

Spring 2019

VOSH-ONE



Voluntary Optometric Services to
Humanity – of New England

VOSH-ONE is a chapter of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL. The organization is dedicated to the preservation of human sight, mainly in developing countries where there is no welfare system. VOSH-ONE accomplishes its goals through its own missions or by assisting other groups with the same purpose.

Optometry Education in Vietnam

by Bruce Moore

As we know, optometry in much of the world barely resembles the optometry that we know in the United States. In many of the English speaking countries, it approaches, but does not quite reach the same level of professionalism, experience, and integration into the health care systems within those countries as here, except of course for Canada, which is equivalent to the US.

In the Latin American countries that many of us have had extensive firsthand experience with, things are quite different, and in many, optometry barely



exists in a form familiar to us. In some, there are educational programs that are beginning to help develop optometry, and some of us have had involvement in those efforts. I have been fortunate in my academic career at NECO to have engagement with vision care and optometry in many countries in Latin

America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. All different, all interesting, and to various degrees, exciting, frustrating,

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Chris Burke

WEBSITE

www.VOSH-ONE.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

• Next VOSH ONE Meeting:

Sunday, May 5th 8:45 am at
NECO. RSVP: Ilara Donarum at
ikdonarum@gmail.com

• It's that time again! Don't forget to
submit your **VOSH-ONE**
membership dues for 2019.

Dues are \$40 and can be paid

securely online via

PayPal (follow the

QR code here) or

by check (made

payable to VOSH-

ONE) to the

following address:

VOSH-ONE, c/o

Andrea Murphy, PO Box 371,

Grantham, NH 03753. Please also

be sure to include your updated

contact information. We hope you

join us at a meeting and/or mission

in the coming year!



• A **\$1,000 grant** has been
established by the Volunteer
Optometric Service to Humanities
(VOSH) ONE members
representing the New England
region. The award will go to two
students from The New England
College of Optometry in either
graduating class of 2020 and/or
2021. Applications for the award
will be sent out later in 2019.

• **Joint AAO/WCO meeting**
from Oct 23- 27, 2019. The
World Council of Optometry

(WCO) invites you to be part of the
3rd World Congress of Optometry to
be held in partnership with the
American Academy of Optometry
(AAO) from October 23-27, 2019.

This global event will be held in
Orlando, Florida. WCO invites
educators, optometrists, researchers,
public health experts, students to
submit abstracts for continuing
education lectures, workshops,
scientific program.

Scientific Program and poster
Submissions Open - May 1- 31,
2019

Come to the AAO/WCO and stay
for the VOSH International
meeting on Sunday, Oct 27, 2019.

more announcements on next page



VOSH
INTERNATIONAL™
Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity™

www.VOSH.org

***The freedom to see:
Providing the gift of
vision and eye health to
people worldwide.***

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Tentative VOSH trip to El Salvador, Nov 9-16, 2019.**

Combined dental/optometric group. Contact Jenifer Ambler, OD, ambleroptometry@gmail.com

- This year's **VOSH-ONE scholarship was awarded to Lindsay Michaud.**

She is a member of the NECO Class of 2019. She served as the student VOSH Vice President from 2017-18 and travelled to the Dominican Republic on their annual mission last year. Congratulations, Lindsay - we wish you all of the best in your future endeavors!

- Dr. Derek Feifke has a selection of **optical frames to donate for an eyecare mission.** If you are in need of frames, please be in touch directly with Dr. Feifke: idocderek@gmail.com

- The **QR Code** is a physical representation of data. It is essentially a barcode that can be scanned from any imaging device, such as a cell phone camera or barcode scanning app. As VOSH-ONE embraces a new generation of technology, this QR code can easily and efficiently direct interested persons to the VOSH-ONE website, without the necessity of typing the URL. This has potential to increase traffic to the website, especially from individuals inquiring about the organization



while mobile. The QR code can be copied, pasted, and reprinted on multiple digital and physical marketing platforms.

