



VOSH participates in pilot screening project in three countries

VERAS! project initiated by UNESCO Chair in Visual Health and Development

by Patti Fuhr, OD, VOSH-AL, Vice-pres., V/I

In early fall, 2006, the UNESCO Chair in Visual Health and Development initiated a one-year pilot vision screening project. The project is now underway in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

General goals of the project are to train local teachers and health promoters in the detection of childhood visual health problems, to diagnose and treat the visual problems

detected in schoolchildren and to create a strong network of visual health activists in Central America.

Acronym for the project is VERAS!, which stands for Vision, Educacion, Rendimiento, Aprendizaje, and Sostenibilidad. The word VERAS! means "You will see!"

VOSH is cooperating in the UNESCO project in numerous ways. VOSH doctors have

helped plan the protocol and train coordinators in the protocols in all three countries. Wendy Marsh-Tootle, OD, of the U. of Alabama and Bruce Moore, OD, of the New England College of Optometry, both specialists in children's vision, were active participants in the planning and training sessions.

One goal of the project is to develop a

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PLANNING SESSION: John Gehrig (Above, r.) was among VOSH representatives who joined representatives of UNESCO and the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health and Education in early September, to work out details of the VERAS! project.

VOSH-VA, RAM provide combined medical services post-Katrina

By Victoria Molnar Weiss, OD,

President, VOSH-VA, New Orleans trip leader

We all watched the news on August 29, 2005, as Hurricane Katrina raced towards New Orleans, then watched, horrified, as the levees gave way and massive flooding occurred.

I knew that as an optometrist, my greatest ability to help Katrina victims would come later since optometry is not typically a first responder. And so, while we didn't have a specific date scheduled, VOSH-VA and RAM

(Remote Area Medical) paired up again (See V/I Newsletter, Fall/Winter, 2001/2002.) to prepare to hold a combined medical clinic here in this once great city. Dr. Erin Brewer, Director for the Center for Community Health in the State

of Louisiana helped coordinate the needed licensing requirements and provided other clinic support.



At the Audubon clinic site, Vicki Weiss, OD, of VOSH-VA, pauses for a photo with her son, JW and 7-year-old patient Kayla, a -1.50 myope who loved chatting with the team.

The combined medical, dental, eye care, veterinary and pharmaceutical care team that traveled to New Orleans in early February included some 1,350 volunteers from all over the country. INTEL joined our efforts and provided patients CDs or memory cards with their medical records.

I headed up the eye care portion of the clinic. We recruited forty volunteers including 19 ODs, 3 ophthalmologists, 4 paraoptometricians, an RN and ten ancillary helpers, including my 13-year-old son. In addition, approximately 15 opticians and other volunteers helped fabricate, fit and dis-

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Retreat in Florida for all VOSHers in October

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL has set the following meeting schedule for 2006:

A V/I Board Meeting will be held at the Mandalay Bay Resort Convention Center at the AOA Convention site in Las Vegas on Thursday, June 22. We will host a hospitality booth that evening and we will staff a booth at the exhibit hall during the hours it is open. All VOSHers are welcome to join us.

The V/I Annual Meeting 2006 has been moved to the weekend of October 13-15 in Florida, where V/I will host a 2-day retreat open to all VOSH members at the Palms Island Resort & Marina, Lake Monroe, FL. (See www.palmsresort.com.)

This will be an ideal opportunity to meet fellow VOSHers from across the country, provide your input, share your VOSH trip experiences, and pick up new ideas. Watch for further details in the next newsletter and on our website, www.VOSH.org

Container shipment to Ghana delayed

Got any equipment, instruments or optometry-related books to spare?

V/I is collaborating with World Medical Relief, another volunteer organization, to send such items to support optometry schools and the general hospital in Accra. Spare items will be sent across the border to at least one school in Nigeria.

The actual date for shipping the container has been postponed by World Medical Relief to

September, so there is still plenty of time to make donations.

Since placing our first request in the last newsletter, a number of donors have come forward with text books and equipment. Donors must pay for shipping to Michigan. Rotary, Lions and delivery firms have assisted donors with these costs in several instances.

World Medical Relief, will pay for shipping

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You can help us create a vision for our future



Ruth McAndrews, OD

The V/I/Board is addressing its vision of the future. First of all, in recognition of those visionaries who have led VOSH/INTERNATIONAL in the past, the honor of Fellowship of

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL (FVI) will be

conferred to past-presidents at the combined Annual Meeting and Retreat we're planning to hold in October in Florida (See page 1.)

