

## **President's Insights**

### **VOSH/International moves to the South of the Americas**

VOSH/International's fastest-growing region is Latin America. We have a vigorous presence on the continent with six VOSH chapters and 28 SVOSH chapters from Mexico to Argentina.

For this reason, VOSH/International held a meeting in Latin America for the first time in its history. The meeting was held within the XXVI Latin American and Optics Congress (CLOO) framework in Quito, Ecuador.

During the meeting of optometry deans, Dr. Timothy Wingert presented on internationalization and its contribution to education. Dr Dan Twelker shared his ample research experience.

On October 25, we donated equipment, and a low-vision workshop was held for students of the Optometry program at the Technical University of Manabí. Thanks to doctors Doug and Vicki Weiss, Dr. Neisha Rodríguez, and Dr. Ángel Romero for participating.

On the morning of October 26, our meeting was held with significant participation from Latin American chapters. Under the topic Facing inequalities in visual health in Latin America, presentations included Special Olympics, the visual services program of the Technical University of Manabí, the impact of humanitarian service in Peru by the Instituto Eurohispano, and the clinical data digitization program of the Autonomous University from La Laguna, Mexico. By external broadcast, presentations were made by National Vision, the OneSight EssilorLuxottica Foundation, and the SPECS 2030 program. Present were the Opt. Hugo Farhat, President of the Latin American Association of Optometry and Optics (ALDOO), and Dr. Michele Ming, representative for Latin America of the World Council of Optometry.

On the afternoon of October 26, members of the VOSH/International chapters made presentations on the CLOO program, including Dr. Dan Twelker, Dr. Michael Ciszek, Drs Diana García, Mónica Márquez y Beatriz Gómez.

On Sunday, October 27, we held a humanitarian clinic at the REMAR Foundation, where program clients received free eye exams and glasses. We have the support of optometrists from the Federation of Optometrists of Ecuador (FEDOPE).

To complete our program, Dr. Michael Ciszek went to the Technical University of Manabí as a VOSH Ambassador to teach courses and workshops to the students of the optometry program and join in humanitarian clinics for people with HIV and special needs children.

We feel excited and delighted with this Latin American meeting. The meeting further positions us as a truly international organization. It also allows us to be closer to our chapters, which work daily for the visual health of those who need it most.

Héctor Santiago, OD, Ph.D., FAAO  
President  
santiago@vosh.org