- VOSH missions can be very rewarding, but organizing a mission is not an easy task to undertake. VOSH-ONE would like to encourage and support new VOSH trip leaders by offering a **\$500 travel stipend to VOSH-ONE members** who are planning their first eyecare mission. Recipients of the travel stipend will be paired with an experienced VOSH-ONE member who will act as a mentor to support the recipient during their trip planning process. VOSH-ONE hopes that this starter stipend and mentorship will help ease the burden of planning a first trip.

Note: Whether or not you receive a stipend, VOSH-ONE is still here to

help support you in planning any of your eyecare missions. Please reach out to us if you would like to be paired with a mentor or if you have any questions.

VOSH-ONE Travel Stipend Requirements:

1. The applicant must be a VOSH-ONE member.
2. The applicant must be the primary organizer of the proposed eyecare mission. This trip must be the first mission for which the applicant is the primary organizer.
3. The applicant must have participated in at least one VOSH mission in the past.
4. The applicant must provide the name of a facilitator or liaison in the project country.
5. At least 200 people/patients must be serviced during the mission.
6. The applicant must write a short report to be included in the VOSH-ONE newsletter following completion of their trip.

****Students do not qualify for this stipend.**

Visit the VOSH-ONE website at www.vosh-one.org for more information or to apply.

Conquering One Eye Exam at a Time

VOSH Trip to Dominican Republic

By Mr. Biren Patel – Student, NECO

VAMOS CHICOS! Early in 2019, I had the great opportunity to travel to the Dominican Republic to provide eye exams to the underserved neighborhoods of Santo Domingo and Santiago. Alongside 21 other students and 5 optometrists we examined a total of 800 patients, all in different age ranges from babies to children to elderly. This all became possible through the VOSH club at NECO. Each year the club travels to a country in the developing world. In order to attend this mission trip, students are required to fundraise, volunteer, and perform vision screenings by the middle of their third year. This trip would not have been possible without the help of each student and doctor. Everyone played a huge role, whether it was dispensing glasses, helping with retinoscopy, or working in the ocular disease station and educating the patient.

Upper year students had told me that this trip was going to be one life changing and memorable experience, and I can attest that it has been nothing less. Each and every one of us was able to take away clinical pearls and better our own clinical skills to levels that I was not expecting. Each of the 5 doctors provided a unique learning environment and taught us their own methods of modifying eye exams specific to each case. I can now say that I am more confident

when working with patients when I go to clinic and even when I tutor students at school. We worked with two organizations - Batey Relief Alliance and Project Mañana--that were very welcoming, whether that was learning new Spanish phrases or teaching us how to bachata. Most of these patients had never received eye care before, and after this trip majority of them received proper visual correction, artificial tears for dry eyes, sunglasses for protection, or 6 months worth of glaucoma drops.

I vividly remember one of my last patients at Project Mañana was 70 years old and had trouble reading the Bible before going to bed. She had never received eyecare before and so assisting her and helping save her vision was such a memorable experience. She received glasses for distance and at near to help her read as well as sunglasses for protection. The moment she put them on she prayed for me and wished me nothing but the best in life and couldn't thank me enough. I would highly recommend all students at some point attend a mission trip--it is an eye opening experience. The health care system in developing countries is not comparable to the U.S., and it is amazing how people live day to day with the minimal resources they have. You can learn more about VOSH at svoshneco.org and consider donating!



Nicaragua 2018

Joe D'Amico O.D.
eyeclam@aol.com

We enjoyed another VOSH/ ONE trip to Granada, Nicaragua February 2 through February 9. Boston was snow and sleet for our early morning flight, with de icing and delay in leaving we had less than 5 minutes for our connection in Miami. Luckily the Managua gate was across the hall from our arrival and we all made it. There was a bit of a problem when American Airlines thought Nancy and Lee were too heavy (good thing I was already on the plane). The airline lost Karen's suitcase, but she did get her case the next day.