Building upon this foundation, V/I is taking the Vision 2020 challenge very seriously. The goal is to work together with other organizations to eliminate refractive blindness by the year 2020. To better accomplish this vision, we are re-structuring our board and organizing permanent committees with their own objectives and responsibilities.

We need to involve more of you in this process. If you have a skill or area of interest you would like to apply, please let me or one of the board members know.

Participating in VOSH trips and collecting glasses are important. Still, there are numerous other ways you can contribute to VOSH. Do you or a supporter or a relative have skills in communications, promotional development, accounting, fundraising? Let us hear from you. We need you. As charitable dollars shrink, the challenge to find grants and other sources of funding becomes even more crucial.

To date V/I has not been especially savvy in asking for funding from major business and private donors to support the many VOSH projects underway and to develop new ones. And, while our website has been successful beyond any of our wildest dreams, we need to continue to develop its content and design.

Other types of donations

In addition to contributing your time and talents, many of you have dusted off unused books and functional equipment for use in optometry schools in Ghana. The shipment has been delayed a second time, but the future recipients are used to waiting and they are excited to know the items will be coming.

Thinking beyond these tangible items, for example, we hope you will also consider donating frequent flyer miles to V/I the next time you get your statement.

Finally, when reviewing your charitable giving, have you considered V/I? Or, how about considering us in memorials or in special cele-

brations? Happy birthday, indeed, to Helda Welderle, of Missouri, in whose honor on the occasion of her 90th birthday, a \$20 donation was recently made to V/I. Likewise, our appreciation is extended to Joyce Hassenius of Freeport, IL. Memorial donations totalling several hundred dollars in honor of her husband, Richard Hassenius, OD, were earmarked for V/I earlier this year.

You can even create a lasting contribution to the vision of the world by including VOSH in your estate plans.

Meeting plans

Please visit us at the AOA Congress in Las Vegas. Our Board meeting will be held at the Mandalay Bay Hotel, Thursday, June 22 from 8 AM to noon. We will host a hospitality suite on Thursday evening, June 22, from 7:30 to 10 PM, and we'll be staffing a VOSH booth in the exhibit hall on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Charlie Covington's work is never done

Charlie Covington was an accountant during his long and successful career. He retired in 1997, but since then he's assumed a second career, a volunteer position in service to VOSH, both on the state and the international level. The time he now spends on VOSH matters is much the same as a full-time job, but Charlie isn't complaining, he's grateful for the opportunity to serve this organization which he believes in so wholeheartedly.

Charlie worked as a postal inspector for the U. S. Postal Inspection Service and as an auditor for AAA in Florida before his retirement. He is now a resident of Lake Mary, FL.

Charlie became aware of VOSH when fellow Lion member John Gehrig (V/I Legal Counsel) recruited him to join a VOSH mission to the Ukraine that was organized by VOSH-OH. Charlie had no idea what VOSH stood for at the time, but he loved to travel so he signed on. He was so impressed by the VOSH experience that Charlie has since committed his time, talent and money to VOSH.

Since helping to found VOSH-FL in the mid-'90s, Charlie has remained an active volunteer with the Chapter, participating in or leading teams to Ethiopia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Hungary, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Romania,

To accommodate your requests, we have scheduled the 2006 V/I Annual Meeting to take place as part of an autumn weekend VOSH retreat at the Palms Island Resort & Marina, on Lake Monroe in Central Florida. (www.palms-resort.com). This will be a wonderful opportunity to relax together, share concerns and stories, as well as our photographs from VOSH trips.

Mark the weekend of October 13-15 on your calendar now and watch for more details regarding this event in mid-summer.

Ruth McAndrews, VOSH-IOWA

President, VOSH/INTERNATIONAL,
March, 2006

Don't forget! Visit www.VOSH.org for a complete listing of scheduled VOSH trips.

Vietnam, Paraguay, Ukraine, Mexico and Peru.

On VOSH trips, Charlie's done just about everything except for eye exams. He's done visual acuities, crowd control, and dispensed and adjusted glasses. He's also operated a retinomax and just recently, Charlie even purchased his own Nikon Retinomax which he will bring on an upcoming trip to Ethiopia that he's leading.

