



John Gehrig, Esq.: Always Ready to Meet a New Challenge



For the past five years, Attorney John Gehrig has served as general counsel to the board of VOSH/International. It's a quiet role, but an increasingly important one as there are more frequent questions regarding liaisons with other NGOs and other legal concerns requiring close scrutiny.

John graduated from Harvard University in 1958, University of Michigan Law School in 1963, and then practiced law in Cincinnati for 19 years before moving to Florida. Arriving in Florida, he took a Master's in International Law at the University of Miami and then went to work for Orange County, Florida, where he became County Attorney. John retired from public life in 1999, although he still maintains a small private practice in the fields of probate and real estate law.

John became involved with VOSH by happy coincidence in 1994 when he went on a church medical mission trip to Honduras, working specifically in the optometric clinic. When he returned to the States, John read an article in the Lions Clubs International magazine about VOSH. He subsequently wrote a letter of inquiry to then President, Phil Hottel, OD. Phil's immediate answer was to "come on board." Therefore, John has been an active VOSH'er ever since Phil's invitation.

John's first VOSH trip was with VOSH-Ohio to Ukraine in 1995, along with fellow Floridian, Charlie Covington. Upon their return, John and Charlie started VOSH/Florida. John served as President of VOSH/Florida for nine years and is still a very active member. He

Continued on page 9 ...

Letter from Larry Hookway, O.D.

President of VOSH/International

VOSH/International is continually striving to make life easier for the VOSH Chapters. In recent months we have added some new chapter opportunities.

- Does your chapter have people that might be interested in adding more missions but the planning of the mission is the stumbling block? VOSH/International now has some easy ways to add mission trips.

- Nicaragua: Sergio Romero is now an employee of VOSH International and he is the mission coordinator in Nicaragua. If you are planning a trip to Nicaragua or want to add another mission you can contact Sergio and he will set up the clinic sites and make the hotel, meal and busing arrangements for the group. He will also help make sure your paperwork is in order for customs and for the Minister of Health.

- El Salvador: FUDEM has opportunities for small groups. If you contact FUDEM and arrange for a date for your mission, they will make all the arrangements and you will be included in one of their outreach missions. They manufacture new spectacles for their patients so the group does not have to bring in recycled glasses. (See page 3-4.)

Other major projects:

The VOSH/International Nicaragua committee is working hard to set up a permanent clinic in Matagalpa, Nicaragua. Matagalpa is the second largest city in Nicaragua and is very poor. We will be using funds from a Walman Optical grant to equip a permanent clinic site in the near future. We are currently working with the Minister of Health and the Lion's clubs in Nicaragua to determine the best place to establish the clinic.

Technology Transfer Program (TTP): VOSH International is collecting used ophthalmic equipment that can be used by optometry schools or eye clinics in developing countries.

The VOSH/International Board has spent a lot of time discussing and learning about the World Health Organization's Vision 2020 Initiative. The goal of this initiative is to eliminate preventable blindness by the year 2020. Uncorrected refractive error is the second leading cause of preventable blindness, second only to cataracts. Some of the board will be attending the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina in August. It is a testimony to the dedication of the board members, since they are paying their own expenses to attend this very important meeting. This meeting is held once every 4 years and is the major meeting for people involved in the Vision 2020 Right to Sight Initiative. The VOSH International board has also been evaluating ways that we can work with organizations like Optometry Giving Sight and the Lion's clubs. We hope to have both of those groups helping us in our efforts in Nicaragua. We are also making an effort to network with providers of cataract surgery like the IEF (International Eye Foundation). If things go as planned, we will have a sustainable vision care system in place that will provide continuous vision care to the Nicaraguan people in and around Matagalpa. I think you can agree with me when I say "It has never been more exciting to be involved with VOSH."



Save the Date!

October 26, 2007

VOSH/International Annual Meeting Anaheim, CA

See page 5 for details.

SUNDAY

26
VOSH/International
Annual Meeting
in Anaheim



Pisco/Chinca Mission to Peru

By Nelson Rivera, OD

This Pisco/Chincha mission was very special. It was a true solidarity effort in which we had the participation of several groups in two separate locations that had been struck by the strong earthquake in August 2007. Even in February 2008, six months after the earthquake, this whole area is far from recovery. We still saw rubble covering full city blocks. Many people are still living in tents and makeshift temporary homes. Even the main church in downtown Pisco can be seen with only its bell towers standing, as the main structure collapsed during the quake killing dozens of worshippers instantly.

