

## **President's Insights January 2022**

The ability to see well has a tremendous impact on a person's education. It is estimated that up to 80% of a child's learning is through vision and therefore, any condition that hampers vision, or the processing of vision, may result in problems learning.

A properly conducted vision screening can be an important first step in identifying students with vision impairment that may be affecting their ability to learn. A comprehensive eye exam can solve the great majority of vision problems quickly and efficiently. Simply diagnosing and treating uncorrected refractive error with glasses or contacts can get the majority of students seeing well and give them the best opportunity to learn with confidence. When correcting refractive error alone is not enough, the optometrist can evaluate students, and refer, when necessary, for binocular vision, accommodation, vision processing or low vision issues.

VOSH/International is committed to supporting optometric education globally as this is the most sustainable manner to ensure the development of a local optometric workforce. Our programs have a long history of supporting optometry schools in many countries including Nicaragua, Mexico, Ghana, Vietnam, Haiti, Kenya, Uganda, the Dominican Republic and are evolving to online formats to respond to the pandemic related challenges. VOSH Corps helps to identify optometrists willing to spend at least a year teaching at a school of optometry. For those who are interested in sharing their knowledge and passion for a shorter period, the VOSH Ambassadors program is available. Dr. Dan Twelker recently lectured at UTESA (Universidad Técnica de Santiago) in the Dominican Republic and upcoming Ambassadors include Dr. John Larcabal working with KNUST (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) in Ghana and Dr. Melissa Barnett with MMUST (Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology) in Kenya. In 2021 the VOSH Mentorship program innovated by offering a training workshop for members of our SVOSH chapters in Latin America to learn about publishing research in English scientific publications. This was done in collaboration with the SVOSH faculty adviser at the Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa, Mexico and Alcanza, maximizing the talent available within the VOSH network.

Last year, our Education Committee led us in offering COPE accredited continuing education at our Mid-year and Annual Meetings on topics relevant to our work. Its school screenings working group is supporting our SVOSH chapters in Peru, Nicaragua and Mexico to develop participatory children's vision research projects based on proven protocols that can be replicated and adopted in other countries.

On [International Day of Education](#), I value how VOSH works to ensure every person's fundamental right to education. Either with our patients or with our fellow optometrists, we know vision can unlock the potential in every person.

I encourage all of our members to take advantage of the educational opportunities that our organization is offering and to consider sharing their knowledge with other members of the network through our programs. Wishing you all a happy and healthy 2022.

Michael Ciszek, OD, FVI, ABO Diplomate  
President  
VOSH/International