When he was tapped to serve as Secretary-Treasurer of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL in 1999, Charlie happily took on the added responsibility. When this soft-spoken man of few words, with a winning, warm smile and a mischievous streak speaks, the Board listens.

As the organization has grown, so too have his duties, but Charlie continues to assume the bulk of the responsibility himself without any complaints. A local high school student does assist with some of the data entry, but Charlie handles all budgetary matters and makes sure that notes needing a response get out in a timely fashion, whether by email or by snail mail. His accuracy and commitment have been crucial to the continued growth of VOSH.

Charlie will say only that he feels privileged to serve an organization that continually makes such a difference by providing the gift of clear vision to so many needy people worldwide.



Charlie hard at work in the dispensary



Crowds wait their turn in Pothureddypalli, India.

V/I assists Tsunami region of India

by Dale Cole, OD, Immediate Past-President, V/I

In October, 2005, V/I provided an eye care team of 9 optometrists, an optician and 8 ancillary personnel from across the USA (Ohio, Washington, Oregon, Virginia, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri and Kansas) to serve the Indian population affected by the recent Tsunami. The team was hosted by India Lions clubs and Lion/Dr. K.V.R. Krishnaji of the R.R. Lions Hospital. Coordinators for the trip were Hare Patnaik of the USA/India and Gopi Gopalan of India. I served as mission leader.

The experience of the team ranged from recent graduates on their first mission to some that have been on over 30 VOSH missions. Four communities in the area were served during the week with over 1,000 individuals receiving glasses from the VOSH team. Cataract patients were referred to local ophthalmologists. Funds were collected primarily by Mr. Hare Patnaik, as well as VOSH, to provide new glasses for almost 10,000 patients seen by Lions and VOSH during the mission.

New V/I Board Members appointed

Jeff Forrey, OD, of Redmond, WA

Vice-president Jeff Forrey, OD, has been in optometric practice in Redmond, WA, since 1969. Prior to that Dr. Forrey served for four years as a Major in the Army Medical Service Corps.



His VOSH involvement began in 1989 when he joined a VOSH team to Chile with Sid Pearlman, OD, of VOSH-IL. Since then, Dr. Forrey has participated in over ten missions, serving as team leader on three of them. Dr. Forrey is a past-president of his state Optometry Association and he is presently Board president of a non-profit Low Vision Clinic in Wellevue, WA, sponsored by the Lions Club and the NW Sight and Hearing Foundation.

When he's not busy with optometry or VOSH, Dr. Forrey enjoys skiing, scuba diving and photography, a hobby he took up initially to display images he captured on VOSH trips. Dr. Forrey brings an inquisitive voice and fresh perspective to the V/I Board.



Greg Pearl, OD, of Hermosa Beach, CA

Vice-president Greg Pearl, OD, of Los Angeles, CA, has taken part in over 50 weeklong VOSH missions to Venezuela, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Mexico; he's also participated in over 100 weekend missions to Baja,

CA and he has established a non-profit clinic in the nearby village of San Quintin, CA. That's quite an impressive record for someone who's only 49 years old and is running two optometric offices, one in Hollywood and one in Norwalk.

Dr. Pearl's first VOSH mission was to Venezuela with an Anglican church group from Kansas in 1989. He was so inspired by the experience that when he came home, Dr. Pearl sent out a letter inviting every OD in CA - all 3,300 of them - to an organizational meeting. The core group who responded became the VOSH/CAL Board, with few changes over the last 17 years. The presidency is passed around each year, but the group works together closely on all projects.

When he's not working on VOSH projects, Greg and his wife of two years enjoy running, snowboarding, bicycling, motorcycling and swimming.

Nelson Rivera, OD, of Dallas, TX



Vice-president Nelson Rivera, OD, has been practicing optometry in Dallas, Texas, since 2002. He received his OD degree from the InterAmerican University School of Optometry in Puerto Rico

in 1996, and served as clinical instructor there until 2001.

Dr. Rivera was raised completely bilingual so in addition to his regular duties, he's been tapped to serve as V/I's official Spanish/English translator and he's willing to translate for any other VOSHers who may need assistance. Perhaps Dr. Rivera's biggest gift is his easygoing manner which makes you feel that, despite a hectic schedule, he has all the time in the world to assist you.

Dr. Rivera's first VOSH mission was to Potrerillos, Honduras in 1994. Since then he's assisted VOSH teams in Kenya, Peru, and at several different locations in Nicaragua. He has just represented V/I at planning sessions in Granada, Nicaragua, regarding the VERAS! Project.

