



NEW OFFICERS: The 2002-2003 VI Executive Board: (L-r) Robert A. Foote, OD, vice-president; Ruth S. McAndrews, OD, vice-president; Dale K. Cole, OD, president-elect; Harry I. Zeltzer, OD, president; John Gehrig, Esq., vice-president and legal counsel; Ann Slocum-Edmunds, OD, vice-president. Missing from photo: Charles H. Covington, Sr., secretary/treasurer. For further news from the Annual Meeting, please turn to pages 2 and 3.

Up and running with VOSH-NY and a commitment to Peru

By Jorge Won, OD,
president, VOSH-NY

The seeds for volunteering were planted in me decades ago when I was attending school in Peru, the country where I was born and raised. I studied in a Catholic school run by Maryknoll Missionaries, a group of American priests, brothers and nuns who gave us a great education and taught us the real sense of sharing and giving.

By the time we were seniors in high school, religion class consisted of a half-day per week of volunteer work in the community. Who can ever forget those Friday mornings when we were assigned to spend time and help feed



Dr. Won (l) with a Peruvian patient patients in Lima's largest mental hospital and in a nursing home? Mind you those were institutions in a third-world country. That experience sure did leave an imprint in our brains and hearts.

I was intrigued by the concept of SVOSH while at SUNY-Optometry, but economic limitations did not per-

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VISTAKON makes a second major donation to V/I

During his remarks as keynote speaker at the V/I Annual Meeting in Vancouver, Stanley Yamane, OD, reviewed the enormous strides VOSH has made during the last year and outlined challenges for the coming year.

The 75 attendees gave him a resounding ovation when Dr. Yamane announced VISTAKON's second grant of \$20,000 to help VOSH continue to advance its ambitious agenda.

VISTAKON is a division of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc. Dr. Yamane is Vice President Professional Affairs Division of VISTAKON for the Americas.

VISTAKON's initial \$20,000 grant last year was key to providing V/I a stable financial base on which to move the organization forward..

Dr. Yamane said that one of VISTAKON's goals is to develop a lasting partnership with V/I. He challenged the membership to "dream, believe, dare and do."



He noted, "Your V/I leadership has a dream they believe and are daring to do, to help those who are unable to help themselves. They need your support to help them do what seems like an impossible mission. I am confident that you will rise to the challenges before you as we move forward into 2003."

Dr. Yamane recommended that the 2003 grant money be used for educational purposes and outlined specific materials including:

1. the creation and use of CDs/videotapes to help convey a greater understanding of

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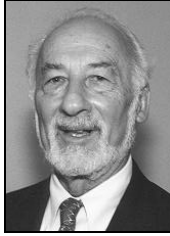
We're on for San Diego in June

Both organizations have voted affirmatively on the proposal, so it's a go. The next V/I Annual Meeting will be taking place in San Diego this June to coincide with the American Optometric Association's Annual Meeting.

Details still have to be worked out, but please mark your calendar now and watch for further details in early spring. With this significant meeting change, we anticipate making major strides in advancing awareness of our efforts and generating wider participation in VOSH. At the same time, the change will reduce travel costs for those planning to attend both important events.

From the President's desk ...

The VOSH/International annual meeting in Vancouver, B.C. was an energizing and inspiring event for all of us who participated. Indeed, a record number of VOSHers turned out for the two-day event, offering their insight, expertise and perspective in advancing a very full agenda. Thank you to all who attended and to VOSH/BC (Third World Eye Care Society - TWECS) for a splendid job hosting the event.



On behalf of the Executive Board I also want to thank Vistakon, a Division of Johnson and Johnson and Dr Stanley Yamane, OD, Vice-President of Professional Affairs, for their second generous donation of \$20,000.

In addition to serving as keynote speaker, Stan participated in all of our proceedings, shared his personal thoughts on our future development, provided emergency acoustical equipment for other speakers and hosted a rooftop dinner for the Executive Board. To further underscore his commitment to our cause, Stan recently became a dues-paying member of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL himself.

Some of the decisions made in Vancouver will have historical significance. One exciting outcome is to co-meet annually with the AOA in June. This arrangement will enable us to gain visibility and reduce travel costs for individuals who attend both meetings.

Proudly, the board of directors approved five new chapters, bringing us to a total of thirty-two. Increasing Chapters and expanding into new continents is in keeping with our pledge to the World Health Organization's program known as VISION 2020-The Right to Sight. The goal is to eliminate preventable blindness by the year 2020. Last year VOSHers treated over 140,000 patients. Our projections for next year are even greater.

