May 2023 Newsletter

This month President Ciszek reflects on the importance of teaching clinics to harness the expertise of seasoned professionals to mentor the younger generations of optometrists, we welcome a new VOSH chapter in Somalia and the new president of VOSH-MN, share a call for small research grants for our international SVOSH chapters and of the activities planned for June in Washington DC, share resources on an important month to raise awareness on myopia and more. Enjoy this issue and share your news with us. We love to know what you do.

President's Insights

I frequently quote our organization’s mission statement because it represents who we are and what we do to provide vision and eye health to those who need it most across the world. “VOSH/International believes in the freedom to see...”

Read the whole articles about our teaching clinics with inputs from VOSH leaders who have been involved in implementing these initiatives. This month we offer you an English version here and a Spanish version here.

Are you in Washington DC this June?

Are you or members of your chapter attending Optometry’s Meeting this year? If yes, come and meet us. A few Board members will be attending this event and we will have a booth at the Eye Care Square exhibit. On Saturday 24th June between 2:00-3:00 pm we will co-host a reception with AOSA (American Optometric Student Association). We encourage you to join us and inspire the younger generations. If you are interested in knowing more about our current work and want to help us design for the future, join us on Saturday 24th from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. Please contact the Executive Director at vosh@vosh.org if you are interested in these events. We hope to meet US SVOSH representatives on Friday 23rd June between 4:00-6:00 pm. Let us know if you are coming by completing this survey. See you in Washington!

Small Research Grants available - Becas de
investigación disponibles

We are delighted to call for applications from our international SVOSH chapters for four small research grants. Deadline for applications is Friday June 23rd. Announcement of the selected proposals will be made at the end of July.

Interested international SVOSH chapters, please apply using this form. If you need clarifications contact vosh@vosh.org

Solicite las becas de investigación para capítulos internacionales SVOSH llenando esta solicitud hasta el 23 de junio. Las propuestas seleccionadas se anunciaran a finales de julio.

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**News from our chapters**

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**Welcome VOSH-Somalia**

We are delighted to welcome VOSH-Somalia to our network. VOSH-Somalia has representatives of all eye care professionals in its midst including an ophthalmologist, refractionists, optometrists, opticians, ophthalmic nurses, opticians, and other volunteers. The chapter also has strong connections with several public hospitals in the country.

They will receive the support of VOSH-MI for their first year of work. We look forward to working with them. Welcome! Soo dhawoow.

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**VOSH-MN has a new president**

After many years of great work, Dr. Stacy Hinkemeyer-Colatrella stepped down as president of VOSH-MN. We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Georgiann Jensen-Bohn to this important position. Dr. Jensen-Bohn retired from private practice in 2022 after over 30 years of clinical practice. She serves on the Minnesota State Board of Optometry, the Health Professional Services Program and volunteers at the State Services for the Blind among others. She enjoys being with her family and helping others. Healthy eyes and vision are a passion for Dr. Jensen. Thank you, Stacy, and a warm welcome to Georgiann and the new board of VOSH-MN.

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**Volunteers are needed for Mexico and Guatemala**

VOSH-MN is looking for volunteers for two humanitarian clinics. The first one is scheduled for the week of January 28th, 2024 in collaboration with Friends of San Lucas in San Lucas, Toliman, Guatemala. The trip leader is Dr. Jennifer Meister Bourn (meisterjen@hotmail.com).

The second one will take place between February 17 and 25, 2024 in Patzcuaro, Michoacán Mexico led by Ken and Laurie Baalson (kenlauriebaalson@aol.com).

More information on both clinics here.

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**Ghanaian KNUST receives donation from VOSH/International**
Thanks to the strength of our network and the commitment of our volunteers, the school of optometry at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) through its SVOSH chapter received a donation of equipment that will help the school to continue offering top-level education. Read the article published by KNUST [here](#) and enjoy the pictures.

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**AMIGOS SVOSH-PUCO Spring Newsletter**

The Spring newsletter gives an insight into the incredible work of this SVOSH chapter at Pacific University College of Optometry in Ecuador and Guatemala. If you would like more information please contact Emily Bittman ([bitt3343@pacificu.edu](mailto:bitt3343@pacificu.edu)). You can download the newsletter [here](#).

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**News from our partners**

**Prevent Blindness Focus on Eye Health Summit is coming soon**

On July 12-13, 2023, Prevent Blindness will host the 12th annual Focus on Eye Health Summit as a **FREE** virtual interactive event. The 2023 Focus on Eye Health Summit asks the question **“Why the Eye?”** with the aim of stimulating dialogue as we continue to explore vision and eye health through a public health lens. Diverse voices will stimulate conversations around the challenges to equitable access to eye care, explore new and unique collaborations across stakeholders, and seek opportunities to integrate vision and eye health.
Into public health policies, practices, and research advancement. This event will remind us why the eye should be an important focus for us all. For details about this free and important event, visit www.preventblindness.org/eyesummit.

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**Monthly observances**

### Myopia Awareness Week
**May 22-26**

There are more treatment options available, more optometrists involved in myopia management, and increased public awareness of the prevention and slowing the progression of myopia among children. Myopia Awareness Week was relaunched in 2021. This global initiative led by the Brien Holden Vision Institute brings attention to the growing epidemic of myopia in children across the world. This year under the banner “*Keep an eye on myopia*” it called for eye care professionals to include myopia management as an essential part of eye health. Resources available [here](#).

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**Global Myopia Awareness Coalition (GMAC)**

Awareness among parents and carers is essential to generate action to prevent and slow the progression of myopia among children. GMAC is a coalition of companies, associations, and networks of eye care professionals working towards generating this awareness and action by parents. Check their [website](#) and watch the space for information in French and Spanish as its 2023 campaign starts.

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**International Myopia Institute**

The International Myopia Institute has recently published its 2023 White Papers. They have resources in Spanish, French, and other languages. Visit their website and download the papers [here](#).

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**Myopia Consensus Statement 2023**

The World Society of Paediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (WSPOS) launched its Myopia Consensus Statement 2023 *Interventions to slow the progression of myopia*. WSPOS is a free and open network. More information on WSPOS [here](#). The Consensus document can be downloaded [here](#).
US National Healthy Vision Month

This article from Salud America focuses on the efforts of the US National Eye Institute (NEI) to ensure its messages are culturally relevant for Latino families and four ways to promote a healthy vision for families. Check the article here.

Salud America! is a US Latino-focused organization that generates awareness using culturally relevant approaches to build health equity for the Latino community in the USA.