Dr. Rivera loves his profession and traveling. He is completely committed to VOSH as he feels compelled to try to help the tremendous number of people who truly live in very poor conditions to have the gift of good eyesight. That's more than half the world's population, Dr. Rivera notes.

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL

is pleased to offer the designation of

Fellow of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL (FVI)

to individuals with demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to the challenges of providing eye care to underserved people throughout the world.

The first fellowship exam will be held at the V/I Annual Meeting in October, 2006.

To request an application and other material, contact: Charles H. Covington, Sr., Secretary/Treasurer, V/I
111 Linda Lane, Lake Mary, FL 32746-4208
ccovington@cfl.rr.com



A group of children from the PPA Orphanage in Lima, Peru, proudly display their new glasses as their advisors look on. Severo Sanchez, OD, president of VOSH-SOS Peru, examined a number of the children in his office in December and will continue to work with other groups to see that the children's eye care needs are met.

Website helps connect VOSH-SOS/Peru with Lima orphanage

Last fall, Laurie Bowers and her daughter Emily participated in a 2-week work project at the Puertoculturio Perez Aranibar (PPA) Orphanage in Lima, Peru. Before leaving, Laurie innocently commented how wonderful it was that none of the nearly 600 children wore glasses, only to find out that a number of them did need glasses, but there was no funding for either exams or glasses for anyone. Laurie made arrangements to pay for eye care for 10 of the children, but she promised to find a way to provide exams and glasses as needed for more of the children when she got home.

Surfing the internet, Laurie came upon the V/I website and immediately wrote to president Ruth McAndrews. "How could I inspire one of your US Chapters to offer to vision test approximately 600 abused, neglected or orphaned children – from infants to age 17 who reside at PPA?" she asked.

Dr. McAndrews immediately contacted Peruvian optometrist Severo Sanchez, OD, leader of VOSH-SOS (Peru), one of our newest Chapters that's headquartered right there in Lima. Right around the holiday, Dr. Sanchez saw a number of the students and he continues to work with other groups to see that all the children are examined and those needing glasses receive them.

In a presentation to her local Lion's Club, Laurie said, "What made VOSH so magical was that their Lima Chapter became involved and will continue to play a vital role in the future vision needs of PPA. This was not just a one-time offer of help, but a continuation of goodwill."

Team serves children living in landfill

In his report following VOSH-Northeast's recent trip to Nandasmo, Nicaragua, team leader Carl Sakovits, OD, noted that he had heard of a community of orphans living off a landfill not far from the VOSH team's hotel in Jinotepe. Indeed, they would include the children in their combined medical clinic, but rather than try to set up a satellite site, they would hire a bus to transport the children to the clinic.

As the school bus rolled in, the sounds of a very excited group of youngsters reverberated throughout the site. Roughly 60 orphans spent the day with the VOSH-Northeast team, receiving medical, eye, audiology, and dental care. At the end of the day,

as Dr. Sakovits was rounding up the VOSH team to head back to their hotel, he noticed the rental bus that was just departing.

Dr. Sakovits wrote of the moment: "The kids were still going strong, jumping, screaming, and smiling as they had upon their arrival. The one adult chaperone that accompanied them settled them down just long enough for them to say thank you and to serenade us with a departing song in Spanish. They were on their way home ... back to the garbage dump."

Dr. Sakovits paused to absorb the harsh reality and reflected, "I hope I never forget this."



This youngster was referred to the FUDEM clinic for ophthalmological consultation.

VOSH-CAL team assists FUDEM in El Salvador

A VOSH-CAL team of 13, led by Greg Pearl, OD, and including 9 optometry students from the Southern CAL College of Optometry traveled to El Salvador in late February to work with FUDEM, a non-profit Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) of El Salvadorans dedicated to providing free and low cost eye care to the poor of El Salvador. The VOSH-CAL team was coordinated and accompanied by 2 FUDEM optometrists, 4 technicians, 3 opticians, a surgical coordinator, along with FUDEM Program Director Ricardo Granada, and Executive Director Alex Sanchez. The team worked for five days in three rural municipalities in the northern mountains of the state of Morazan. These villages have been identified by the El Salvadoran government as areas of extreme poverty where people live on \$1 per day or less per household.