We are moving towards globalized eye-

care, open to affiliations with other leading non-governmental organizations. In July 2002 VOSH-VA coordinated a domestic mission in TN with Helen Keller Worldwide (HKW). More missions with HKW are planned. We also became an affiliate of the World Council of Optometry (WCO) whose purpose is to improve the quality of optometric education in underdeveloped nations.

Presently, we are collaborating with the WCO on several issues. Thank you Scott Brisbin, OD, Immediate Past-President of the WCO for the inspiring lecture as well as your participation and input throughout the weekend.



Scott Brisbin, OD, Immediate Past President, World Council of Optometry and Sergio Torres Calderon of Helen Keller Worldwide, at the V/I annual meeting.

In a resolution, we approved VOSH as a non-sectarian and non political organization. This will provide us greater opportunity for fundraising and align us with mainstream organizations such as Doctors without Borders.

We took action so that VOSH membership will no longer be fragmented. All VOSH members will now be members of V/I. Presently there are members of INTERNATIONAL who may or may not belong to a Chapter. That will remain the same. The change is with Chapter members. They will automatically become INTERNATIONAL members and they have an option of donating \$10 annually to the parent organization. This change will require due process.

A movement to create a fellowship of VOSH/International (FVI) was approved by annual meeting attendees. Stuart Frank, past vice president of V/I,



advisor and president of VOSH/Northwest authored the proposal. He and his committee will now develop a program to certify Fellows who can represent us in the public health and educational arena.

Finally, a new volunteer post was created to benefit chapters. John Gehrig, Esq and president of VOSH-FI will serve as our legal counsel. John is also a vice-president of V/I. He will be available to answer legal questions regarding VOSH, our constitution and our by-laws.

Also, V/I has implemented a reliable line of communication with faculty advisors and our 17 student chapters (SVOSH). By donating \$100 annually to each student Chapter, we are indicating our support of their efforts, acknowledging their vital role in the future growth of VOSH and receiving prompt reports of missions for our database.

Our website has become indispensable, providing an extensive source of information. We critique it and update it frequently. The site provides mission dates, chapter photos, a message board, membership applications, contribution forms, scientific papers, newsletters, the results of an identity survey and more. Most recently we've added a DISCUSSION PAGE and a topic of the month.

Our biannual newsletters continues to be upgraded and distributed to our membership, to schools of optometry and at professional meetings. Newsletters can also be downloaded on our website.

We look forward to the challenges of 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry I Zeltzer, OD, FAAO

Dr. Yamane

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VOSH, thereby encouraging new people to get involved.

2. the creation of CDs/videotapes to help VOSH volunteers learn how to communicate with patients in their own language

3. the creation of a CD/videotape to help prepare a person for his/her first mission.

Dr. Yamane also urged the group to set organizational goals including:

1. the establishment of active chapters in every state of the US., and in every US/Canadian Optometry School

2. More missions in the US and Canada

3. Establishment of more International Chapters so that the organization is truly an International organization.

4. Establishment of a stronger public relations program to share with others the outstanding work that V/I is doing to help those less fortunate.

Recognizing the need for additional major fundraising, Dr. Yamane urged members to seek other corporate grants and consider establishing contribution levels. He also encouraged the V/I Board to seek out estate planning contributions from within its own membership.

Bundled drugs for missions available at www.map.org

During his remarks, Stan Yamane made note of another potentially helpful resource with which Johnston & Johnson is collaborating financially: MAP International, a non-profit organization which gathers drugs and bundles them. Johnson & Johnson Medical Mission Packs and Over-the Counter Mission Packs are available through MAP International. Teams pay solely for shipping. For further information, see their website: www.map.org. Program Director is Veronica Arroyave, MPH Brunswick, Georgia, 31522. 1-800-225-8550



ABOVE LEFT: At the Vancouver Annual Meeting, breakout/workshop sessions were held, enabling participants to share their views on issues before being presented to the full group. ABOVE RIGHT: J.P. Lowery, OD, Chief of Pediatrics for Pacific University Clinics, was one of the guest speakers in Vancouver. Currently working on research related to humanitarian eyecare, J.P. shared results of research projects carried out by Pacific University College of Optometry in Mexico. One study compared entering vs. exiting acuities of a humanitarian eyecare mission. The other concerned the accuracy of autorefracton vs. retinopathy for children's eyecare. While everyone recognizes that humanitarian eyecare is helpful, little formal research has been done to date. For this reason, last year VOSH/INTERNATIONAL made a modest donation to support these research projects. V/I encourages others to analyze their data. For details of JP's studies, contact loweryj@pacific.edu

The WCO's fellowship program

In Vancouver, Scott Brisbin, OD, FAAO, Immediate Past President of the World Council of Optometry presented an enlightening and inspiring discussion of the political, educational and humanitarian mandates of the WCO, Optometry's international body.