This mission effort was coordinated by Nelson Rivera, O.D. (VOSH Int'l Director and Latin American Liaison), and Guillermo Carrillo, B. Optom. (Director for the NGO Mirada Peru and Latin American Liaison for Optometry Giving Sight). Planning got underway in September 2007. We were able to recruit members from three schools of Optometry in Lima (ISTPOO, Villareal and Eurohispano); as well as ten third-year optometry students and five assistants from Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago. Guillermo started coordinating locally while I started coordinating in the USA.

Mark Sachs from PRVAIL kindly mailed 900 readers and 100 sunglasses. Bob Merriam from VOSH/Kentucky mailed some small frames and a few eyeglasses. Max Bruss from VOSH/Florida assisted with some large duffels to carry the eyeglasses as well as some VOSH memorabilia for the participants. Cooper Vision Latin America sent a monetary donation toward the effort to defray some of the expenses. This was most helpful for items such as advertising, paper, lenses for patients, some lunches and water for the attendees. Maria Julia de Asmat from the Clinica Divino Nino Jesus assisted us with transportation; and her assistant, Alberto Lazo, stayed with us all three days in Pisco. He also kept a list of patients who needed further care ophthalmological care in their clinic. Nicolas Carranza from the Lions Club in Pisco offered the work site for the mission. We had to purchase and install a large tarp there because the former Lions Club hall was destroyed by the earthquake. This was in the middle of summer, so the weather was very hot. The priest from El Carmen district in Chincha also offered his assistance in coordinating the missions both at the parish hall in El Carmen as well as the one in the small agricultural village of Hoja Redonda.

On February 20, we took the four hour bus ride south from Lima to Pisco. On the twenty-first, Eurohispano, ICO, and half of

the Villareal students worked in Pisco, while ISTPOO and the other half of Villareal students worked in Chincha with Guillermo, assisted by Gladys Gonzalez from the Lions Club in Lima. February 22 and 23, I worked in El Carmen and Hoja Redonda along with ISTPOO, Guillermo, and a couple of ICO students. In the meantime, Hui Song Choi, O.D. superbly managed the Pisco site the last two days.

Ultimately a total of 2020 patients were seen. Many patients would line up as early as 2 a.m. in order to be seen. Unfortunately, there were still some who we were not able to examine.

Many eyeglasses, sunglasses, and readers were dispensed free of charge. Several patients were referred for further ophthalmological treatment, especially of pterygia, cataracts, and glaucoma. Divino Nino Jesus will see the Pisco patients. Gladys Gonzalez from the Lions-Lima will arrange for Chincha area patients be seen at National Ophthalmology Institute.

There were a few prescriptions (63 to be exact) at our sites that were not available, so those patients were fitted with frames. The lens blanks will be purchased with the Cooper Vision gift, and local students will fabricate the eyeglasses.

Any inventory that was not used was left so the local groups can return to Chincha in another two to three months and help more people.

We are most thankful to our Peruvian brothers for hosting us in their beautiful country ... it was a great experience for all of us. The ICO Optometry students had the opportunity of working alongside the local Peruvian optometrists and also learning about the scope of our profession doing humanitarian work. This is something they do not get during their regular schooling, so I am very grateful they had this enlightening opportunity.

Additional thanks go to Cynthia Cruz and Maria Elena Diaz, our official English/Spanish translators; and to William Tanner, MD for his ophthalmology expertise. Very special thanks to Juan Carlos Aragon and Belinda Elizondo from Cooper Vision Latin America for their contribution, and for Harold Babine and John Gehrig from VOSH/Florida for assisting with all the necessary paperwork.

As the Spanish saying says: "En la union esta la fuerza," so let us all continue joining our efforts together so we can better assist our people in Latin America.



Jami Parsons, third-year student at Illinois College of Optometry examines a child.



Church in main square of Pisco. It collapsed during the earthquake, leaving only the bell towers.

VOSH/Florida Supports Optometry in Peru

By Max Bruss

We provided readers, frames and, suns to Jim Miyagawa of the Kalamazoo Rotary. Their group is going to Peru in July and will work with our friend Severo Sanchez. We also shipped 20,000 plus frames, readers and filters to Maria Julia through Prosoi in Peru this past week.

Our President, Paul Anderson, O.D. is cleaning and adjusting the second group of six 2.5 volt ophthalmoscopes and handles to go to Universidad Nacional Federico Villarreal, a five-year optometry school in Peru. We plan on future donations of phoropters, slit lamps, keratometers, countertop chargers, more ophthalmoscopes and Copeland retinoscopes. Severo Sanchez donated the first three Copelands and a charger from his previous donations.