FUDEM's goal for 2006 is to screen 68,000 children in 33 such municipalities and to provide those children with 20/40 vision or less, free eyeglasses. We screened 2,644 schoolchildren and provided exams for those failing the autorefractors and then provided final refraction with three portable phoropters and several trial lens sets. FUDEM opticians made 160 pairs of eyeglasses on site using FUDEM's "Harry Potter" glasses and similar ones from Helen Keller. Another 43 pairs of kids glasses will be made at the FUDEM lab in San Salvador.

All of the teachers were examined and provided free glasses as needed. The first day of clinic was also dedicated to examining adults. We dispensed 298 pairs of over-the-counter reading glasses. Another 150 pairs of free bifocals will be made at the FUDEM lab for dispensing in two weeks. About 75 surgical candidates were identified and scheduled for a consultation at FUDEM's satellite clinic in San Miguel, about an hour away. FUDEM is committed to providing transportation and free surgery to those patients by one of their staff ophthalmologists. The organization currently does 25% of all eye surgeries in El Salvador.

Any VOSH Chapter or team leader who'd like to contribute their services to this worthwhile and efficient campaign should contact Alex Sanchez asanchez@fudem.org or Ricardo Granada rganada@fudem.org



A village home, crafted from gathered sticks

VOSH, WCO, BCVI efforts impact eye care in Belize

Several months ago, Ed Paul, OD, e-mailed VOSH-NECO colleagues, seeking an OD who might be interested in a special assignment in Belize. Dr. Paul has been actively involved in eye care in this Caribbean country both as a professor and as a VOSH volunteer for a number of years.

As good timing would have it, VOSH-NECO had just received an inquiry from Derek Mladenovich, OD, a young clinician with considerable experience in working in community eye clinics in Latin America and Africa. Dr. Mladenovich is presently an adjunct faculty member at the Center for International Studies at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. His work incorporates clinical, teaching and research aspects, both in domestic and international settings. Dr. Mladenovich's

first experience in a third-world setting was as a student VOSH volunteer to Guatemala when he was in optometry school.

Dr. Paul introduced Dr. Mladenovich to Mrs. Joan Musa, Executive Director of the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired (BCVI). Since its inception in 1981, the BCVI has provided comprehensive eye care service throughout the country. Until August, 2005, BCVI relied on short-term, foreign volunteer optometrists and one ophthalmologist employed by BCVI to provide eye care in community-based settings.

In August, 2005, three Belizean optometrists, sponsored by the BCVI and trained in Cuba, returned to serve in their country. These new

optometrists had only basic knowledge of ocular pathology. Since they were to be placed in strategic community eye care settings around the country, the need for further training in primary care of ocular pathology became apparent.

Mrs. Musa and Dr. Mladenovich worked together to design a Clinical Mentorship Program. Dr. Mladenovich then applied to the World Council of Optometry for a fellowship to enable him to administer the 3-week project. Without the WCO's financial support, the project would not have been able to move forward.

Dr. Mladenovich began by evaluating the presenting competency of the new optometrists, both theoretically and on-site. Based on his evaluation, he delivered close to 30 lecture hours of continuing education in ocular pathology they would be most commonly encountering in the field.

During the second part of the program, Dr. Mladenovich provided on-site clinical support with emphasis on ocular examination techniques and sequence, recording, treatment and management of pathology encountered.

Since Dr. Mladenovich's departure, he has been providing additional mentoring to the optometrists via internet-based chat software, and is evaluating the experience as a possible alternative method of continuing education delivery in such instances.

The impact of the Clinical Mentorship Program and the WCO Fellowship met its predetermined standard. Long-term impact will be evaluated with time. Dr. Mladenovich feels this project provided the BCVI skills and standardizations of ocular examination sequence that will enable them to establish a strong foundation for providing low-cost, effective, long-term and sustainable eye care in Belize.

For further information about the WCO and its Fellowship Program, visit

See www.VOSH.org for upcoming trips

Interested in participating in a VOSH trip? See www.VOSH.org for a listing of upcoming VOSH trips including names of leaders and how to contact them. Check the listing often as it is updated almost daily by webmaster Harry I. Zeltzer, OD.



Derek Mladenovich, OD

VOSH team to Mus, Turkey

Ali Hocek is an architect and a longtime volunteer with VOSH-Northeast. This year Ali wanted to do something to assist the people of Mus, Turkey, Ali's native country, so he co-organized a team of twelve volunteers to hold a VOSH clinic there. The final team included four ODs.

