



VISTAKON makes major VOSH donation

VISTAKON, a division of Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, Inc., provided a \$20,000 grant to VOSH/INTERNATIONAL at the beginning of this year. It is the largest donation ever received by our organization.

The grant was announced jointly by V/I vice-president, Dr. Ann Slocum-Edmonds, who serves as Corporate Liaison, together with Dr. Stanley Yamane, Vice President of the Americas Professional Affairs Division for VISTAKON.

We are all grateful to VISTAKON for its generous support and we encourage other major corporations to follow their lead.

Irma North, OD, is quite a remarkable "Lady"

by Zabelle D'Amico

No one knows just how Irma North, OD, got the nickname "Lady." According to her children, it's simply what they've always called her.



Indeed, the title is an apt one for this amazing woman whose life is punctuated as a pioneer in the women's movement, a pioneer in optometry and a pioneer VOSH'er.

Irma's dad Charles Hess was a prominent Chicago optometrist and jeweler in the early years of this century, so even as a youth she was fascinated by the field of optometry.

In high school, Irma recalls, she wrote a paper for a teacher in which she mentioned her decision to follow in her father's footsteps. The nun wrote boldly at the bottom of the page, "This profession is best left to men."

Fortunately Irma did not heed the woman's advice. She graduated from Northern Illinois

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The team of translators who served VOSH-IL in Vilnius, Lithuania were local medical students, many of whom spoke five languages.

Lithuanians support VOSHers with love and prayer on September 11

by Sandra Bury, OD

Thirty-four members of VOSH-IL arrived in Vilnius, Lithuania on September 8, 2001, three days before the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

Local medical students, many of whom spoke five different languages, served as translators. Theirs was an important skill, as patients spoke any one of several languages including Russian, Polish, German and Lithuanian.

Towards the end of the second day of clinic, many of the students' cell phones started to ring. (Most people have inexpensive cellular phones

because Lithuania lacks infrastructure.)

"I have terrible news from your country," said my translator. "Terrorists are bombing New York City and your Pentagon. Thousands of people have died."

Initially I thought it must have been a mistake, but I soon learned otherwise. As patients came through the clinic, they took our hands in theirs and offered condolences for our country. They were moved to tears. These were people who had endured Hitler, Stalin and decades of Soviet occupation. They were hardened to

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VOSH Annual Meeting in Vancouver

Vancouver, British Columbia will be the site for the 2002 VOSH/INTERNATIONAL Annual Meeting, to be held on October 25 and 26 at the Empire Landmark Hotel.

Guest speakers will include Dr. Scott Brisbon, President of the World Council of Optometry; Dr. Stanley Yamane, VP Americas Professional Affairs, VISTAKON; and V/I past-president Mike Listenberger, OD, of

VOSH-Michigan.

VISTAKON, a division of Johnson & Johnson Eye Care, is the major sponsor. VOSH-British Columbia (TWECS) will host the event. Hotel rates are just \$60 per day. Please mark your calendar now and plan to attend meetings and workshops. Hopefully, every chapter will send a delegate to vote on matters of importance. Contact Charlie Covington: ccovington@cfl.rr.com.

From the President's desk

I am pleased to report that VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is growing (three new Chapters are on the way) and that formerly inactive Chapters are regrouping and getting trips underway.

Still, due to the enormous need for eyecare in underdeveloped countries, VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is seeking to increase membership. Read the letters requesting aid on page 5a of this newsletter and visit the Message Board of our website, www.VOSH.org. You will quickly realize the inequity of supply and demand for our services. Requests for missions arrive daily. VOSH cannot attend to all of them.

I cannot overstate the importance of our website both within and beyond our organization. Aside from keeping us connected to one another, it is serving as an important data base for upcoming missions, people seeking optometrists/clinics, grants, eyeglass recycling centers and more. Check it out frequently: www.VOSH.org.

Your executive board continues to reach out and is in constant contact with Chapters. It is our pleasure to serve as coordinator for the growing number of Chapters and as a proud parent organization.

In other news, V/I recently signed a declaration with the WHO (World Health Organization) and the AOA (American Optometric Association) to help eradicate preventable blindness by the year 2020.

Achieving a goal of this magnitude for a non-governmental organization is a difficult task which requires cooperation with other signatories of VISION 2020. Therefore, I propose a closer, but independent relationship with the AOA which will lend its resources and help VOSH reach its fullest potential.

Harry I. Zeltzer, OD, FAAO
VOSH/INTERNATIONAL president



From our mailbox

Dear Dr. Zeltzer,

Let me introduce myself. I am Mark Wolmer, an OD from Danbury, CT. I think we spoke on the phone years ago.

Last month, I went with the Blondins {Matt Blondin, OD} to San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua. It was one of the BEST vacations of my middle-aged life. In four days, 5 ODs and many students saw 2,402 patients, treated some diseases, handed out 1,500 sunglasses, and met many locals.

I have been looking for something like this for years. In 1968-69, as a Senior at PCO, I went to Haiti... Then, I was in the service, got married, went into a partnership with my dad, bought him out, raised two daughters, purchased a nice cruising sailboat, and life was good.

Then, the e-mail came to all CT ODs asking for volunteers and I said, why not?

