



August 2026 Newsletter

This month we bring you inspiring updates from clinics and events across Mexico, Colombia, and Honduras. We celebrate important milestones from optometry schools in Colombia and Ecuador and congratulate the recipients of two VOSH/International awards as well as a national awardee from Ethiopia. You are encouraged to register for our Annual Meeting and explore membership in the Franklin Harms Society. Amid these celebrations, we also pause to reflect on our members, partners, and communities experiencing hardship at this time.

President's Insights

August 2026

Exploring
Mexican
Optometry



President's Insights

President Weiss represented VOSH/International at the recent Summit Vision y Óptica in Mexico City. In this short video, she reflects on her experience at the event and her conversations with representatives from Mexican Optometry Schools and State Colleges of Optometry. Optometrist Salvador González, Coordinator of Optometry, joins President Weiss to share his perspectives as well. The video includes translation in both Spanish and English.

Watch the video [here](#)

The 2026 Annual Meeting is a month away



VOSH/INTERNATIONAL

2026 ANNUAL MEETING

**Beyond borders: optometric education,
humanitarian service, and standards**

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY
MARSHALL B. KETCHUM UNIVERSITY

Anaheim, California, USA
October 3rd, 2026
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm US PST

REGISTER
NOW

Do not forget to register

The 2026 Annual Meeting will take place in a hybrid format on Saturday, October 3rd, from 2–5 pm (US PT) at the Southern California College of Optometry. We invite all VOSH and SVOSH chapter members and friends to join us for in-depth discussions, and the opportunity to connect with fellow volunteers from the USA and other parts of the world.

More information on the programme and registration is available [here](#)



**Have you thought about
joining the Franklin Harms
Society?**

Find out more here



Franklin Harms Society

During the Annual Meeting, new members of the Franklin Harms Society will be welcomed.

VOSH volunteers have contributed thousands of hours to improve vision care for people in need around the world. To honor those who have shown exceptional, long-term commitment, VOSH/International created **The Franklin Harms Society**, named after our founder, Dr. Franklin Harms. This distinction celebrates optometrists, volunteers, and supporters who have participated in [ten or more VOSH humanitarian trips](#), both local and international—individuals whose service embodies the very heart of our mission. Are you one of them?

Apply for the Society [here](#).

Awards

VOSH/International will honour two remarkable individuals with its two most prestigious awards. Professor Bruce Moore will receive the 2026 Harry L. Zeltzer Lifetime Achievement Award, and Dr. Jennifer Meister Bourn is the Humanitarian of the Year Award.



Professor Bruce Moore, OD, FAAO
2026 Harry L. Zeltzer Lifetime Achievement Award

Professor Bruce Moore has inspired generations through his dedication to pediatric optometry, generous mentorship, and enduring volunteer service. Discover more about his remarkable career, achievements, and lasting impact [here](#).



Jennifer Meister Bourn, OD
2026 Humanitarian of the Year Award

Dr. Meister Bourn exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism through her actions, generosity, and unwavering positive attitude. Her commitment reflects the very foundations on which VOSH chapters grow, serve, and make a lasting impact. Read more about her [here](#).



Mr. Merkinah Markos Lorato
Head of Optometry Programme
Gondar University

Best Leader Optometrist Award

Ethiopian Optometric Association



Ethiopian Best Leader Optometrist Award

The [Ethiopian Optometric Association](#) has recognised **Mr. Merkinah Markos Lorato** (pictured, centre) as the **Best Leader Optometrist 2025–2026** during its 11th Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference, held from August 29–30 in Addis Ababa.

Mr. Markos Lorato is the **Head of the Optometry Programme at Gondar University** and is the **faculty adviser for SVOSH-Gondar**.

Congratulations on this well-deserved honour.

News From Our Chapters

The University of Zimbabwe joins VOSH/International

We are delighted to welcome the University of Zimbabwe optometry programme as the new SVOSH-Zimbabwe chapter and look forward to working with and learning from them.

You can contact the Faculty Adviser, Mr. Leaveson Thom at (lthom@medsch.uz.ac.zw) and the SVOSH Chapter President, Nigel Dzanga at (dzanganigel@gmail.com).

Welcome on board!



Outcomes from the Summit in Mexico

The 2026 Summit Vision y Óptica brought forward important discussions on the future of Mexican optometry and cross-border collaboration. B.Opt Salvador González offers key insights from the Summit, including reflections from the main panel and the gathering of optometry schools. You can read the article in English [here](#).