According to Ali, Mus is located west of Lake Van and has a population of 60,000. Average yearly income is approximately \$650. Most of the people of Mus are covered under a state health insurance but the team still had many more patients come than could be seen. Many were either not covered by national health care or had not used the medical services available to them. The city has an eye hospital, headed by ophthalmologist Dr. Mustafa Atas, who set aside his own busy schedule to provide support for the VOSH-Northeast team. Dr. Atas often has to limit patient visits to a couple of minutes so he welcomed the additional aid.

The VOSH team examined 600 patients and had the privilege of spending more time with individuals having particular conditions. One little cross-eyed boy cried and whined for hours in the hall. When his prescription glasses were put on him, his eyes uncrossed and he smiled. Another young man in his early twenties, with little vision, was given a second pair of glasses in case the first broke. The patient insisted that someone else should have them.



(Front L-r): Mission organizers Ali Hocek and Sadi Dinlenc with Ibrahim Ozcimen, governor of Mus, Turkey, who put team in contact with local media to make people aware of the clinic in Mus. The governor also provided added security and he hosted a brunch in the team's honor on the last day.

Of the patients seen, 400 pairs of glasses were distributed. Remaining glasses were donated to Umut Feneri (Hope's Lantern), which is a Mus-based, not-for-profit organization providing assistance to the poor, particularly those not covered by the national health system.

"In my view," reported Ali, "aside from the examinations and prescriptions we provided, one of our greatest contributions to the patients in Mus, was conveying and encouraging a patient's own culture of health care. Simply being there was an acknowledgment that health matters. In more complicated cases, the time spent with patients provided them a better understanding of their condition, its prognosis and treatment."



Rocco Robilotto, OD, with a patient

VERAS! project underway in Central America

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screening protocol that is inexpensive, efficient and reliable, one that can be used by adults of diverse backgrounds to screen young children of diverse backgrounds for vision problems.

An initial planning session was held in El Salvador in September, 2005. Training sessions were held in Managua, Nicaragua, in January, 2006, and the first in-field implementation of screening and examination of children occurred the first week of March, 2006, in Granada, Nicaragua. Twenty teachers, five supervisors and five nurses learned the protocol and screened over 1,000 pre-school and first graders in a 3-day period. Volunteers from VOSH-FL and VOSH-AL examined all children who failed the screening and a matched number who passed the screening.

A statistical analysis of the predictive power

of the vision screening protocol will be done and results will be reported to the UNESCO Chair in Visual Health, VOSH/INTERNATIONAL and the Nicaraguan Ministers of Health and Education.

A full report of the results of the VERAS! study will be posted on the V/I website once the one-year pilot project is completed this fall.

V/I has provided some funding for this project. GoodLite, Inc., produced and donated screening and examination sets. VOSH-FL donated new children's frames for use in all three participating countries. Mario Carcamo, OD, of Miami, MC Vision of Nicaragua and Helen Keller International have donated lenses, frames and finishing services. We are seeking further donations of funds, lenses and lab work for children needing glasses.

All VOSH chapters seeing children in



TRAINING THE TRAINERS: In early January, a weekend training session for thirty in-country screeners was held in Granada, Nicaragua. Instructors included Wendy Marsh-Toottle, OD, of the University of Alabama. (Above r.)

Nicaragua are welcome to participate in this project. VERAS! protocols can easily be incorporated into work you are already doing in your VOSH missions. VERAS!

For further information, contact pfuhr@mind-spring.com or orlandoeye@earthlink.net.

VOSH-VA, RAM in New Orleans

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pense eyeglasses on site. It was an extraordinary experience for all of us.

The clinic site was the Audubon Zoo. We were situated literally "in the swamp," with alligators swimming below us. Jose Cadena of Affordable Portables helped us set up 12 refracting lanes and lent us phoropter stands. We also had seven slit lamp stations, two binocular indirect ophthalmoscopes and a considerable amount of donated eye drops.

The optometric team provided 1,735 complete eye examinations; 1,334 individuals received eye glasses from the on-site lab.

Patients we saw were thankful to have us there. Six months after the disaster, many still did not have their eyeglasses and a number of glaucoma patients still didn't have their glaucoma medications. There were so many sad stories related. It seemed that everyone we talked to, people from all walks of life, have been affected. One person now living in Metairie with his cousin commented about Mardi Gras. He felt it was hard to celebrate as his uncle had finally buried his wife and son that very week.