I am now scheduled to go to Peru with Jorge Won, OD in August and I am speaking wherever I can about VOSH and the Lions Club eyeglass program... I think we get jaded here in the USA thinking "What value are a pair of old eyeglasses?" We don't realize the disabling power of functional blindness.

I have had other ODs say they wouldn't go without an Ophthalmologist, as people get mad if we can't help them. I'd say, we helped 1,500 people and we saw probably 50 cases needing surgical intervention. I don't think many people were angry. My only concern is I have written to people I suppose in charge of trips on the trip list. I have gotten very few responses back. I don't understand that.

Mark Wolmer, eyedrmark@yahoo.com

Ed. Note: The VOSH board is making every effort to redirect all inquiries that reach us. Believe us, your participation is wanted and needed!

Dear Dr. Zeltzer,

...Your suggestion to locate my local VOSH president has brought about wonderful events.

I e-mailed Dr. Doug Totten (the Michigan-VOSH president) and he has helped me tremendously. He's put me in

contact with a lady who runs an eyeglass recycling program in a Michigan prison. They have offered to clean, fix, catalog and pack the 2,200 glasses I've collected thus far... At the next VOSH meeting they will mention the need for an optometrist for our July mission to Nigeria...

Thank you for responding to my initial email. Thank you also for posting my request on the VOSH message board. I am keeping my fingers crossed that an optometrist/ophthalmologist will want to accompany us.

Kathy Stegman, RN
kstegman@voyager.net

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Medical Director for Rotary Project Amigo here in Colima, Mexico. With the help of a visiting optometrist, we recently held a vision clinic for 914 people. Is there a VOSH Chapter interested in supplying manpower for future clinics?

Francy Rubin
tomtroyfrancy@yahoo.com

Dear Sir:

I was wondering if you have any information or contacts you could suggest for donating used optometry textbooks to optometry/optical programs in various parts of the world. I seem to have read somewhere that these organizations in third world countries could make use of them...

Dean T. Bryan, OD

Ed. Note: Contact WCO: Tony Di Stefano, wcotdistefano@pco.edu

We need your news

We welcome your features, photos and/or anecdotes regarding recent missions or other items of interest. Simply email us at eyeclam@aol.com or snail 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 cut-line information (who, what, where, when, how).

Also, if you have any suggestions for features or profiles, let us know.

“Lady” Irma North, OD

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College of Optometry in 1943, one of only three women in her class (the other two never practiced). It was not until the third quarter of this century that women became commonplace in Optometry.

As a female practitioner in the '40s, '50s and '60s, Irma had to overcome many biases. Undaunted, she started a solo practice in Chicago in 1946, and just four years later she restricted her practice to contact lenses. While contact lenses are everywhere today, at that time they were just being introduced as an alternative means of vision correction.

In 1977, Irma took part in her first VOSH trip, a mission to Haiti. It was such a special experience that Irma continued to take an annual VOSH trip during her remaining years of practice.

After retiring in 1992, Irma relocated to Bellingham, Washington, to be nearer her children. The hardest thing about retiring was leaving the vast network of people whom she'd known for so long, but her VOSH community and related travel have continued to give her tremen-

dous personal satisfaction.

Instead of limiting her VOSH efforts, Irma now participates in at least two to three VOSH trips a year. With VOSH teams she's traveled all over the globe - to Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, Poland, Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Bolivia, Guyana, Peru, Croatia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Mexico, Bosnia and Swaziland.

As her grandchildren have grown, Irma has included them. Granddaughter Cody travelled with her to Nogales when she was 12. Fourteen-year-old Kevan helped a team in Honduras. And, VOSHers or not, everyone around Irma, children and grandchildren alike, has learned to check corrections, clean and package glasses.

This year's plans include a VOSH trip to Vietnam. It will be an extra special time because Irma will be accompanied by one of her daughters and her family.

“I suppose my mother's interest in VOSH came out of her intense love of



Treating patients at a leprosarium in Borba, Brazil in the mid-'80s is one highlight of Dr. Irma North's many VOSH experiences.

people and her ability to offer both services and compassion,” says daughter Kenda. “She has a beautiful view from every window and great community where she lives, but VOSH has given her the opportunity to see the world from a unique point of view.

She could certainly afford to travel to the greater cities, stay in fancy hotels, visit famous museums, but she prefers the life of a ‘budget’ traveler, working with tremendous people in remote places.”

Writing about her travels with “Lady,” granddaughter Kevan noted, “When I was younger, I took it for granted that all grandmothers took off for weeks at a time to visit every corner of the world. Now that I am old enough to realize the rarity of such a miraculous grandmother, I relish the opportunity to share in her love for seeing the world in intimate settings.”



Toyota Agency serves as VOSH site in Thailand

VOSH-KA sent an optometric team of 4 to Singburi, Thailand in late January. With the assistance of Rotarian hosts, the team examined 1,000 patients in 3 days. Clinics were held in more than one site, but the most interesting one was in a Toyota Agency where the customer lounge provided a space for ophthalmoscopy, the showroom was used for refractions (it was rather bright), and the dispensary was set up outside, with glasses arranged on the tailgates of brand new Toyota pickups. The KA team was impressed with the generosity of the Thai Rotarians, especially the man who closed his Toyota dealership so VOSHers could examine over 300 people who will never be able to afford a car. ABOVE: Dr. Diana Carriger examines a patient with the aid of translator Isara Tang, a Rotary Club of Bangkok member.



