Maria Eugenia, in the recently-completed permanent eye care clinic at San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua.



PERMANENT CLINICS SEEKING OPTOMETRIC COVERAGE:

- SAN JUAN DEL SUR, NICARAGUA,

VOSH-NECO has established a permanent one-lane clinic at this site, situated on a bay in southern Nicaragua. Goal is to have optometric coverage on a monthly basis. Ideal for optometrists willing to combine service to the community/Spanish language study/vacation. For further information: JFeyecare@aol.com or eyeclam@aol.com

- JEREMIE, HAITI

The Haitian Health Foundation has established a multidisciplinary permanent clinic with a separate, modern eye care facility. Individual or group participation can be arranged for most any week of the year. Housing is provided. Contact: Dr. Robert Pannone, 860-887-2060

Calendar of upcoming VOSH missions

● GOMEZ PALACIO, MX, Feb., 2002

Dr. Tim Lynch, lynchtth@hotmail.com

● HONDURAS-COPAN RUINS,

Feb. 23-March 2, 2002

Dr. Jeff Marshall, VOSH-Indiana

317-322-7788 drjcm@att.net

● TACOA, HONDURAS, date TBA

William Davis, SIGHT FOR THE BLIND

Doug Vilella, 814-833-2584 doogie@erie.net

● PANAMA CANAL, March, 2002

VOSH-KA Dr. Dale Cole dcole@midkan.net
dkuehn@russellks.net

● SAN CRISTOBAL, CHIAPAS,

MEXICO, Feb. 2-12, 2002

VOSH-Iowa, Dr. Harlan Vander Griend

Sa.3@rconnect.com or 712-324-2552 (w)

● CHILE, March or April, 2002

Dr. Ellis Potter

epotter@iolaks.com or 316-365-2108

● SAMOA, June, 2002

VOSH-Northwest, Dr. Mike DeRosier

dpvc@juno.com

● VIETNAM, Sept. 19-28, 2002

VOSH-Indiana/Ambassadors for Children, Dr.
Jeff Marshall 317-322-7788 drjcm@att.net

● KENYA, AFRICA, Nov., 2002

VOSH-KA, Dr. Dale Cole

dcole@midkan.net or 785-823-6391 (w)

● JEREMIE, HAITI, November, 2002

Vosh-NECO, Dr. Robert Pannone

860-887-2060

● SWAZILAND, SOUTH AFRICA,

Date TBA, VOSH-Illinois,

Dr. Jim Sanderson, 708-349-7571

● KENYA, 2002, Date TBA,

VOSH-AL, Dr. Patti Fuhr, pfuhr@mind-
spring.com 205-591-8165

● ECUADOR, 2002, Date TBA,

VOSH-Oregon, Dr. Janet Leasher,

janetleasher@hotmail.com

● MEXICO, 2002, Date TBA,

VOSH-Oregon, Dr. Janet Leasher,

janetleasher@hotmail.com



HAPPY ENDING: During the March, 2001 eye care clinic at the Vincent Pescatore Eye Clinic in Guatemala, this youngster was brought in with a maggot in her eye. It had been there for a month because the family needed to raise the money for the long trip from their home near the Mexican border. The young lady was lucky as the maggot had simply dug into the orbit and didn't cause major damage.

Clinics, optometrists, teams wanted

If you're looking to find a site for your VOSH team or if you're thinking of taking on a leadership role but don't know where to go, consider the following requests. We'd like to include any additional locations or contacts you may learn of. Send info to: Webmaster Chuck Covington at www.VOSH.org or to the newsletter editor: eyeclam@aol.com

SANDY BAY, NICARAGUA,

Sept. 23-Oct.4, 2001

Sandy Bay is located in the Atlantic Coast region, an extremely impoverished area populated by indigenous Miskitos. Last leg of trip is by boat.