It was unbelievable to experience the devastation up close. Unusable cars were parked under the interstate for a stretch of many miles. Homes completely collapsed. Clothing on rods with items jumbled, in the middle of the front lawn. A peek into

doorways of what were once living rooms, are now completely destroyed.

Hopefully, we helped make some of the people who have suffered so much do better. Many people told us and wrote to us to say we made a difference. I know we helped them medically, but, equally as important, I believe we made them feel cared for. As one local optometrist said, "the human community needs to be restored just as much as the physical one."



ABOVE: Children waiting to be examined hug their new "friends." BELOW LEFT: Just one of countless images of the ongoing turmoil six months after Katrina hit.



Container to Ghana delayed to September

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the container from the Michigan site to Ghana. Mr. Kojo Dom and Nelson Edwards, OD, are Rotary Coordinators for the project in this country. When the items reach Ghana, Mr. Mohan Mahtani, overseas Rotarian Coordinator and VOSH-KNUST will supervise distribution.

To support the project, VOSH-Northwest has donated a Topcon SL 3E biomicroscope complete with a Haag-Streit tonometer and pneumatic instrument table on which to mount the slit lamp. They've also sent along a +90 diopter Volk lens and a +20 diopter viewing lens. Others have sent in lenses, frames, books, slit lamps, phoropters, a lensometer, an AO slide projector and more.

A complete list of donors/donations will be posted on the V/I website once a final inventory is taken and the container is on its way. For further questions, harryzeltzer@comcast.net.

Here's where to send your items:

World Medical Relief

Ghana Equipment Container

11745 Rosa Park Blvd,

Detroit, MI 48206-1270 USA

Tel. 313-866-5533

**Don't forget to check out the
VOSH message board at
www.VOSH.org**

VOSH News notes

VOSH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM:

In an effort to acknowledge and to honor those members who have demonstrated a commitment to the goals of V/I, the Board has established the Fellow of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL (FVI) designation and program. All VOSH members are invited to participate.

In addition to recognizing those individuals who have already made significant contributions to our organization, the Fellowship Award is designed to encourage members to pursue the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to successfully meet the global challenge of preventable blindness; to foster the development of future leaders prepared to meet that challenge; and, to prepare individuals who may be asked to consult with governmental agencies, educational, private, or public institutions, and the media, on issues related to the mission of V/I.

To achieve the FVI recognition, members are asked to submit an application to the FVI program. Components of the Fellowship process are: (a) completion of an Application for Fellowship; (b) demonstration of commitment to the mission of V/I; and (c) successful completion of a written examination and oral interview. Applications are now being accepted.

The first Fellowship exam will be held at the V/I Annual Meeting in October, 2006, in Florida. We look forward to honoring our first Fellows at that time. To request an application, e-mail Secretary/Treasurer Charlie Covington at covington@cfl.rr.com.

* * * * *

SANDRA BURY, OD, EARMARKS AWARD MONEY TO VOSH:

Doug Villella, OD, was named VSP's "International" award winner during the AOA Convention in Dallas in June. (See V/I newsletter, Fall-Winter, 2005-2006.) Dr. Villella was picked from 6 regional finalists. Also among the regional finalists

was Sandy Bury, OD, who was recognized for her work with VOSH-IL as well as The Chicago Lighthouse, a non-profit organization that is a beacon for the blind and visually impaired throughout the midwest. Dr. Bury has donated \$500 of her \$2,000 regional award to V/I, and the same amount to her local chapter. She earmarked the remaining money for her staff who have continually supported her in her outreach efforts both at home and abroad.

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CONTINUING DEVELOPMENTS IN GUATEMALA:

We've recently received an update from Dr. Villella and VOSH-PA regarding their Guatemala clinics. VOSH-PA has received a donation to purchase two patternless edgers for the optical labs in its eye clinics in Visueliza and Peten, Guatemala. This technology will enable patients to receive "same day" service whenever possible. Since many patients travel to the clinic from afar, it is difficult for them to pick up their glasses at a later date.

Also, for the next 3 years, all indigent children referred to the clinics who require services, will receive free eye glasses and surgery under a fund established by VOSH-PA. Their goal is to establish an endowment to extend this free service.

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MAGNIFIERS FOR VOSH MISSIONS:

TLCRC, Texas Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center, still has a supply of reasonably-priced magnifiers at its Texas facility. Fifteen dollars will buy 84 magnifiers for use solely in underdeveloped countries. For further information contact: Ike Fitzgerald: tlerc@attglobal.net.