A MIRACLE: Every clinic has its stories. This young Honduran was led into a VOSH-KA eye clinic by a friend. His eyes were closed. Sunlight bothered him, examiner Dale Cole, OD, was told. Retinoscopy revealed the young man to be very nearsighted. As more correction was placed before him, the more those eyes opened. Finally, at -14.00 his eyes were wide open and he really began to look around. After he was fitted to lenses, the dispensary staff watched as the young man just stared in disbelief at being able to see his friends in the courtyard playing. He told them he'd been kicked out of school because they thought he was dumb. Now he could go back to school and learn to read.

VOSH's role in strategies to reduce the global burden of blindness

by Janet Leasher, OD MPH
leashejl@pacificu.edu

Following are excerpts from a talk presented by Dr. Janet Leasher at the V/I Annual Meeting in Florida. For the complete text of her speech, see the V/I website, www.VOSH.org.

Dr. Leasher has received a \$600 grant from V/I for a study in Honduras that will quantify the visual acuity of the community before and after a mission.

The present magnitude of blindness and the major causes of blindness are staggering. Updated statistics now indicate that there are over 45 million blind, and almost 180 million people who can't walk around unaided in the world.

Furthermore, if decisive action is not taken, those figures will DOUBLE by the year 2020.

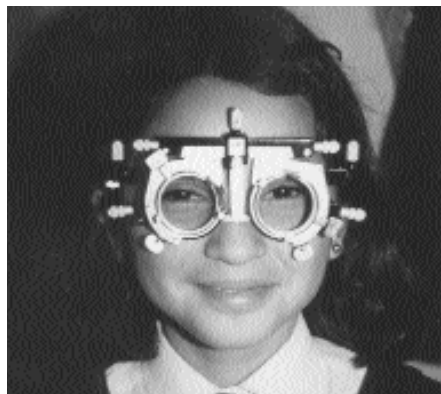
Causes of blindness

Eighty percent of the world's blind live in the developing world. The leading causes of blindness have been identified as follows: Cataract; Trachoma; Glaucoma; Onchocerciasis or River Blindness; other causes are diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, Hansen's disease (leprosy); childhood blindness, with measles and vitamin A deficiency being the leading causes; and, particularly of interest to VOSH, blindness due to uncorrected refractive error or low vision.

Although we've known this for years, only recently has its importance been recognized enough to create target strategies to eliminate the problem. And, it has only been within the last decade that we've had statistical tools to justify the global burden of disease. Therefore, not only the impact of blindness on people's personal lives, but the impact of their disability on society and the economy can be measured.

Such analysis allows us to speak more effectively and produce meaningful data when addressing the multiple determinants of blindness in the health arena.

This also means that it is more important than ever for those of us involved in missions to collect meaningful epidemiological



A young Chilean being examined

logical data about the populations we serve. In many countries where limited resources exist for blindness prevention programs, our profiles can be quite useful.

In the June, 2001 issue of OPTOMETRY, the AOA Journal, Dr. Wid Bleything and a student who went on one of our missions to Romania two years ago, compiled and analyzed data from that trip. Others are addressing the issue, including, OPHTHALMIC EPIDEMIOLOGY, The WHO (World Health Organization) and The World Council of Optometry (WCO).

The status of the world's blind will not get better unless we look beyond the box that we have created around VOSH. Ocular health of the impoverished people in the developing world will not get better unless we look at social justice, human rights and all the determinants of health.

Formal evaluation of VOSH role

This is a moment in time to ask ourselves who are we really? Where is our destiny pulling us?

We need to evaluate our program, as if we were a bilateral governmental funding organization such as USAID. How effective are we in accomplishing the goals of our mission? Do the recipients of our care really need it? Do they appreciate it? Do the recycled glasses that we give out really make a difference in their lives? How are we influencing their awareness of the importance of vision care? How well are we educating them as to prevention and protection of their vision? Are our messages culturally relevant?

And on a national scale, what are we doing to make a dent in the manpower shortage of eyecare providers or access to care in that country? Are we actually hurting the local doctors' efforts to regulate the practice of opticianry, optometry or ophthalmology in that country? You all can cite examples where we have made a difference; otherwise we wouldn't still be here today, but ... can we prove it in a scientific peer-refereed study? One that would be evidence based in nature and not just anecdotal?

Need to establish partnerships

I believe the time is right for VOSH to develop partnerships with other groups that are providing eye care. Whether or not we just coordinate our trips to the same country with other groups, like we've started to offer through the Upcoming Trips list in this newsletter, or we partner with the WHO to provide data for the various countries, or we get involved in the World Council of Optometry (WCO), I think we need to evolve in order to stay alive.

Since North American optometry is light years ahead of most developing countries, we have much to offer these countries in which we serve. If we collaborate with local doctors, with Ministries of Health in the countries where we work, if we link with optometry educational programs which already exist, if we offer to provide Continuing Ed to local doctors while we're there, if we provide them the data we collect through our missions, we will be taking a step forward.

Assistance with 501 (c) (3) forms

Several VOSH Chapters have already contacted William Ringelstein, a Florida accountant/document preparer, who spoke about non-profit designation at the V/I Annual Meeting in Florida last fall. He has also offered his services at a significantly reduced fee, making it feasible for Chapters who don't have funds for this expense. He can be reached at BILJEANR@sunline.net

Analysis of a clinic

VOSH-MI has compiled some interesting figures from its mission to St. Lucia in March, 2002, when a total of 742 patients were seen.