Our recent donations and the \$2,000.00 budgeted for supplies and repairs will permit us to ship another shipment to Caritas for PDG Gladys Gonzalez and her program with the Lions of District H-4 and provide bulbs and batteries for the scopes at the two schools we are supplying in Lima.

VOSH/Northwest Examines, Equips and Teaches in Peru

By Paul Caletti, O.D. (VP VOSH/Northwest)

Two years ago Dr. Brian Rhee led our first VOSH mission to the Kausay Wasi clinic in Coya, Peru. At that time, the clinic was just getting started. We saw about 150 people a day and left a lot of our supplies for future missions. In 2006 the floors were still dirt and the roof only covered one half of the building.

When I returned home, I convinced my old company, Spectrum Ophthalmics, to give me instruments to set up an exam lane in Coya. The Northwest Medical teams arranged shipment by barge to the clinic. The purpose of our 2008 VOSH mission was to set up the exam lane for future missions. We had a projector, phoropters, slit lamp, hand instruments, BIO, and tonometer.

It just so happened that a young man from Coya, whose father works as a maintenance man for Kausay Wasi Clinic, was accepted to Optometry School in Lima. His name is Jimmy Mora Ramos. When we arrived at the clinic, Jimmy was using a trial lens set to obtain his prescriptions. Dr. Lis Faulstich and Dr. Ed Worthen then worked with Jimmy teaching him how to do retinoscopy and tonometry, use the slit lamp, use the refractor, how to take "K" readings, and general optometry.

We only had a small team of seven people: Dr. Faulstich, Dr. Worthen, opticians Linda Heath and Constance Worthen, non-optical professionals Gene Frogge and Carolyn Mohrlock, and me. However, we were able

Team Sight and Bite Returns to El Salvador

By Jenifer Ambler, OD, VOSH/ONE

Drs. Ed Warren, Jane Pentheny, and I are optometrists who have been serving in El Salvador for a number of years. In early November, we once again held five days of clinic, examining over 80 patients daily in our two adopted towns of Apopa and Suchitoto.

Unlike many VOSH missions, these locations have a high amount of astigmatism, although we certainly dispensed a large number of readers.

Dr. Natalia Colome, the El Salvadoran Director of the country's recently-formed School of Optometry, worked with our team on her day off. We passed on to Dr. Colome our remaining children's glasses and medications which she delivered to Hospital Bloom, El Salvador's top children's hospital. Since the school is less than a half-hour away from our clinic site, Dr. Colome treated us to a tour of the campus. The first "real" class will begin in January, 2008, but the facility has

been operating on a small scale over the past year.

Exam units are in various states of assembly and the lab is already actively making glasses for children in their school screening program, using frames and blank lenses obtained from VOSH-Washington and other sources. Dr. Colome was thrilled to receive a supply of frames we brought on behalf of Dr. Bina Patel's VOSH students at the New England College of Optometry.

We are looking forward to continued collaborations with the school which clearly is an important first for Central America. It has the potential to advance the development of sustainable in-country eyecare programs to address the enormous need that exists throughout the region.

If you have uncut blank lenses to donate, please contact me at amblerj@sover.net.



to see over 400 patients, set up the lane, and instruct Jimmy. About thirty patients were referred to a group of ophthalmic surgeons from SEE who will visit the clinic later this year

The Kausay Wasi Health Clinic, www.kausaywasi.org, now has a pharmacy, dental clinic, gynecology clinic, minor surgery center, and an optical department. For more information, visit their Web site (www.kausaywasi.org) or give me a call at 206-914-3450.

VOSH in El Salvador

ASAPROSAR and FUEDEM are the two largest eye care NGO's in El Salvador. VOSH/ONE has been working alongside ASAPROSAR for several years. VOSH/California has helped in the establishment and support of FUEDEM. Both of these organizations have long extended open invitations to VOSH teams to assist in their rural campaigns. Last year, Dr. Bruce Moore took several of his students from New England College of Optometry to work with ASAPROSAR as part of a summer externship program. This winter, teams from Illinois and Iowa accepted these offers and have shared their experiences. Both collaborations resulted in successful, productive clinics. More detailed reports can be found on www.vosh.org.

Additional teams (small or large) are always welcomed by both organizations. Their Web sites are www.friendsofasaprosar.org and www.fudem.org. For more information on ASAPROSAR, feel free to e-mail Dr. Harry Zeltzer harryzeltzer@comcast.net or Natalie Venezia ncvenezia@mac.com. You may contact Dr. Greg Pearl drgregpearl@yahoo.com, Ricardo Granada rgranada@fudem.org, or Dr. Ruth McAndrews ruthsmca@msn.com for more information regarding coordination with FUEDEM.