Multi-disciplinary medical team is being hosted by a Granada couple. Wife Ceffie is of Miskit origin and speaks English, Miskit and Spanish fluently. Approximately 14,000 people living here have not had the benefit of a doctor in at least 20 years. Contact Donna Tabor, a former Peace Corps volunteer now in Granada: ugogirl@tmx.com

NUEVA SEGOVIA, NICARAGUA:

We received a communication from Ayuda en Accion, a non-governmental organization, working in four municipalities in northern Nicaragua. They had learned of VOSH efforts elsewhere in Nicaragua and are requesting a team to plan a mission to their area. Contact Lic. Haydee Castillo Flores, Coordinadora, Ayuda en Accion, aea.nsegovia@netpor.com.ni
MEDIJUGORJE,

BOSNIA-HERZOGOVINA

Need optometrists, ophthalmologists to serve refugees, orphans in this area. Laura Allen, CARE FOR CHILDREN, mlacrown@wwa.com

DURANGO CITY, DURANGO, MX

Optometric team wanted

Contact Antonio Raul, 011-818-1347

POSELTEGA, NICARAGUA

VOSH group wanted. Contact Barbara

Seitz-de Martinez, 812-335-0851. She has family ties in Poseltega.

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Batey Relief Organization (BRA) regularly organizes medical teams to serve Haitians who live in difficult conditions on bateyes in the Dominican Republic. Optometrists are needed for these teams. For further information, visit the BRA website: www.bateyrelief.org or contact Ulrick Gaillard, BRA President, at bateyrelief@mindspring.com

JUTIAPA and QUICHE, GUATEMALA

Need for an interested VOSH team to work with 3 Guatemalan ophthalmologists of the Vincent Pescatore Eye Assn. Contact Dr. Doug Vilella, doogie@erie.net 814-459-5707

Reports from our chapters

Offering clear vision and much more in El Salvador

By Jenifer Ambler OD, VOSH-NECO

Most recently, our multi-specialty medical team traveled to El Salvador in October, 2000, with our largest crew ever (19 people) and the largest percentage of newcomers since our initial trip in 1994. Our effort is now a combined medical/Rotary/church project. I just happen to wear all 3 hats.

This year's crew included 2 ODs, 4 dentists, 1 dental assistant, 1 hygienist, 2 EMTs, 1 teenager (who video-documented the trip), and a group from 2 churches in Brattleboro, VT and Farmington, CT who share a sister parish in El Salvador.

We held a 3-day clinic in Cabanitas (a sister city parish), located in a neighborhood of Apopa, just north of San Salvador and then traveled on for 2 more days of clinics in Suchitoto, north of the Guazapa volcano. At this site we served residents of outlying rural communities.



Suchitoto is a lovely Spanish Colonial town, but it is surrounded by some of the most conflicted areas of the war. Rural communities were especially hard hit, so the people were (and still are) very needy; many were refugees in Honduras and are now trying to reestablish their homes and livelihoods.

We had a Salvadoran translator/helper and 3 local assistants who could do histories and pre-testing. I taught them to use my new Welch Allen Suresite Autorefractor which came in very handy, although battery life was disappointing.

While we examined eyes and teeth, EMTs held classes in first aid, CPR, and



emergency care for local health workers.

I have no idea how many patients we saw during our stay; we just kept 'em coming until dark. Together, Jane Penthany, OD and I probably averaged about 100 a day.

We've held four medical clinics here in the last 5 years alone, so it was fun seeing friends we've made over the years, and always neat to see familiar names/faces come into the clinic. Many remember me as the barefoot doctor because I've always had a bad habit of kicking my shoes off in the clinic (well...it's hot!).

Before departing we donated half of our leftover glasses and drugs to the clinic in Suchitoto and half to clinics run by the Lutheran Synod.

During our stay, we met with the Lutheran bishop, the director of the Lutheran Synod's health clinic network, and the youth director, who are combining efforts to head off gang membership for boys and teen pregnancy for girls.

We've also been following a little boy who was crippled by polio and then severely burned because he was unable to flee a house fire. Presently, we're working on the necessary paperwork and funding to get him to a Shriners Hospital in the states for treatment.