Among their findings: Of the total 479 patients over age 40, glaucoma referrals were 5.1%. Of the total population over 50, referrals for cataracts were 5.6%.

Trip leaders were David and Barbara Oosting. For their full report, e-mail them: doubleo@triton.net

Three new VOSH Chapters pending

Three new VOSH Chapters are in the works, another indication of growing interest in our organization.

Individuals in Delaware, Alabama and Arizona have all spoken to VOSH leaders about forming VOSH Chapters and are now actively working toward that end. The V/I Board has made available a packet of material to assist them as they put their organization together.

Presently VOSH-INTERNATIONAL has 27 Chapters. In addition there are 17 active student Chapters.

Each of the new Chapters must be confirmed at the Annual Meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, to take place October 25 and 26. For further information about the weekend, contact Charlie Covington, ccovington@cfl.rr.com

VOSH signs

The Declaration

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL, represented by president Dr. Harry Zeltzer, was one of twenty-four leaders of health organizations with common goals who signed the Declaration to Eradicate Preventable Vision Loss, at a special gathering hosted by the World Council of Optometry (WCO) at the American Academy of Optometry Meeting held on December 6, 2001, in Philadelphia.

Survey Results tallied and posted on

V/I website: www.VOSH.org

After returning home from the Bradenton Annual Meeting, V/I vice-president Patti Fuhr, OD, faculty member at the University of Alabama, got right to work preparing a detailed questionnaire to survey the opinions of Chapter leaders regarding mission policy.

The survey/questionnaire included more than 60 questions. It was e-mailed to every Chapter leader and generated

considerable inter-Chapter discussion regarding just what the role of VOSH is/should be. Results have been tallied and graphed. They are posted on the V/I website: www.VOSH.org.

Don't hesitate to download and study the results, then e-mail Patti with any further input you may have. Her e-mail: pfuhr@mindspring.com. Thanks, Patti, for a well-done job.

Where to send those used glasses for recycling

VOSH teams often collect used glasses and sort them for their own upcoming clinics. Still, the needs per clinic often run anywhere from 5,000 to 15,000 pairs of glasses, so additional help is needed. Fortunately, many individuals and groups are willing to collect/donate old glasses. To help reduce shipping costs, we've compiled a list to help you find a "collector" closer to you.

Please keep 'em coming. If we've omitted any site, please let us know and we'll add it to the list which will now be routinely posted on the V/I website: www.VOSH.org

LIONS CLUB Recycling Centers in Indiana, California, Texas and Virginia have been around for some time and do an amazing job neutralizing, packing and shipping. See www.VOSH.org for links or visit them directly at: www.lionsclubs.org

VOSH-AL collects glasses and sends glasses to the Lions Recycling Center in Indiana, or to student VOSHers in Alabama.

Send used glasses, lenses to VOSH-AL, 5720 11th Ave South, Birmingham, AL 35222. Contact: Patti Fuhr, pfuhr@mindspring.com

VOSH-Florida has an eyeglass recycling program in conjunction with Silver Springs Lions, Fort King Lions, Lions Clubs Council of Marion County and the Marion County jail. Used glasses can be sent to: A.O.C. Inc., 4754/4760 S. Maricamp Rd., Ocala, FL 34471 Contact: Max Obrusso, email: maxobrusso@cs.com

VOSH-Illinois works with the local Lions Club to collect glasses. Contact: Dieter Ruehrmund, 2745 Karen Lane, Glenview, IL 60025 E-mail: dieterueh@aol.com

VOSH-Iowa works with local optometrists and Lions Clubs to recycle glasses. Contact:

Dr. Harlan Vander Griend, OD sa3@connect.com

VOSH-Kansas works with Lions, Rotary Clubs and optometry offices to collect used glasses. Three prisons, one in Lansing, one in Hutchinson and one in El Dorado, process the glasses. Contact: Dale K. Cole, OD dcolem@informatics.net

VOSH-Michigan collects glasses in conjunction with a prison recycling program at Deerfield Correctional Facility. Contact: Doug Totten, OD, dtotten01@aol.com. Send used glasses to: Deerfield Correctional Facility, ODVT/HOPE Programs, 1755 Harwood Road, Ionia, MI 48846 (Tel.: 616-527-6320).

VOSH-NECO collects glasses and is currently developing a prison recycling program with the MA Prison Dept. Contact: Joseph A. D'Amico, OD, eyeclam@aol.com

VOSH-Netherlands collects glasses for recycling. Contact: Jonathan Wasserstein, OD docwass@yahoo.com

VOSH-Northwest works with local Lions in several locations in Washington state. Used glasses may be sent to the VOSH-NW Eye clinic, c/o Union Gospel Mission, 1224 E. Trent, Spokane, WA 99202. For donors in Montana, Idaho, and Eastern Washington, e-mail: r3ryan@pop.spkn.uswest.net

For donors living in Western Washington, send glasses for recycling to David Savage, OD, 1226 NE 90th, Seattle, WA 98115. His e-mail: savagedm@aol.com

VOSH-Ohio accepts glasses for recycling and works with Lions Clubs on the project. Send glasses to VOSH-Ohio, 5560 Ohio S.R. 12, Pandora, Ohio 45877-0209. Contact: Tim Morand, OD, tsmorand@fuse.net

Satellite clinic in Trinidad, Nicaragua

Over 2,000 patients passed through the main eye clinic held in Jinotepe, Nicaragua, with Northeast-VOSH in mid-January. For the first time this year, a smaller group of four held a satellite clinic in La Trinidad, a small village in the Malacatoya district. The trip was arranged by Donna Tabor, a former Peace Corps worker in the city of Granada who continues to live, work and assist Nicas, especially street children.