School Director Dr. Natalia Colome shows off the examining room at the fledgling optometry school on the campus of the Universidad de El Salvador.

VOSH/Iowa Assists FUDEM on Rural Campaign

By Don Kingfield, O.D.

This was my first VOSH trip in seven years. This was also a family mission for me. My brother and his son, another niece and her mother were in our entourage. Besides Iowa, team members joined us from Missouri, Texas, Colorado, Maryland, Vancouver, and California.

FUDEM (Foundation for the Development of Women) was started 18 years ago and now has morphed into visual health provider for the poor of El Salvador. They have 150 employees; including optometrists, opticians, ophthalmologists, even a psychologist nun who counsels patients before surgery. They have a lens finishing lab and surgical suites. Instead of taking thousands of used eyeglasses to distribute to the poor, we are giving out readers to those who can benefit immediately and writing prescriptions for those whose needs are more complicated. We brought readers, sunglasses, and several hundred new frames that were donated by Sutherlin Optical in Kansas City, Missouri.

We begin with a tour of the capital city, San Salvador, and then head for our base hotel in the hills. From there we travelled every

day to a different village in areas of extreme poverty. FUDEM describes extreme poverty as 50% of the population living on \$1 or less per day, and it does get worse than that.

On the first day of clinic, 21 VOSH and 14 FUDEM volunteers drive in buses and pickups to city of Guaymango (pop. 20,000) where we see 525 patients, including a retinal detachment which has gone too far for repair. At 4 p.m. we pack everything and head back to the hotel for dinner and rest. I am tired and asleep by 8:30.

The next day we have a two hour drive to the village of Masahuat. Now I understand why we need to rise at 5:00 AM for desayuno (breakfast), so that we have traveling time. Two Peace Corps Volunteers help us with translating. One of them is living in an area so remote he has to walk 1.5 hrs just to get to a road.

Day 3 of clinic is our busiest day with 718 patients seen and lots of eye pathology to interest our students. In five days of clinic we examined 2430 patients. A couple weeks after we leave, those prescriptions that have been fabricated will be delivered. We are also as-



Dr. Don Kingfield and Kevin Kingfield listening to concerns of a patient.

sured that any patients needing surgical intervention will receive treatment at the FUDEM clinic in San Salvador.

On Saturday, we finally had the opportunity to tour the main FUDEM clinic in San Salvador. A fitting end to the week was a video they showed us of a little girl who wasn't achieving her goals in school and home until her visual world came to life. Our hope is that we can return and help more of the disadvantaged in this little country far away.

VOSH/Illinois Works with ASAPROSAR

By Natalie Venezia

In February, VOSH/Illinois participated in a vision campaign in Ahuachapan, El Salvador, working alongside ASAPROSAR. It was a resounding success in all respects.

The trip was arranged with the invaluable assistance of Eloise Clawson and Harry Zeltzer. Our group was comprised of 4 ODs, 4 students from Illinois College of Optometry, one optician and 10 lay persons. Once we arrived in El Salvador, we quickly realized that almost every detail was attended to by Dr. Jorge Luna and ASAPROSAR and the trip exceeded all our expectations.

The campaign was a true collaboration between ASAPROSAR, the office of the mayor of Ahuachapan, and VOSH. The mayor came by several times to see how everything was proceeding and he truly seemed to care for the people in the town. I understand Ahuachapan to be one of the poorest, if not the poorest, departments in El Salvador.

Our team treated approximately 1450 patients in 4 days, making about 140 referrals, and as typical in these VOSH trips, there were several "miracle" cases, warming our hearts. One of the most impressive aspects of our trip was that we were able to make referrals with confidence that follow up surgeries or consul-

tations would occur. ASAPROSAR has scheduled a group of ophthalmologists to come to Ahuachapan on April 12, 2008 to do cataract and other surgeries, so we are confident that the little six-year-old boy born with cataracts will be receive an operation on that date.

We made donations of medicine and readers to ASAPROSAR. Our visit to their clinic was most impressive. ASAPROSAR is truly making a difference in El Salvador. We are humbled to have been a small part of the vision of Dr. Guzman and Friends of ASAPROSAR.



Dr. James Vaught with patient.



Natalie Venezia with satisfied patient.



Dr. Hedrick examines a young girl.