Our main connection in Suchitoto, the woman in charge of all rural health clinics, was in a bad bus crash last October, but was lucky to have survived. She sustained a broken pelvis and internal injuries and was hospitalized for almost 3 months. Now she is deeply in debt to the

RECYCLEDGLASSES FASHIONSHOW: Back home in Vermont, Jenifer Ambler OD (second from right holding child) and friends take a break from neutralizing and bagging recycled glasses to show off their favorites. (Below, left) Jenifer pauses for a photo with a Salvadoran woman who just happened to come into the clinic in Suchitoto wearing a Vermont t-shirt.

hospital and her husband has left her. Our group is making arrangements to pay down her hospital bill.

On our last day in El Salvador we toured a Rotary housing project for people displaced from their homes by hurricane Mitch and spent some time relaxing at the beach. The weather is indeed better in October, offering more lush greenery and cooler sleeping at night. And no matter what the month, I always love the food!

The history of our efforts in this part of El Salvador dates back to 1994, when we held our initial combined medical clinic under Rotary auspices. In 1996, as we were looking for more lasting ways to help as many people as possible for as long as possible, we came across information about solar water pasteurization systems. Our Rotary club raised funds and obtained a matching grant to install a pilot project near Suchitoto in 1997.

The water project has grown considerably and we now have a separate organization called Pure Water for the World, with 501C(3) status and a paid executive director. (See www.purewaterfortheworld.org).

We partner Rotary clubs in NE with Rotary clubs in El Salvador and Honduras. Rotary International has sweetened the pot with matching grant funds.

Presently we're installing both solar and slow sand filtration systems. Engineering students at Dartmouth College are helping to analyze the success and cost effectiveness.

VOSH newsbriefs at a glance

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS IN HONDURAS:

Here's another important website for anyone involved in eye care projects in Honduras: www.projecthonduras.com

Purpose of the internet-based group is to support projects that address social and economic needs of Honduras. It serves as a clearinghouse for ongoing development projects in Honduras. They are currently developing a data base of all individuals with special interests, in the hope of pooling resources, avoiding conflicting schedules, etc.

* * *

CONTRIBUTION FROM BIOCOMPATIBLES eye care

Biocompatibles eye care ran a blind survey of optometrists over the internet in early March. Their study project involved research of the price elasticities of various brands of soft contact lenses.

In order to encourage participation, the firm donated \$10 to VOSH/INTERNATIONAL for the first 200 surveys completed. VOSH/INTERNATIONAL appreciates this donation, totalling \$1,950.

* * *

A HEARTY ROAR OF APPLAUSE FOR LIONS :

V/I president Jeff Marshall will be making a presentation to the President of Lions Club International when the organization travels to Indianapolis in July for its major Convention. The presentation is to recognize Lions for the invaluable help they have provided VOSH over the years. The honor will be made at the International

Relations Meeting on Friday, July 5, as this is the group that is involved with mission work around the world.

* * *

IN MEMORIAM: DR PHILIP FREITAG, 1924-2001

Dr. Phil Freitag of Madison, South Dakota, passed away on March 29, 2001, after a several month struggle with a brain tumor that was first discovered on Christmas day.



Dr. Freitag was a VOSH supporter and leader for many years. Along with participating and leading numerous VOSH missions over the years, Dr. Freitag served as president of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL from 1993-94.

He was most prominently involved with a team that returned on a recurring basis to Jamaica. He was formerly president of the South Dakota Optometric Society and was named Distinguished Optometrist in 1992.

In recent years he also served the Public Health Service of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe.

Dr. Freitag's enthusiasm, support, leadership and wonderful sense of humor will be sorely missed.

Memorials can be sent to the VOSH Fund, First American Bank & Trust, PO Box 327, Madison, SD 57042. For anyone wishing to communicate with his wife Rosemary, her address is: Rosemary Freitag, Box 86J, Wentworth, SD 57075.