A pickup truck took the team to the town. There were supposed to be seven in the party but, true to Nicaraguan custom, four more people went along for the ride. "That's just how it is," says team member Jonathan Wasserstein, OD.

The road was another adventure, a dirt road with huge potholes, depressions and rocks. The driver had to be attentive or there could be massive damage to the vehicle and potential injuries to passengers. As the team reached its destination, a river came in sight. Instead of a bridge, there was a ferry to shuttle vehicles across. "It was an unusual contraption," notes Dr. Wasserstein, "but it worked." The team saw 84 eye patients and 73 medical patients, a successful day.



Fast pickup: Jonathan Wasserstein, OD (seated right) and former Peace Corps worker Donna Tabor (seated L with cap) rounding up their team before heading for Trinidad.



RIGHT: Tzotzil-speaking Chamula children registering to have their eyes examined.

VOSH-Iowa in San Cristobal, Chiapas, Mexico

by Harlan Vander Griend and sewing material more clearly.

Ten Iowa VOSHers led by Dr. Ruth McAndrews, held their tenth annual eye clinic in San Cristobal, Chiapas, Mexico, in early February. The clinic took place in the Presbyterian Seminary, located in an established section of San Cristobal.

The majority of patients were farmers and homemakers from the surrounding countryside. The small VOSH team examined 616 patients and dispensed over five hundred pairs of eyeglasses.

One particular farmer traveled six hours to the clinic, then waited four hours to be seen. He wanted to be able to read his bible more easily. Several women wept with joy when they were suddenly able to see their thread

Another female patient returned to the clinic the day after she was examined to tell the team that she had experienced



VOSHer Marla Sverdlow listens as Rev. Allen Schreuder instructs Tzotzil-speaking paramedics on patient flow and acuity testing.

a vision for the past four years, one in which she saw visitors coming to give her glasses to restore her sight. Now her vision had come true.

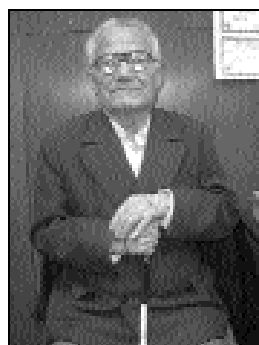
Rev. Allan and Sue Schreuder, a missionary couple from the Reformed Church of America, served as hosts for the five-day clinic schedule. The couple has been doing mission work in the state of Chiapas for over 20 years. Husband and wife speak both Spanish and Tzotil. The VOSH team depended on their language skills to arrange schedules for interpreters and facilities.

Mission team in Lithuania on 9-11

Continued from page 1
tragedy, yet opened their hearts in support to us.

When the US had a minute of silence to honor the victims, we took a break from work to bow our heads in prayer. Then, one of our translators stepped to the center of the work area and played "Ave Maria" on her violin. The mournful music was touching to everyone.

Newspapers were not readily available. And, although the reception



A patient learns of the grim happenings in America.

was bad, we were able to see the horrifying images through CNN in our hotel rooms. The cybercafe in downtown Vilnius was flooded with travelers anxious for more information.

While Lithuania is a wonderful country, we all wanted to be home with family and loved ones. No international flights were leaving for America and no one knew how long we'd be away. Fortunately, just as the mission ended,

international flights were resumed and we were on our way.

VOSH newsbriefs at a glance

GREAT LUNCH DATE:

At a conference for international optometry educators in Atlanta earlier this year, V/I president Harry Zeltzer, OD was invited to be guest speaker for one of the luncheons. His topic was on "The Benefits of VOSH Chapters at Colleges of Optometry." Dr. Zeltzer welcomes these opportunities to make others more aware of VOSH and to learn what other groups with similar goals are doing.

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MORE ON STUDENT VOSH CHAPTERS:

Vice-president Dieter Ruehrmund has created a faculty directory to improve our method of communicating with students. With this new system in place, keeping in contact with student Chapters will be more consistent.

Also, during the past six months, V/I has disbursed \$100 to each of our 17 student Chapters to show support for their efforts and to foster a closer relationship. Optometry students are the lifeblood of the organization.

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DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT:

You've all heard about the many uses for Skin-So-Soft, the scented softener for dry skin sold by the Avon Lady. There are a host of alternative uses for the product, including as a sun block, to repel insects and to remove tape. Stan Segara of VOSH-NW has submitted another use for this skin cream: to lubricate corroded eyeglass hinges.

"I suggest that no VOSH mission leave home without it," comments Stan. "One small drop of Skin-So-Soft is

all it takes." In about five seconds, the hinge is workable without breaking.

The product is marketed in 16 ounce bottles, but he transfers it into clean eye drop bottles with screw-on lids to avoid spillage during travel.

Stan's team learned about the hint from an Illinois VOSHer, Joyce Bialecke, on a mission in Nicaragua six years ago. Her team had made the discovery through trial and error.

