

President's Insights November 2022

If we hold the saying, "time flies when you're having fun", to be true, I must be having a blast. I can hardly believe that this year's Annual Meeting in San Diego already marks the half-way point of my VOSH/International presidency. Look for more of Michael's musings on VOSH in 2022 in the next newsletter.

There are a ton of people to thank for our very successful 2022 Annual Meeting where we celebrated 50 years of providing free, quality eye care. I am always afraid I am going to forget to mention someone when I start thanking people; so, if I miss you, please accept my apologies and I'll blame it on my lack of coffee this morning. A big thank you to everyone who attended and assisted, both in person and virtually.

Long-time VOSH member and past executive director, Natalie Venezia, was our local advisor, found the lovely venue the Hilton Garden Inn, and planned the informal dinner at a great local pizza place.

The welcoming reception that gave visiting VOSH and SVOSH chapter members a chance to network and catch up with colleagues and friends was kindly hosted by VOSH California.

The joint reception hosted by the World Council of Optometry and VOSH/International gave us time to chat with our WCO colleagues while highlighting the opportunities to work together on the significantly overlapping goals of expanding the recognition and capabilities of the profession while improving optometric education globally.

The great success of the event is in great part due to the lecturers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa.

VOSH is extremely grateful to National Vision Inc. for sponsoring the 2022 Annual Meeting, for their long history of support and for Tracy Scott's insights on their work as the keynote speaker of the event. We thank VSP Vision represented by Stephanie Ganiban for providing travel grants to aid several SVOSH leaders to attend the meeting and for making an inspiring presentation.

Congratulations to Dr. John Daniel Twelker for the VOSH/International Humanitarian of the Year Award and to Dr. Gerard Marie Jean Claude Cadet for the Harry L. Zeltzer Lifetime Achievement Award. Dr. Mark Rakoczy completed the Fellowship of VOSH/International and Jacqueline Joy from Pennsylvania College of Optometry - Salus University completed the Student Fellowship of VOSH/International. Our Vice-President, Dr. Hector Santiago, received the prestigious Brien Holden Humanitarian Award from the American Academy of Optometry.

Of course, there are no words to express how grateful we are for the tireless efforts of our volunteers who spent countless hours to make the 2022 Annual Meeting an enjoyable, educational, and successful event. A special mention to Dr. David Stacy, chair of our Technology Transfer Program, who made sure the donations for our colleagues from Jordan and Ghana arrived on time in San Diego.

Dr. Hyder Almosawy produced a beautiful video to celebrate 50 years of the VOSH movement with inputs from several of our US and international chapters. This has been a work of great creativity and we can only say thank you to all those who participated and to our communications committee for taking the initiative. This committee also organized a photo contest for SVOSH chapters.

Although unable to attend in person, Bernell donated screening charts that were distributed among our international chapters in attendance.

Before the Annual Meeting, Alcon graciously sponsored the first ASCO International Optometric Education Special Interest Group and VOSH/International joint event. There were informative presentations on strengthening research capacities through collaboration, building effective international academic partnerships, and student-led public health awareness initiatives. After the breakout groups presented their ideas on how to encourage optometric institutions to see international programs as opportunities, a sub-committee was formed to continue collaborating on international optometric education.

Our hybrid events offer the best of both worlds; communion and networking for those members attending in-person and improved access and ability to participate for those attending virtually. Board member Tracey Peterson navigated the complexities of implementing this hybrid format with the challenges of working across multiple platforms and programs with a big smile. The omnipresent IT glitches have already been identified and plans put in place to continue to improve the quality of our valuable hybrid meetings.

Thank you.

Michael Ciszek, OD, FVI, diplomate ABO
President
ciszek@vosh.org