* * *

VOSH-CA TAKES ON ECO CHALLENGE-BRAZIL

Last April, an extreme-adventure competition, including world-class athletes from across the world, was held in Brazil for 10-12 days. Participants, including members of VOSH-CA took part in the event in which 4-person teams from 26 countries covered a 320-mile course across desert, mountains, rivers and oceans via horseback, sea kayaks, bicycles and walking. The "Pharmanex Force for Good" of Provo, Utah won the event. The team chose vision care as their required charity program and opted to help out in a poor "favella" in Sao Luis, Brazil.

VOSH-California was invited to assist in the effort. The Pharmanex Foundation made a generous grant of airfare for the VOSH eye care team; FUNDAMED, a Brazil organization, handled details in the host country. A team of four optometrists and one ancillary helper examined 410 patients and dispensed 325 pairs of glasses. In addition, approximately \$4,000 in medications were donated.

With the success of this effort, VOSH-CA is now considering a longterm relationship with FUNDAMED and Brazil. For info: David Eldridge, idoc1@earthlink.net

* * *

AIRLINE DILEMMA MEANS FREE TICKETS FOR VOSH-NORTHWEST:

Stu Frank OD and his team of 8 optometrists and 10 support staff saw approximately 2,200 patients in Puerto Vallarta Mexico in late spring, 2000. Patients were from the city's poor neighborhoods, an

orphanage and impoverished people from outlying towns.

The team did encounter some difficulty with Alaskan Airlines, but the VOSHers are slated to receive 16 free tickets for all the lost eyeglasses which were never found after arriving in LA and going through customs.

* * *

VOSHer RECOGNIZED

Sydney Perlman OD of VOSH-Illinois, who has led 23 missions around the world since 1977, was recognized for his efforts by The Star, a suburban Chicago newspaper. Retired from his full-time practice at Trinity Hospital in South Chicago in 1995, Dr. Perlman continues to work part-time and he continues to devote time to VOSH-Illinois.

* * *

KIRCHGESSNER FOUNDATION AWARDS VOSH-CA THREE GRANTS:

It was a "good day" at the office when David Eldridge, OD helped Mr. Martin Webster out with his visual difficulties. In talking, David told the patient about VOSH and its work.

Mr. Webster is affiliated with the Kirchgessner Foundation and he felt VOSH was a perfect fit for the kind of philanthropic work they support. The latest grant of \$7,300 is to purchase equipment needed to facilitate efforts in clinics held in adverse conditions. The previous grants enabled VOSH-CA to buy a Nikon hand-held autorefractor, a portable, hand-held biomicroscope and a tonometer.

* * *

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL

Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity



For further information, call Toll-Free

1-877-VOSHers

or visit our website:

www.VOSH.org

* * * *

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is a voluntary non-profit organization whose primary goal is to facilitate the provision of vision care worldwide to people who can neither afford nor obtain such care.

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL accomplishes this goal by service as a coordinating body for affiliated chapters, by administratively supporting activities of chapters and members and by actively promoting the formation of new chapters and new members.

Currently there are 23 state chapters, three of which are composed of two or more states. In addition, there are 14 active student chapters, as well as one each in Mexico, Canada and Honduras.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

More VOSH news

Your contributions and memberships

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is a 501-(c)-3 corporation, meaning that all contributions are tax-deductible.

Our primary source of income is membership and Chapter dues. We encourage optometrists to join and help us give this added service as a part of our professional lives. We also welcome other professionals and laypeople who share our desire to help those less fortunate obtain better sight.

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL dues are \$30 per year. Chapter dues are \$100 per year. Please send dues or contributions to:

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL

C/O Charles Covington, Treasurer
102 Oak View Circle,
Lake Mary, FL 32746

Be sure to include your name, address, telephone and e-mail if you have one.

For more information:

call TOLL FREE 1-877-VOSHers or visit our website: www.VOSH.org

Available for loan

Equipment is expensive. V/I has begun compiling a list of items that our member chapters are willing to loan for use on VOSH missions, so long as your mission dates don't conflict with theirs.