In his remarks, Dr. Brisbin discussed the potential for a strategic partnership with V/I through the WCO's Fellowship pro-

gram which he feels could strengthen and expand the impact of current third-world eyecare.

WCO Fellows are provided a stipend to spend an extended time in the field specifically for training and educating locals. Dr. Brisbin sees V/I as a source for identifying prospective Fellows from its membership. For further information, contact Sbrisbin@compusmart.ab.ca

Welcome to five new Chapters

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL continues to grow. Five new VOSH chapters were confirmed at the V/I meeting in Vancouver, BC, bringing the total number of VOSH Chapters to 32.

The "International" aspect of our organization took on added meaning with these changes since three of the newly-formed Chapters are in foreign countries.

Within the United States, we welcome VOSH-Virginia, and VOSH-Arizona. Our new Chapters abroad are VOSH-India (New Delhi), VOSH-Varanasi, and VOSH-Africa (Tanzania).

Increasing Chapters and expanding

into new continents is in keeping with our pledge to the World Health Organization's program known as VISION 2020-The Right to Sight. The goal is to eliminate preventable blindness by the year 2020.

Since refractive errors are recognized as one of the leading causes of preventable blindness VOSH will be reaching more of the world's 180 million visually disabled.

The intention of our organization has always been to be world-wide in scope. However, until recently most of our Chapters have been in the United States. We welcome all of our new members and look forward to continuing to grow glob-

Jorge Won, OD, starts Chapter, serves in Peru

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mit me to join any student missions. After graduation I put all thoughts of volunteering on hold since by then I was consumed by only two priorities, raising our young family and building the practice I'd started in New York City.

By the late '90s, with our sons nearly grown and our practice running on "autocontrol," my urge to give back resurfaced. I joined VOSH-PA in a mission to Guatemala in 1999. It was quite an eye-opening and humbling experience that brought back pleasant memories of volunteering as a youth. I was hooked.

Everything came full-circle last year when we decided to start a new chapter so that New York would have representation within VOSH. IN its inaugural mis-

Michigan's H.O.P.E. eyeglass program breaks new ground

The Humanitarian Optical Prescription Endeavor (H.O.P.E.), under the direction of Sally Spry at the Ionia, Michigan Correctional Facility, has been supplying the majority of used glasses for trips sponsored by VOSH-MI.

Recently, for the first time, several inmates in the program qualified to take a portion of the National Board Exam for Opticianry. VOSH trips and Board members sponsored these individuals. Several of them passed and are now eligible to take the next part of the examination. Along with helping people in other countries, VOSH is enabling individuals in our own back yards find new ways to lead productive lives.

H.O.P.E. officially got underway in January, 1996. It is a cooperative effort including the Michigan Department of Corrections, the Deerfield Correctional facility, Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, VOSH, Ferris State University, Opticians, Optometrists and Ophthalmologists to provide eye care and eyeglasses to underprivileged nations and people, along with practical training in the field of optical dispensing.

sion, VOSH-NY sent a team of 18 to a neglected part of southern Peru in July, 2002. We examined nearly 1,300 patients. The ophthalmologist who served on our team performed 15 cataract surgeries. Serving in Peru, land of my birth, seemed the natural and right thing to do.

My wife and I had decided that that VOSH would be a family experience and so our two teenage sons worked alongside us in Peru. It is our belief that exposing them to what all VOSHers see and feel in each trip will make them appreciate how fortunate we are as Americans. I trust it will make them better men and citizens.

What makes VOSHers tick? I'd like to share one anecdote, similar to so



Jorge Won, OD, with two post-op cataract patients. The woman in the center sobbed when she saw her daughter-in-law (behind her) for the first time ever.

VOSH on the domestic front

Along with its efforts abroad, VOSH is currently involved in several projects here in the United States. VOSH chapters providing eyecare for domestic projects include VOSH-IL, VOSH-VA, VOSH-Northwest, VOSH-AL and VOSH-Oregon.

Perhaps the most active group is VOSH-IL, which conducts five separate domestic missions annually. One team, headed by Ron Weingart, OD, of Montgomery, travels to St. Paul's Catholic Church in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood where they see about 100 patients who will receive free exams and glasses.



many other VOSHers have undoubtedly experienced on other trips. An elderly lady who'd just had her first eye exam ever, was legally blind due to bilateral hyper mature cataracts, the ones you never see in the US.