WD 40 is another alternative lubricant, "but it has the fragrance of crank case oil," says Stan.

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ANOTHER HANDY TIP:

"One bad drink of water can compromise an entire mission," says Patti Fuhr, OD of Vosh-AL. For this reason, participants on their teams carry "Bottoms-Up" Portable Water Filtration Bottles and they filter tap water routinely.

The system eliminates up to 99% of major contaminants including Cryptosporidium, Giardia and other cysts and spores. It comes with a snap-on cup to protect the spout from dirty contaminants and a sling is available for ease in carrying.

For further information: Patti Fuhr, OD, pfuhr@mind-spring.com. You might want to consider it as a fundraiser for your Chapter as well.

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CYCLE FOR SIGHT 2002-CANADIAN ROCKIES:

VOSH-PA will hold its second annual Cycle for Sight trip to the Canadian Rockies from July 20-28. All levels accommodated; you can ride 20 miles or 100 miles a day. Fund-raising materials provided. Proceeds to benefit children needing sight-saving surgery in Guatemala.

For more info visit: www.vosh-pa.org or call Julia Eagles 814-480-8609.

A DAY TO REMEMBER:

Thirteen volunteers serving VOSH-Minnesota were into the sixth hour of a clinic work day in Konjic, Bosnia, Herzegovina, when the September 11 attacks took place.

One of their hosts had his cell phone in his pocket and it rang. The call was from his wife back home in Chicago, with news about New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

Their host called the US Embassy in Sarajevo and was told to leave immediately for the hotel in Medjugorje. Then the principal in the school where the team was working weighed in with his opinion. He warned the team that the 300 people waiting in line would probably surround the bus and not allow them to leave. The VOSHers opted to finish examinations and dispense glasses as fast as possible.

The two-hour ride back to the hotel through dark mountain tunnels and shell-racked towns from previous warfare in that county was silent as everyone worried about what was happening at home.

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TEN MILLION DOLLAR BABY: The SVOSH (student) organization at Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, TN, was formed by Allen Fors, OD, in 1976. Since that time, the group has gone to 56 locations in many countries. Last year sixty student volunteers and staff optometrists held clinics in Costa Rica, Belize, Honduras and Bolivia where they examined 3,455 patients and distributed 4,784 pairs of glasses. Dr. Fors maintains an overall estimate of donated services from the college's SVOSH trips through the years. It is now hovering at the \$10 million dollar mark.

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WINNING TICKET:

Each year VOSH-S. Dakota offers two \$600 scholarships towards a VOSH trip, one each to an optometrist and an assistant who've never been on one. All eligible are allowed to put their name in a basket and a winning name is drawn. Funds for the project come from their VOSH Chapter (\$600) which is matched by a \$600 grant by the S. Dakota State Association. Mike Brooke, OD, first got involved when he won the drawing and now he's president of VOSH-S. Dakota!

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VOSH AIR INSURANCE:

American Express has a new program that automatically provides \$1 million air coverage for just \$14.00 if you use their credit card. No forms are required and there is no red tape. After notifying customer relations, you will be billed on your monthly statement each time you travel.

* * * * *

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 27 Chapters including Canada, Honduras and the Netherlands. In addition, there are 17 active student Chapters.

V/I website:

www.VOSH.org

V/I toll-free telephone:

1-877 VOSHERS

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307-237-8713, drloe@trib.com

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is a 501(c) (3) corporation, meaning that all contributions are tax-deductible. Our primary source of income is membership, Chapter dues and donations. Individual 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, Sec/Treasurer, 102 Oak View Circle, Lake Mary, FL 32746.

Calendar of upcoming VOSH missions

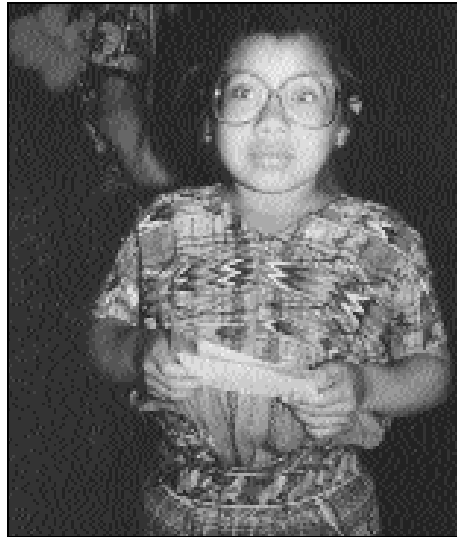
Need more info on upcoming missions? Contact the trip organizer. Trips are listed in order by country and nearest upcoming date. Additional info/photos regarding some clinics are available through links on the V/I website: www.VOSH.org

Mission leaders: Please e-mail Charlie Covington your updated trip information. With your continued input, we can inform potential VOSHers of opportunities as early on as possible: ccovington@cfl.r.com



TWECS (VOSH-British Columbia) in Bolivia: Although the official language is Spanish, nearly a third of the patients who came to this VOSH clinic only spoke Quechua. The majority came from the community surrounding the hospital where the clinic was held, but some had traveled up to two days. Average pay earned in this area is approximately \$100 per month.