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DR. SILVER'S ADAPTIVE GLASSES IN USE:

At the V/I Annual Meeting two years ago, Dr. Josh Silver, a researcher from England, spoke

about the revolutionary self-prescribing glasses he invented. Basically, the glasses are liquid-filled when placed on the patient's face. The patient turns the edge until he/she sees clearly, then locks the frame at that setting. The lens then hardens, but it can be reset if the patient experiences a change in sight.

Last fall, Major Richard Fillman of the US Air Force, noted that the US Military had just distributed 1,000 pairs of Dr. Silver's glasses in the Republic of Georgia, working with 2 optometrists and 2 techs over a one-week period. Typical age-range of patients was between 55 and 75. The team had glasses grinding capability, so patients out of the +/- 6D range also received corrective glasses. The military is now planning additional distributions in Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria and Morocco. Major Fillman has been directed to enlist volunteer assistance from other NGOs including VOSH. If interested, contact Major Fillman: fillmanr@eucom.mil.

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WCO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM:

HOYA Vision Care has committed \$50,000 to the World Council of Optometry's Fellowship program. Fellowships are granted to professional candidates with a commitment to public service, specifically in optometric education, patient care and community service and organizational development. WCO Fellows are assigned according to their expertise and the needs of the host countries. Each Fellowship requires a pre-approved program specifying the action plan and program evaluation methods. If interested, contact: Jennifer Buono, wco@pco.edu.

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VOSH WEBSITE REMAINS BUSY:

According to webmaster Hary I. Zeltzer, OD, the VOSH website (www.VOSH.org) is visited between 2 and 4 thousand times each month. The number of pages visit-

ed is 28,000 to 30,000 per month. In addition to a listing of upcoming trips, photo pages from recent trips, the site includes links to VOSH Chapters that have websites and it provides a variety of organizational information. The Message Board has become another important resource in bringing people together. It includes messages from individual trip leaders, people wanting to volunteer and people seeking VOSH teams to serve their countries. Check it out for yourself - www.VOSH.org

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IN MEMORIAM: George Nesheim, OD, 1925-2005:

Dr. George Nesheim, of Bainbridge Island, WA, a longtime devoted member and treasurer of VOSH-NW, passed away in early December. Dr. Nesheim participated in missions to many countries around the globe, including Poland, Russia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Samoa, Thailand and Peru.

Dr. Nesheim served in the US Navy in World War II and graduated from PUCO in the early 1950s. After retiring from practice in the early 1990s, Dr. Nesheim stepped up his VOSH activity, averaging 3 trips a year, most often with his wife, Jonny. He continued to work in his former office so that the OD who purchased it could also participate in VOSH trips.

During retirement, Dr. Nesheim became an active volunteer in the regional Episcopal Church, helping to establish a Spanish language church for migrants and taking Spanish lessons to better communicate with the new parishioners as well as with patients he served on VOSH trips.

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IN MEMORIAM:

As we went to press, V/I learned of the passing of two more dedicated VOSH volunteers, Dean Slocum, OD and Scott Loe, OD. Obituaries will be included in the next newsletter.



VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is a voluntary non-profit organization whose primary goal is to facilitate the provision of vision care worldwide to people who can neither afford nor obtain such care.

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL accomplishes this goal by service as a coordinating body for affiliated Chapters, by administratively supporting activities of Chapters and members, and by actively promoting the formation of new Chapters and new members.

VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is a non-sectarian and non-political organization. Currently there are 37 VOSH Chapters. In addition, there are 17 active student Chapters affiliated with American schools of Optometry.

Visit **www.VOSH.org**

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In addition, there are 17 active student VOSH Chapters affiliated with American Schools of Optometry including: Illinois College of Optometry, Indiana U. School of Optometry, Inter-American U. of Puerto Rico School of Optometry, Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State U., New England College of Optometry, Northeastern State U. College of Optometry, NOVA Southeastern U. College of Optometry, Ohio State U. College of Optometry, Pacific U. College of Optometry, Pennsylvania College of Optometry, Southern CA College of Optometry, Southern College of Optometry, State U. of New York State College of Optometry, U. of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry, U. of CA, Berkely School of Optometry, U. of Missouri-St. Louis School of Optometry, U. of Houston, College of Optometry.