Our ophthalmologist extracted the cataract and implanted an IOL in one eye. I did the post-op exam the next morning and when I removed her patch, she cried. She thanked us and turned around to face her daughter-in-law for a few seconds and in between sobs exclaimed, "Juana, esposa de mi hijo...tu si eres bonita!" ("Juana, wife of my son ... you really are beautiful!").

We will be returning to Peru in August, 2003, when the ophthalmologist on our team will take care of her other eye and we'll see approximately 2,000 more patients.

And, VOSH-NY is growing. Another team, under the leadership of Ed Cordes, OD, will be conducting an eye care mission in the Dominican Republic in

Patients have all been previously screened through Programa Cielo, a bilingual outreach program of St. Anthony's Hospital that provides health education and assistance in finding health care and social services. Cielo primarily helps newly-arrived immigrants who don't have insurance, allowing them to receive services that some in the US might take for granted.

If they are able, the patients seen through Programa Cielo make a small donation to offset the cost of glasses. Eyewear companies donate frames and a local optician provides the lab work at no charge. Patients pick up their glasses about a month later.

VOSHers serve a second time in Samoa

By Richard Ryan, OD and Kathy DeRosier,
As in all VOSH trips, each of our 25 team members paid their own way to serve for a second time in Samoa. Lodging and food was provided by our hosts during the days of the clinic, as was transportation to and from work sites.

We saw close to 3,000 patients over 5 days in two locations: Salialoga, Savaii, (their big island, primarily agricultural) and Apia Upolu (the capital city).

To serve a population of roughly 200,000, Samoa has one resident ophthalmologist, one six-month college trained, certified "optometrist" (more equivalent to a licensed dispensing optician who does refracting) and one optician.

The most memorable patient we saw was a young woman who worked as a newspaper reporter. She had been "blind" since birth, but had never had an eye examination. It turned out she was -16.00, but even with deprivational amblyopia, we were able to achieve 20/200 with glasses.

While still legally blind, she was far more able to see shapes of objects and colors after being treated at the clinic. Needless to say, the woman was ecstatic, as were we. Her eyes filled when she mentioned being able to make out the bright colors on her mother's dress. (Her mom serves as her guide.)

On both islands, a large number of patients with old agricultural type eye



LEFT: Waiting in the shade for an eye examination. ABOVE: A Samoan shows off his new glasses.

injuries were diagnosed, as were a large number of UV-related eye pathologies. Although there is a high incidence of diabetes in Western Samoa (as in most South Pacific Island populations), the incidence of retinopathy was very low, lending credence to the idea that diets rich in antioxidants and fish, may be protective for the retina.

Christianity is a way of life here. Each night at 6:30 PM a curfew is imposed in several of the villages. When the gong sounds, all go inside for evening prayer. When the gong sounds again, at around 7 PM, people are free to continue their activities. Sundays are for church and "umu" feasts, named for the clay ovens in which the cooking is done. Note that there is no

Our trip coincided with the fourth of July. The American Consulate invited our team to a celebration. To our surprise, we found we were the guests of honor and we were soon joined by native islanders as well as diplomatic representatives of a number of countries including New Zealand and Australia.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Western Samoa made a moving speech about the special qualities of the citizens of the United States. His words, along with remarks of the New Zealand Consular Representative seemed to be a heartfelt attempt to say to the US citizens in attendance that, in spite of the tendency for foreign nationals to look at the US as an overbearing parent, that individual efforts such as VOSH show in a microcosm the bigger picture of what the US is all about.

Your V/I memberships and donations

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

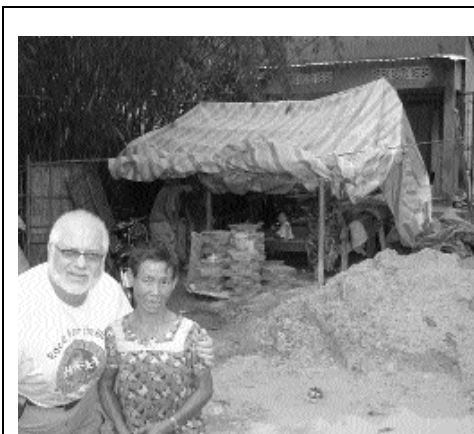
In changes approved in Vancouver, all members of VOSH Chapters are now automatically members of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL. A voluntary suggested donation of \$10 per person is recommended from each Chapter.

Individual VOSH/INTERNATIONAL dues are \$30 per year. Chapter dues are \$100 per year.