- [SOUTH AFRICA, May, 2002.](#) VOSH-MI, Paul Kropf, 231-947-1691
- [ROMANIA, May, 2002.](#) VOSH-OR, Ann Slocum-Edmonds, 503-285-1671, amsedmonds@msn.com
- [WESTERN SAMOA, June, 2002.](#) VOSH-MN, Kirk Thomas, 763-569-4070, holeintheday@hotmail.com
- [POLAND, June, 2002.](#) VOSH-OHIO, Barbara Plougher, arliss@wcoil.com
Tim Morand, tsmorand@fuse.net
- [MATAGALPA, NICARAGUA, June 7-14, 2002](#) (tentative), VOSH-FL, John Gehrig, orlandoeye@att.net
- [SAMOA, June, 2002](#)
VOSH-Northwest, Dr. Mike DeRosier
dpsc@juno.com 509-276-6932

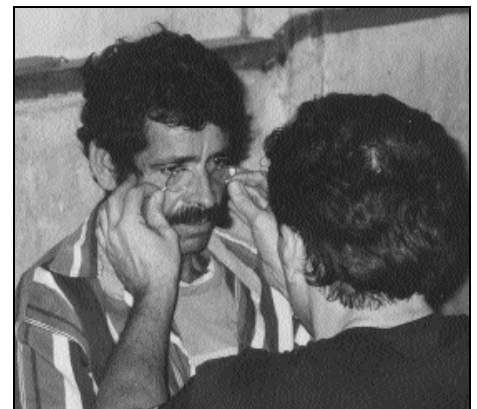


Her glasses may not be the latest fashion, but this young Guatemalan is enjoying clearer vision as she leaves a VOSH clinic.

- [WISE, VIRGINIA, July 26-28, 2002.](#)
VOSH-VA, Dr. Vicki Weiss,
DVCClear@aol.com
- [BRAZIL, July 30-Aug. 6, 2002.](#) VOSH-FL, John Gehrig, orlandoeye@att.net
- [LATVIA, Sept. 13-24, 2002.](#) VOSH-MI, Dave Bennett, 517-694-0517
Doylej@msu.edu
- [COSTA RICA, Sept., 2002.](#) Dr. Patti Fuhr, pfuhr@mindspring.com
- [VIETNAM, Sept. 19-28, 2002](#)
VOSH-Indiana/Ambassadors for Children,
Dr. Jeff Marshall 317-322-7788
drjcm@att.net
- [NAIROBI, AFRICA, Nov., 2002](#)
VOSH-KS, Susan Benkelman,
785-743-2815 sbenk@ruraltel.net
dcole@midkan.net or 785-823-6391 (w)
- [APOPA/SUCHITOTO, EL SAL - VADOR, Oct. or Nov., 2002.](#) VOSH-NECO, Jenifer Ambler, OD, amblerj@sover.net
- [EL SALVADOR, Nov., 2002.](#) VOSH-CA, Dr. David Krasnow, drdavid@gte.net
- [PETEN, GUATEMALA, Nov., 2002.](#) Dr. Doug Vilella, doogie@erie.net
- [CAMEROON, AFRICA, Nov., 2002.](#) VOSH-CA, David Krasnow, drdavid@gte.net
- [SAPOA/OSTIONAL, NICARAGUA Jan., 2003.](#) VOSH-NECO, Dr. Jay Jordan, JFEyecare@aol.com
- [JINOTEPE, NICARAGUA, January 18-26, 2003.](#) VOSH-Northeast,

Brady Hart, bradyhart@bradyhart.com
Jefe2003@aol.com

- [SANJUANDEL SUR, NICARAGUA, January, 2003.](#) VOSH-CT, Dr. Matt Blondin, mblond2@aol.com
Mblond2@aol.com 860-489-2781
- [SOLENTINAME, NICARAGUA, January, 2003.](#) VOSH-NECO, Dr. Joseph D'Amico, 508-829-2033 eyeclam@aol.com
- [BELIZE, January, 2003.](#) VOSH-NECO, Dr. Joseph D'Amico, 508-829-2033 eyeclam@aol.com
- [SANTA ANA, EL SALVADOR, late Jan., 2003.](#) VOSH-NECO, Dr. Harry Zeltzer, 978-356-0447
harryzeltzer@attbi.com
- [GOMEZ PALACIO, MEXICO, February, 2003.](#) Vosh-South Dakota, Dr. Michael Brooke, 605-256-0245
brookemike@hotmail.com
- [JAMAICA, February, 2003.](#) VOSH-South Dakota, Dr. Michael Brooke, 605-256-0245 brookemike@hotmail.com
- [HONDURAS, late February, 2003](#)
VOSH-Indiana, Dr. Jeff Marshall,
317-322-7788, drjcm@att.net
- [ZHANGJIANGANG, CHINA, May, 2003.](#) Dr. Marina Roma-March, twecs@sprint.ca
- [OUTER MONGOLIA, July, 2003.](#) VOSH-Missouri, Bud Falkenhain, 573-364-1773, drfalk@fidnet.com
- [SAN ANDRES ITZAPA, GUATEMALA, March, 2003.](#) VOSH-KS, Dale Cole, OD, 785-823-6391
dcole@informatica.net



In early January, 2002, Dr. Jay Jordan of VOSH-NECO led a small team via horseback to two small Nicaraguan villages where they saw approximately 800 patients.