VOSH/International Annual Meeting

Sunday, October 26, 2008

Would you like to *network* with other VOSH members?

Interested in *exchanging ideas* and listening to *guest speakers* on issues concerning *eye care* around the world?

Then plan on joining us at our annual conference in *Anaheim, California* following the AAO meeting scheduled October 22-25 in Anaheim.

Tentative Agenda

Saturday, October 25

Morning - FVI Examinations

6:00 - 8:00 pm - Casual drop-in pizza party

Sunday, October 26

8:00 am - Registration and breakfast

8:30 - noon - Meeting with special guest speakers

Noon - 2:00 pm - Lunch and networking

2:00 - 4:00 pm - Meeting with special guest speakers

4:00 - 6:00 pm - Cocktail reception and networking



Register for the VOSH Annual Conference at www.VOSH.org

The VOSH Conference registration fee is \$100, which includes special guest speakers discussing topics of interest, breakfast, lunch, and cocktail reception for networking with other VOSH members. Early-bird and student discounts are available with registration before Sept. 15.

Combine Family Fun with VOSH!

Bring your family for an extended weekend of fun at Disneyland, the hotel is located 1 1/2 blocks from the Disneyland Resort.

The Double Tree Guest Suites in Anaheim, California

2085 S. Harbor Blvd, Anaheim, California, USA, 92802

For reservations call: 1-800-222-8733 (TREE). Group Code: VOS

Direct number: 1-714-750-3000

Rate for Double Tree Guest Suites is \$ 139.00* Queen Suite single / double occupancy per night (\$20.00 per each additional person)

* Make sure you register early - this room rate is limited to .first-come-first-served.

Guestroom Accommodations

King rooms and Double Queen Suites feature the Sweet Dreams by Doubletree bed program—a plush-top mattress with triple sheeting, down comforter and jumbo pillows. To help you work in comfort, we've provided a work-friendly desk, ergonomic chair, two dual-line telephones with voicemail and desk level electrical and data port outlets with high-speed internet access. Each room also includes a microwave, refrigerator, coffee maker, iron and ironing board, hair dryer and 27" remote control television with premium channels.

Local Attractions

- Disneyland & Downtown Disney
1 1/2 blocks from hotel
- Knott's Berry Farm
- Fashion Island
- Laguna Beach and much, much more all in close proximity!

Disneyland

VOSH Conference Attendees can purchase tickets at a discounted rate.

VOSH Convention Attendee

Ticket Prices:

- \$62 for 1 day pass to Disneyland
- \$87 for 1 day pass to California Adventure and Disneyland
- \$45 for twilight hours - 4pm to Midnight at one park. Be sure to show you badge at the Disney Desk in the Lobby of the Double Tree Resort.

Phone: 714.383.7052 for the Disney Desk at the Double Tree.

VOSH / International 2008 Annual Conference Registration Form

To register, complete this form and send it along with your payment to:

VOSH/International
Charles Covington, Treasurer
111 Linda Lane
Lake Mary, FL 32746

Please make check payable to: VOSH/International

Questions? Contact Deborah Wright DeMaderios: deborah@wrightmedia.com

Title: Dr. Mr. Ms. Other: _____

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Accompanying Person's Name: _____

Chapter or Organization: _____

Position/Title: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Country: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____
(Include country code if outside United States)

E-mail: _____

Before Sept. 15 (\$95 per person): _____

After Sept. 15 (\$100 per person): _____

Student before Sept. 15 (\$80) _____

Student after Sept. 15 (\$90) _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Online registration and payment via Pay Pal are available at www.VOSH.org.
VOSH International is IRS 501 (c) (3) ID credentialed, Tax ID number is: 31-1093763



Dr. Jeff Forrey and Dr. Paul Caletti accept equipment donation from Pacific University.

Pacific University Equipment Donations Support VOSH

From P.U. Alumni News

After over forty years in practice, Jeffrey Forrey, OD '65, could sit back and enjoy the leisure activities he postponed because of his practice. Instead, his energies are focused on Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH/ International), where he serves as a Director.

Dr. Forrey and Dr. Paul Caletti, VP VOSH/Northwest, were recently at Pacific University to select from donated instruments, books, lab tools and other supplies for upcoming medical missions to Samoa and South America our alumni have made generous donations of these items over the years and those items have been put to good use in training our students and supporting activities from organizations such as VOSH and AMIGOS, the student affiliation of VOSH at Pacific University.

Remember to think of the college when you upgrade your tools and equipment. Please contact Ken Eakland (eaklandk@pacificu.edu) or Jeanne Oliver (Jeanne@pacificu.edu) for more information.