We appreciate all donations big or small, as because it is through them that we are able to advance our projects to provide eyecare to the needy worldwide.

Please send dues or contributions to: VOSH/INTERNATIONAL, c/o Charles Covington, Sec/Treasurer, 102 Oak View Circle, Lake Mary, FL 32746.

If you are considering V/I in your estate planning, please contact John Gehrig, Esq., orlandoeye@earthlink.net



GOODMORNING VIETNAM:
VOSH-Indiana, recently completed a successful mission to Vietnam. In addition to providing much-needed eyecare to the people of that beautiful country, each member of the group donated \$100 to help build two homes. Says team leader Jeff Marshall, OD, "The smile on the face of this recipient says it all!"

VOSH-Alabama serves in Costa Rica

By Patti Fuhr, OD, PhD, Leon McLin, OD

Seventeen VOSH members from as far away as Canada signed on to assist with VOSH-Alabama's eye care clinic in Playas del Coco. Hosts were the Club de Leones de Playas del Coco.

Uncorrected refractive error has been recognized as a leading cause of blindness in underdeveloped nations. Eye exams were performed for 767 patients with visual disabilities, the majority of whom could be helped with simple glasses. Ocular disease was also evaluated and referred when indicated. Low vision aids were provided and minimal sight-guide and orientation and mobility education was provided for low vision and blind patients. White canes were donated to a clinic in San Jose.

Eyecare was provided for all ages. Children and individuals with particularly high or unusual prescriptions can-

not be served adequately with recycled glasses so team members donated or



Team member Eli Pel, OD, examines an aphakic patient who later received glasses to restore vision.

found donations to pay a local optician to cut and finish lenses for the new, donated frames the team brought with them.

One special prescription was for a pair of +12.00 bifocal glasses for an 82-year old woman who'd had cataract surgery many years ago, but did not receive ocular implants. The woman came in

without glasses, with hand motion vision. Given a pair of high plus glasses close to her prescription, the woman's smile was breathtaking as she exclaimed, "Que lindo!" This was the first time she had seen clearly in over 10 years. Her vision will be even better with the brand new pair of glasses to be made especially for her.

The impossible made possible with Acuvue donation

by Robert Foote, OD

VISTAKON's major financial contributions to V/I aren't its sole commitment to VOSH efforts. Take the case of VOSH/MI and Nelson Moises Lolindres of Honduras.

Nelson Moises Lolindres was first seen by a VOSH/MI team during our 2001 eye mission to Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Six years old at the time, the child was diagnosed with Marfan's Syndrome. Surgery to correct his distorted vision from the dislocation of his crystalline lenses was not possible.

One of our team members, Dr. Mark Cook, OD, had brought along some Acuvue diagnostic lenses for someone with very high myopia. Nelson's Rx was found to be -16.00 for each eye, with resulting visual acuity of 20/40 for each eye. With the insertion of -11.00 one-day

Acuvue lenses, we saw an amazing transformation. Nelson went from hanging on to his mother's dress to playing with the other children at the clinic site.

We taught Nelson's mother insertion and removal techniques, as well as how to use the solutions.

Upon returning home, I contacted my Vistakon rep who provided us with a year's supply of One Day Acuvue diagnostic 8.5-12.00 lenses.

A Lion's member in Tegucigalpa takes them to the local eye professional. She sees the child approximately every 2-3 months and gives Nelson additional lenses. Nelson uses each pair for two days, disinfecting with Renu.

The VOSH/MI team checked Nelson again in 2002 when they held a clinic in La Esperanza, site of VOSH/MI's perma-

Project in Poland

VOSH-Ohio packed up 7,200 pairs of glasses, six suitcases of children's clothes and school supplies and headed for Kwidzen, Poland in early June. The 21-person team under the leadership of Barbara Plaugher, OD, saw approximately 4,000 patients in Kwidzyn, Racowiec, Garodeja and Ryewo during the 5-day clinic. Patients from Prabuty were bussed to Rakowiec.

A local Polish eye doctor joined the group and assisted with healthy eye checks later in the clinic week. Remaining eyeglasses not prescribed were left with her for distribution in other very poor areas of northern Poland. Used clothing and other supplies were distributed to an orphanage and school for the handicapped in Kwidzyn.



nent eyecare clinic. We were pleased to see that Nelson was successfully using the contacts and eyeglasses we had sent him. He uses the eyeglasses in school over his contacts to completely correct his myopia. We also made him a pair of spectacles to use when his contact lenses are out.

We will check on Nelson again when we hold another clinic in Honduras in early 2003.