PERMANENT CLINICS

V/I wants to provide as much information as possible regarding medical/eye clinics that can schedule your participation to fit your calendar. Please let us know if we've missed any. This information will not appear in every newsletter, but it will be routinely posted on the V/I website for your convenience.

Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge,
33 km west of la Ceiba, Caribbean coast of Honduras
This is a small, two-room Primary Health Care Clinic, built by VOSH-Oregon in 1998, in conjunction with the Cuero y Salado Foundation (FUCSA) and staffed 5 days per week by a local public health nurse from the Ministry of Health. Available equipment includes a chair, stand (old pink pump-style), a phoropter and slit lamp. Electricity is wired to the building, but only accessible if Dole Fruit Co. is operating the coconut plantation within the refuge and their gas generator is running.
FUCSA has a visitor's center with rough accommodations for volunteers. Bring your own food, supplies, potable water. (It's a camping trip.)
Wildlife Refuge is home to a manatee, howler monkeys, incredible bird species and the human village population which was allowed to stay when it received national designation as a protected area in 1986. Janet Leasher, OD, MPH,
janetleasher@hotmail.com



AT LEFT: the permanent clinic at La Esperanza, Honduras, established by VOSH-MI. Contact: Bob Foote, OD
boone@chartermi.net

San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua
VOSH-NECO has a permanent one-lane clinic within a local health clinic. San Juan del Sur is situated on a bay in southern Nicaragua, not far from the Costa Rican border. Ideal for one or two optometrists interested in combining service/Spanish language study/vacation. Jay Jordan, OD JFEyecare@aol.com or Joe D'Amico, OD, eyeclam@aol.com
San Pedro Sula, Honduras
Fundacion para Servicios Medicos Voluntarios has a well-equipped, permanent medical clinic. For information: Ruth Berkling, rberkling@sulanet.net
Jeremie, Haiti
Haitian Health Foundation has a multi-disciplinary permanent clinic with a separate, modern eye care facility. Optometrists can be accommodated most any week. Housing provided. Contact Dr. Robert Pannone of Ct, 860-887-2060 dr.pannone@snet.net
Ensenada, Mexico
Optometrists and other volunteers wanted to work weekends/several weeks at the eye clinic/Eye Glasses Recycling Center, in Ensenada, Mexico. Dennis Gunst, dgunst@hotmail.com

Clinics, optometrists, teams wanted

These recent letters underscore the increasingly world-wide impact VOSH/INTERNATIONAL has been making since revamping our newsletter and starting our website, www.VOSH.org just three years ago. Many similar messages appear regularly on our message board. The demand far exceeds the supply. Keep checking there.

There is still much to be done if we are to succeed in our goal to eliminate preventable blindness by the year 2020. Please consider taking on the challenge of a VOSH trip, joining VOSH and letting others know about our organization, either through our newsletter, website, or word of mouth.

We're proud of the expanding role of our organization in serving as a clearing house, message board and catalogue of upcoming trips and clinic sites seeking help.

Dear Colleague:

Please let me know how we can apply for VOSH mission in Argentina. Also, if possible, we are interested to participate in VOSH missions in the south cone. How can we do it?

Jose Luis Delgado, OD
Escuela Superior de Optometria,
Argentina
optodelgado@ciudad.com.ar
* * * * *

Dear Sirs:

I am a currently a volunteer at the BP Koirala Center for Ophthalmic Studies in Kathmandu. In addition to residents in Ophthalmology, the BPK Centre recently started a School of Optometry-the first in this nation.

The first class graduated in 2001. They have no full-time instructor. The Peace Corps has approved a volunteer position for the center, which would give them a

VOSH teams/clinics needed and wanted

If you're looking to find a site for your VOSH team or if you're thinking of a leadership role but don't know where to go, consider the following requests and check the V/I website for others:
www.VOSH.org. Info regarding sites can be sent to Charles Covington Sr. at ccovington@cfl.rr.com

THE PHILIPPINES/PANAY ISLAND
panay1_la@go.com
Tony dorono: pansolnet@cs.com

full-time optometry instructor for two years. One of their students would graduate and continue teaching here.

If you have any ideas how to let either graduating or retiring optometrists know about this opportunity, please let me know.

On a short term basis, optometrists are welcome to come give lectures/seminars on specific subject areas.

Linda Jackson, Executive Director
Helping Hand for Nepal, Inc
helpinghandnepal@acsalaska.net
* * * * *

Dear Colleague:

A former colleague of mine at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, MA suggested that I contact you to discuss ideas for developing an ophthalmology/optometry program for the Ghana Health Mission (GHM). I am an internist and medical director of this international project in Ghana, West Africa. As in many developing countries, the needs for basic eye care are significant. Most notably good eye refraction and addressing the high rate of cataracts are the two most common basic needs as well addressing infectious diseases and their complications. I would like to facilitate a collaborative effort between local Ghanaian eye specialists and our medical team. I hope you will be interested in sharing your experience and expertise with us as we begin to address these needs as part of our health mission ...

Jacqueline Spencer, MD
Medical Director,
Long Island City Community practice
Cornell Internal Medicine Associates
email: jks2002@med.cornell.edu
* * * * *

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Ulrick Gaillard, BRA President, batelyrelief@mindspring.com

JUTIAPA/QUICHE, GUATEMALA

Dr. Doug Vilella, doogie@erie.net
814-459-5707

NUEVA SEGOVIA, NICARAGUA

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