Ode To Otto *By Joni Arvidson*

If you have ever been a member or team participant of VOSH/Minnesota within the last twenty years, you are familiar with the "Main Guy" of all our foreign eye missions. The O.D.'s were overjoyed with the examination time being so reduced since "Otto" had joined the team. Before 1986 a VOSH Minnesota O.D. was able to examine 100 patients (at the most) in a ten hour day. Now it is common to examine up to 750 people in that same time period with "Otto" on the team.

Who is this wonder of wonders?

It is the faithful, ever-present Auto Refractor, a.k.a, "Otto." Oh, what stories he could tell! He was lost for a week coming home from Bosnia in Hercegovina after 9-11, slept each night with team members in El Salvador, and locked up at night in a store-room in India. There was the time he was left behind in Texas as the rest of the team continued on to Nicaragua. He was body-searched in Senegal; and getting to Peru this summer he was torn from his travel quarters, wrapped in a team member's jacket, and put in the overhead. What a career!

Equipment Needed for IMEC Shipment to Ukraine

International Medical Equipment Collaborative (IMEC) has been harvesting good, usable eye care equipment on behalf of VOSH since our affiliation last year. IMEC presents the suites available and International Relief Development (IRD) selected the VOSH suite for use in the Ukraine.

A few items are still needed to complete the suite: trial lens sets with adult and pediatric trial frames, 3 binocular vision testers, 3 slit lamps with tables.

If you have any of these items and would like to help expedite this shipment, please contact VOSH/International at www.vosh.org/technologytransferprogram126.html or email Dan DiBurro at ddbirro@imecamerica.org.

I-test Vision Screener

The new I-test Vision Screener is a quick, portable way to do a achieve a spherical refractive starting point. Lenses are +/-4.00 diopters in 0.50 diopter steps. A pinhole and occluder are on each side. By folding it in half, a range to +/- 8.00 D can be achieved. Distributed by Good-Lite (www.good-lite.com), cost is only \$150.00.

Dr. Wes Cooper experiments with I-test Vision Screener.



So long, dear friend, Otto. The routine will now be changed. We will no longer have to worry each time we get on a plane and wonder if our "Teammate" actually got on board too. We had pondered how much longer he could keep up the pace of the long days on a mission. Old age comes to the most faithful VOSH'er. We will miss you, Otto, but we know you will understand that someone younger with new ideas will try to fill your shoes.

Good Luck, "Otto." We won't forget you.



VOSH/International Awarded Grant from Esther B. Kahn Foundation

By Natalie Venezia

In March 2008, VOSH International was chosen as a recipient of a charitable donation in the sum of \$20,000 from the Esther B Kahn Foundation (www.estherbkahn.org).

VOSH was first introduced to the Foundation by Dr. Derrick Feifke, President of VOSH-ONE, through one of his patients, Mr. Richard Russo. Natalie Venezia (VOSH Board Administrator), Dr. Jeffrey Forrey (VOSH Board Director), and Dr. Feifke worked together to submit the grant.

The Foundation supports projects where its grant "will make a significant difference and where the desired result will be tangible, lasting, and accomplished within a reasonable period of time". The Foundation was intrigued by VOSH's efforts to establish sustainable clinics and optometry schools in Central America, to provide those clinics and schools with modern, operable optometric equipment, and to train and educate local people to provide the services to their community.

The funds will be used in conjunction with VOSH's Transfer Technology Program ("TTP") to purchase, collect and ship new or used optometric equipment, supplies and educational materials to needy countries to assist those countries in establishing sustainable optometric labs, clinics and schools. Additionally, the funds will assist TTP to help refurbish, clean and repair used equipment, when donated by VOSH members. Further the funds will be used to send VOSH volunteers to the clinics and schools to help train and educate.

This generous grant by the Esther B. Kahn Foundation will directly contribute to increase accessibility and sustainability of basic eye care, refractive, binocular and low vision services to needy people.

Last Minute Venue Change for SUNY Students



Five SUNY students had planned to go to Nicaragua in January with VOSH/Northeast. At the last minute, the Ministry of Health in Nicaragua unexpectedly declared that the students would not be able to participate in patient examinations. Consequently, a plea for alternatives came to VOSH/International. Communication to chapter and mission leaders lead to offers being extended. Within a short period of time, VOSH/Indiana was able to include all the students in their March trip to Honduras.