If your chapter has "loaners," that you'd like mentioned, please e-mail eyeclam@aol.com. Be sure to include any handling, insurance costs, restrictions.

- HAND-HELD SLIT LAMP available from VOSH-British Columbia. tweecs@aol.com (Marina March)
- RETINOMAX, available from VOSH-CO, insured privately; instrument may be leased for \$1 per month or thereabouts. E-mail ???
- RETINOMAX, available from VOSH-Indiana, insured thru office insurance policy. drjcm@att.net
- THREE-PART DISPLAY BOARD, Standing bulletin board with V/I heading and an array of photographs is available for loan for presentations at meetings and conventions. No charge, but chapter pays postage, postal insurance. drjcm@att.net
- VOSH/INTERNATIONAL BROCHURES outlining the purpose, history and goals of your parent organization. E-mail drjcm@att.net

Two young WI VOSHers share their impressions of Etzatlan, Mexico

Try living like that for a day

By Sam Pierre, age 13

Close your eyes and plug your ears. Now try to live like that for a day. That's what life is like for two-year old Manuel of Etzatlan, Mexico, except that it's life long.

Diagnosed deaf at birth from a traumatic delivery in which he lacked oxygen to the brain, Manuel's mother Cecilia suspected a problem with his eyesight. After two years of waiting, Cecilia saw her chance when my father Bill Pierre, my brother Aaron Pierre, eighteen other VOSHers and I arrived for a week.

After many long hours of waiting, it was their turn. Sitting on his mother's lap, dirty little Manuel looked like a normal child. No one would have suspected that such a heartbreaking story was yet to unfold.

My father found normal eyes when examining Manuel. With the child being too young to say so, my father was left to find out for himself that he was blind. His first clue was when he shined a small flashlight at Manuel. Usually children about that age will follow the light with their eyes; Manuel didn't. Concern grew during another part of the examination where he shined a very bright light into the eyes. Manuel didn't flinch.

My father told Cecilia there was nothing we could do for Manuel and explained how her only communication with him was through touch. When he informed the rest of us, our hearts immediately went out to the family.

Later in the week, a few VOSHers expressed an urge to help Manuel's family in some way or another. After discussion, a collection was taken. We bought a stroller (Cecilia had to carry Manuel everywhere), a playpen and other necessities. I was really moved by how much this group cared about one individual.

On Friday evening there was a going-away party for the VOSH team. One



Sam Pierre helped pick glasses, ran errands and even entertained patients with an assortment of juggling tricks.

member invited Cecilia. When she arrived, the gifts were presented to her. The gratitude she expressed to us was unforgettable. Being a brickworker, her husband was temporarily out of work because it was the dry season. Therefore, any financial help was accepted appreciatively.

On Saturday morning I visited their home to bring them other things. It was a house that was connected to the neighboring homes and made of an adobe-looking brick. The interior consisted of just two rooms. The first, containing all of the beds and furniture, served as a living room, play room and bedrooms. The second room, right behind the first, was a dirt-floored kitchen with a lean-to roof. A door leading to a square garden ended their home. What I found humbling about this family was, despite such a primitive home and a son with endless disabilities, they were almost always happy and content with life.

How I helped

by Aaron Pierre, age 11

They were waiting there, in line since the break of dawn, some traveling miles; many desperate people of all ages, hoping for a chance for improved eyesight. This is what my father, brother and I saw as we arrived at work each morning at the Club de Liones (Lion's Club) in the small town of Etzatlan, Mexico.

If some of you are thinking what could an 11-year-old do on a VOSH trip, I found many ways to help out. My main task was to find the prescribed glasses for the patients. My brother and I also helped out with running errands for the group, for instance if they needed water.

When I gave a patient correct glasses, I felt as if I gave them a special gift of sight. Some of their reactions were smiling faces, a sense of awe and especially gratitude. This was a wonderful feeling. A group of monks were so moved they prayed over us!