El Summit Vision y Óptica ofreció importantes discusiones sobre el futuro de la optometría mexicana y la colaboración internacional. En este artículo, Salvador González comparte su opinión sobre los logros del Summit y el futuro de la optometría en México. Puede leer el artículo completo [aquí](#).



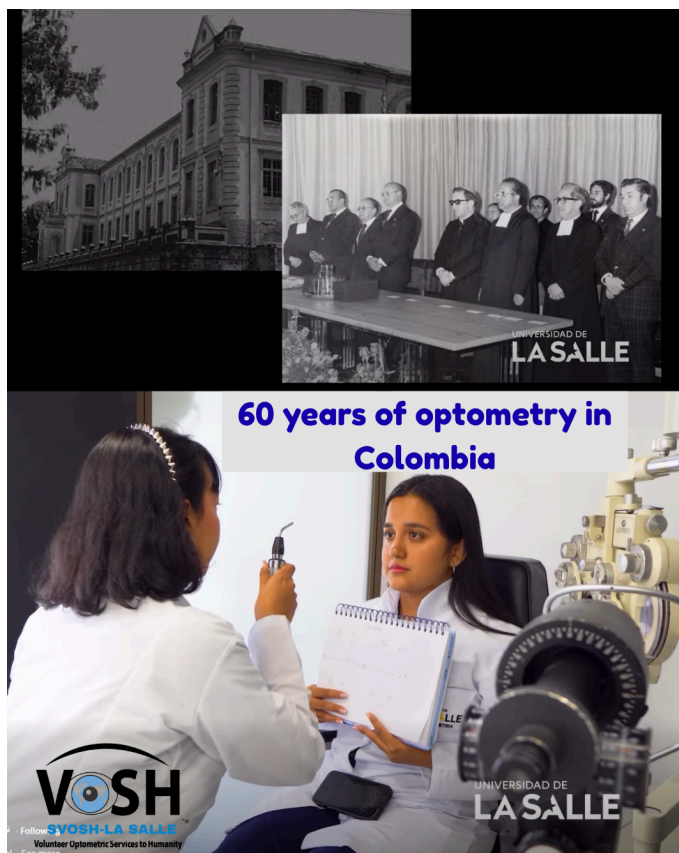
From classroom to community in Colombia

Dr. Marcela Frazier reflects on a meaningful visit to Colombia, where she and Dr. Weise contributed to an academic programme and took part in an outreach activity with Children's Vision International in Bogotá.

Read the article [here](#).



From classroom to
community in Colombia



60 years leading visual health in Colombia

The Universidad de La Salle in Colombia is marking 60 years of educating optometrists. What began in 1966 under the leadership of Dr. Alfonso Mejía Fajardo and 23 pioneering students has grown into a programme with more than 4,000 graduates, making a lasting contribution to optometry in Colombia and beyond. Congratulations to La Salle on this important milestone.

La Universidad de La Salle en Colombia celebra 60 años educando optometristas. Lo que comenzó en 1966 bajo el liderazgo del Dr. Alfonso Mejía Fajardo y 23 estudiantes pioneros se ha convertido en un programa con más de 4.000 egresados dejando huella en Colombia y el mundo. Enhorabuena a La Salle por este importante hito.

Congratulations La Salle!

Watch a great video [here](#)

The Optometry Programme at the Universidad Técnica de Manabí in Ecuador celebrates its 23rd anniversary



VOSH/International congratulates the programme on reaching this important milestone. The celebrations featured progress reports, outreach activities, and awareness-raising events with participation from university authorities and special guests. Carmen Arteaga, Head of the Optometry Programme, shared plans for continued growth and academic development. We are confident that her energy and commitment to the profession will drive the programme forward.

VOSH/International felicita al programa por alcanzar este importante hito. Las celebraciones incluyeron informes de avance, actividades de sensibilización y de extensión comunitaria con la participación de autoridades universitarias e invitados especiales. Carmen Arteaga, Jefa del programa de Optometría, compartió planes para el crecimiento y desarrollo

académicos. Estamos seguros de que su energía y compromiso con la profesión continuarán impulsando el programa.

Congratulations to the entire optometry team at UTM.

Felicidades a todo el equipo de optometría de la UTM



SVOSH-NSUOCO returns to Roatan, Honduras

At the end of July, the SVOSH chapter at Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry (NSU OCO) returned to Roatan, Honduras. After four days and 579 happy patients, this SVOSH chapter returned with a great sense of achievement.

Read their report [here](#).

And let us not forget those experiencing hardship



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