Under the leadership of Jeff Marshall, O.D. the team to Honduras then included 26 optometry students, 21 from Illinois College of Optometry. The students rotated through four stations during the work week. One day each was spent in screening, refraction, dispensing, and surgery. Thank you, Dr. Marshall, for making this opportunity available.

One Memorable Patient

By Rita Cherian, fourth-year NECO intern

We were conducting eye exams in the village of Maralyk, in the outskirts of Armenia. Patients were lining up in swarms with documentation and passport in hand. An elderly Armenian woman sat at my station. As I started taking her case history, the woman explained that she was blind from glaucoma and that she had been taking pilocarpine drops. She said her left eye was completely blind and she could see only figures and light with her right eye.

I proceeded with the exam and pulled out my retinoscopy rack and retinoscope. The woman began frantically gesturing that each lens I moved was better than the previous one and then she started crying. She was extremely emotional since she had lost all hope of seeing. Tears streamed down her cheeks and mine as well. Before I even put the trial frame on her face, she was kissing my hands and thanking me. After all was done, she was a -3.00 diopter myope. I couldn't hold back the tears. We both embraced. I still fill up whenever I recount this story that makes optometry such a worthwhile profession.

VOSH/Arizona Serves at Miguel Aleman, Sonora, Mexico

By Bob Helland

The Arizona chapter of VOSH/International has a rich history of humanitarian assistance in the northern Mexican state of Sonora. Since the group's formation in 2002, we have delivered free vision services to ten thousand needy people. We strive to provide each patient with the same quality of attention one would receive during a normal, stateside optometry visit. Typically our clinics offer visual acuity testing, ophthalmoscopy (eye health screening), auto refraction (computerized measurements for baseline data) and a full eye exam by a licensed professional (including manual refraction using a phoropter). In accordance with the results of this comprehensive evaluation, the patient is then best fitted with used prescription glasses and or reading glasses and sunglasses from an extensive collection provided by Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centers and other generous donors. We also generate medical referrals for those whose needs fall beyond the scope of our current capabilities. We regularly see an alarming number of serious eye pathologies during the course of our work. The most prevalent are pterygium and cataracts although the full list is much longer. These problems are most certainly environmentally related. Long exposure to intense sunlight and constant dust takes a devastating toll. Efforts are now underway to formulate some level of response to this tragic situation of preventable blindness.

For several years now, we have been joined by a contingent of optometry students from Holland. Affectionately known as "the Dutchies," these enthusiastic young professionals make an invaluable contribution to our program while gaining priceless experience



Two Dutch optometry students, Lois Hobelman (examining patient) and Jeroen Van Eekeren, were part of the VOSH/Arizona team in Mexico.

and a motivation toward service. Our partners include Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis and a host of other groups and individuals who contribute to our efforts. There is also increasing and substantial involvement by the government of Sonora who realizes the great magnitude of the problems and appreciates and supports us.

This year, we again worked with our friends from the "Petic" Rotary Club of Hermosillo. We set up our clinic in the rural community of Miguel Aleman, about 60 kilometers west of that capital city. The cite originated as a migrant labor camp for the surrounding orchards, vineyards and croplands, and swelled to its present population of some sixty thousand. It is hard to imagine a dustier place on this earth. We served upwards of three thousand patients in four working days, by far our biggest clinic to date.

The needs we seek to address through our work are somewhat basic. Nonetheless, the effects are often life changing for those we serve. (For complete report visit www.VOSH.org.)

Linda Pang (SCCO) examines patient in El Salvador with VOSH/Iowa and FUDEM.



Grateful Patient from Honduras Thanks VOSH/Michigan

Thanks to all of the volunteers of VOSH/International for all your help to our country, and especially to our poor community in La Esperanza, Intibuca. My family and I have always been blessed with your work. To OD Paul Kropf for all he has done with my daughter Sharon from the first visit of VOSH in Intibuca until today. We ask God every day to bless him and his family for his kindness and humanity. We also want to thank Dr. Dale Nester, his dear father and the entire crew for the dental work they provided to my family this year in La Esperanza, and we hope to see you here next year. Hopefully, next year we will see Dr. Paul and his wife, Judy, also Dr. Robert Foot and his wife and the entire optometric crew. We are very, very thankful. God bless you all.

From Alison, Sharon, Junior, Joshua, Wylie, David and Celicia.

Spanish Podcasts Available

From Christine Smith, O.D.