One day as I was doing my daily job, I came about serving an elderly gentleman, about 85. Looking at his exam sheet, I saw he had cataracts in both eyes for over 50 years and was almost blind. The doctor wrote that all we could do was give him sunglasses.

I felt a sense of accomplishment when I heard that we saw and changed 1,065 people's lives by giving them glasses. It was hard to leave knowing there were still so many more to be seen, but our time was up.

I was amazed at how all the people of Etzatlan were so happy and content even though they had nothing by our standards. They were not ashamed about their lifestyle or their home. It taught me that we don't need things to be happy or to have friends.



Aaron Pierre concentrates intently as he searches for the perfect Rx.

More Chapter News

It was the trip of a lifetime

by Jeff Marshall OD,
VOSH-Indiana

Plans for our two-week African Adventure began more than two years prior to our departure last November. For the 35 team members, it was an extraordinary experience that paired eye care service with a safari.

Our adventure got under-



ABOVE: Kenyan youngsters give a thumbs up as they wait their turn for an eye exam. BELOW: Examining a patient. RIGHT: The safari included lions and tigers and giraffes and scores more animals as well.

way with a charter flight from Indianapolis to Milan, Italy. Since we weren't able to check in for a few hours, our tour company arranged a tour of that beautiful city. Monday morning we departed for Nairobi, a short, 10-hour flight! Our hosts, District 411 Lions Clubs were at the airport to greet us. On Monday morning we went to the worksite, set up and then got our clinic underway. We saw over 3,700 patients in 4 days.

It rained...Oh, my goodness,



did it rain. I've never seen so much mud. But neither the rain, nor the mud dampened the spirits of the team or patients.

We left the clinic on Saturday for a 5-day safari including one night at the Mountain Lodge built around a watering hole, the next night at the elegant Mt Kenya Safari Club. From there we went to Kichwa Tembo, where we saw an amazing array of animals, took a hot air balloon across the Masai Mara and roughed it in tents.

We then flew from Kichwa Tembo back to Nairobi and then from Nairobi to Rome. Saturday morning we had time for a bus tour of Rome, ending at the Vatican where the Pope made an appearance that morning to bless the crowd.



Then it was back home to America with scores of memories of what truly was the trip of a lifetime.

District 411 Lions was so pleased with the project they'd like to host up to three groups a year. If interested, contact Jeff at drjcm@att.net

Editor's Note: Dale Cole, OD took part in the above clinic/safari. he was so impressed with how well the travel co. had handled arrangements that he is planning to lead a similar clinic/safari back to Kenya in Nov., 2002.

Contact dcole@midkan.net



TOP L.: An elderly woman waits her turn. TOP R.: A patient checking his sight with his new glasses. LEFT: Rain and mud didn't dampen the team's spirit.

Eyeglass recycling program at Oregon women's penitentiary

Through the work of Scott Maguire, Carl Abraham and Clay Briscoe OD, inmates at the Women's Penitentiary in Pendleton, Oregon have recently been trained to verify and sort glasses that can be used for eye care missions.

Prior to shipping glasses to the prison, Lions volunteers presort glasses to eliminate broken frames or lenses. On site, glasses are verified, bagged, labeled and then sorted into boxes according to gender and plus or minus power.

A Prison Work Director has been hired specifically to provide ongoing training and oversee production. Approximately 7,000 to 10,000 pairs of glasses per month can be boxed and ready to be shipped to Portland for distribution to humanitarian eye organizations. This service will greatly facilitate the process of

eyeglass recycling and provide more than ample eyeglasses for humanitarian missions originating from Oregon. Through the contact of an Amigos member, a local trucking company has agreed to provide monthly shipping of glasses utilizing extra cargo space.

Currently, VOSH-Oregon and Amigos run between 5 and 10 missions per year. The Lions often organize their own trips as well, so the program is much appreciated.

VOSH doctors and Amigos representatives will work closely with the Lions to streamline this new recycling program. The next step is to refine the criteria for glasses that are useful so that glasses with high cylinders or significant anisometropia do not end up taking up valuable space and weight in lens libraries for years on end.