A terrific internist, Dr. Molly Martin, has done a couple of great podcasts that I helped (un poco) her develop on Spanish for eye care (jornadas or general use). She has already done some basic questions, vocabulary, and the red eye, with a couple more in the works. You can download for FREE at iTunes. Her website is www.medicalspanishpodcasts.com. The ones that are not for eyes are great for general vocabulary. By the way, it is so cool, if you download them and then tap on the center button of your iPod 3 times, you will see the text of the transcript!

A link is available on www.VOSH.org. Any state chapter or other eye care group is also welcome to add the link. Please share the information with others who are working in Spanish-speaking countries.

Apply Now for Fellow of VOSH/International

Examinations for the honor of Fellow of VOSH/International will be held on October 25, 2008. This opportunity is open to individuals with demonstrated knowledge, skills, and experiences to successfully meet the challenges of preventable blindness. Requirements, sample questions, and application material can be found on www.vosh.org.

The fellowship examinations will be held at Doubletree Guest Suites in Anaheim, CA. The honorees will be inducted at the VOSH/International annual meeting on Sunday, October 26.

The deadline for applications is August 1, 2008. For questions or further information, please contact committee chair, Dr. Ann Edmonds, at annedmonds@comcast.net.

Climb Mt. Kilimanjaro and Give the Gift of Sight

Join a scheduled, not-technical climb and safari in February or August (no ropes or climbing experience needed) or customize your own technical or non-technical experience. Learn more—including details on how your trip can be FREE—from the Climb for Sight link at www.voshpa.org or contact Pete Skala at 415-839-8566.

60 Minutes

VOSH/Virginia has been providing vision care in collaboration with Remote Area Medical (RAM) for several years. On Sunday March 2, CBS 60 Minutes featured a RAM clinic that had been held in Knoxville, TN.

VOSH/Virginia will again join RAM in Wise, VA July 25-27, 2008. For more information on assisting with this domestic project, contact Dr. Vicki Weiss, dvcclear@aol.com.

VOSH Valentines

Students at the University of Waterloo College of Optometry sold VOSH Valentines to raise funds for student missions. About 800 candy-grams were purchased and delivered during the week of Valentine's Day.

Where to Find Us

Stop and see us in the exhibit hall!

- American Optometric Association
Seattle, June 25-28. Booth 2311
- International Vision Expo West
Las Vegas, October 3-5
- American Academy of Optometry
Anaheim, October 22-24

www.VOSH.org

- Chapters, missions, leaders, photos, and reports
- Technology Transfer Guidelines
- Message Board
- Annual meeting agenda and registration
- Sources for equipment and supplies
- Documents and information resources
- Links to related organizations

Dale Cole, O.D. Kansas Optometrist of the Year

Dale Cole, O.D. (VOSH/Kansas) and former president of VOSH/International has been honored as the Kansas Optometrist of the Year. Although Dale retired from optometry, he is a professional photographer and remains active in VOSH. Congratulations, Dale!

John Gehrig, Esq.

continued from the cover.

served the V/I Board as a Vice-President under presidents, Harry Zeltzer, O.D. and Dale Cole, O.D. Since then he has assumed the duties of General Counsel.

Over the last 14 years John has participated in about twenty-five VOSH missions, mostly to Central and South America and Eastern Europe - dispensing his way through Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ukraine, Viet-Nam, and Cameroon. To improve his knowledge and skill, John even completed a course to become an optician.

For the last few years, John has been working with Dr. Patti Fuhr and her colleagues, trying to create some permanent clinics and sustainable eye care in Nicaragua. He averages three VOSH missions per year. These missions, plus the time he spends in his job as General Counsel for V/I take up most of his spare time. He is an active Rotarian, an elder in his family (Presbyterian) church, and he is still doing a little law practice here and there. John and his wife Carla spend a good bit of time on the road here in the States visiting their children and grandchildren.

John has witnessed the awesome evolution of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL since he has been advising the Board. The modernization of the VOSH Constitution was a very significant step forward. Negotiating the recent "treaty" among VOSH, UNESCO and the Republic of Nicaragua was exciting. Even more challenging was the endless maze of bureaucracy entailed in establishing VOSH/INTERNATIONAL as a legal non-profit entity in Nicaragua. John is truly committed to advancing the cause of good vision as a basic human right. John's dedication, wit, and pragmatism are invaluable to VOSH and its mission to eliminate preventable blindness.

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

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL accomplishes this goal by serving as a coordinating body for affiliated chapters. It provides administrative support of chapter activities. It also provides promotional opportunities to encourage the formation of new chapters and recruitment of new members.

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is a non-sectarian and non-political organization. Currently there are 33 independent chapters and 24 university-affiliated chapters.

www.VOSH.org



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