We spent the day Saturday doing triage. The ophthalmology group depends on our screening to find people who need surgery. We didn't keep count, but I estimate we saw about 200 people in a very long day.



Our group included ODs Karen Koumjian, Lee Lerner, Nancy Wu, and myself. We had 2 people dispensing: Nicole Chase and Shelly Grossman. We didn't have any NECO students this year, but we had 3 Nicaraguan Optometry students: Ariana Gutierrez, Cindy Artola, and Herman Cruz. We also had a Nicaraguan medical student, Ernesto Chavarria.

During our 4 days of clinic we were able to see just under 600 people, dispensed about 1000 pairs of glasses, and gave out drops for glaucoma and bacterial conjunctivitis. I had a patient on triage day that had a marginal ulcer; we didn't have our drugs with us so the fellow came to our hotel that night where he was given eye drops.



Since we have had problems in the past getting eyeglasses back to people, we decided to give new frames and a written Rx for people needing glasses for which we didn't have inventory. In Nicaragua lenses are not expensive, but frames are very expensive.

My friend Eddy (I fit him with contacts 16 years ago, when he was 10) met us at a restaurant where I gave him a year's supply of contacts. His Rx is -8.50. Eddy now works as an engineer in Managua.

On a personal note, I've been making VOSH trips for about 28 years now and I would like to see this clinic continued, I am looking to find someone who would like to take over the clinic. I would be happy to help set things up for next year and even work with someone to lead a group into this beautiful city. This is a turnkey situation as I have all the contacts, etc. I am available to sit with any potential leader and continue this conversation, so please don't hesitate to consider getting involved.



Sale of South African beaded artwork raises funds for VOSH-ONE and artists

On December 9, 2018 Dr. Derek Feifke presented a check for \$1800 to VOSH-ONE, the proceeds from the sale of artwork he brought back from South Africa in July 2018. He purchased intricately made beaded animals directly from the artists, Tawanda and Trust, who both make the animals and sell them on a sidewalk in Johannesburg. It is a win-win situation, as Dr. Feifke is able to support the artists, who have difficulty making a basic living, and VOSH benefits as a result of the sales.

Dr. Feifke is seen here with the president of VOSH –ONE, Ilara Donarum, and with the artists and some of their work. Stay tuned for more beaded animals to be available early next year as the fundraising will continue. Dr. Feifke used to raise funds for VOSH in the past (almost \$25,000) via running the Boston Marathon 7 times. The VOSH scholarship is a direct result of those funds.

Please be in touch with VOSH ONE President, Ilara Donarum, ikdonarum@gmail.com, if you have a fundraising idea.

Vietnam

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and confusing, but all memorable. Many of you can say pretty much the same. For me, however, the most memorable has been experiencing and helping to develop optometry in Vietnam.

Vietnam obviously is a country that has had a most unusual and challenging history with the United States, for all the reasons we know, especially for those of my baby boomer generation. I had the opportunity of traveling there first a year and a half ago under the auspices of the Brien Holden Vision Institute (BHVI) and VOSH International (VI) with the intent of helping the new optometry program that is being developed in Hanoi, and which is in their fourth year, with the first graduation planned for this summer. My job was to help them with curriculum, the development of clinical programs, and help educate the ophthalmology programs in Vietnam as to what optometry is and could be for improving the quality



and access to vision care for the 100 million people in Vietnam.

The program is housed within the department of ophthalmology in the lead medical school in the country, the Hanoi Medical University. The department chair of ophthalmology is a very strong advocate for optometry and is using all of his resources and political capital in its development. There are only 5 Vietnamese optometrists currently in Hanoi, 4 teaching in the program. The leader was trained at LV Prasad in India, the other 3 in Malaysia, and their skills are quite good. About a half dozen or so of the ophthalmologists are also involved in the teaching, both didactic and clinical. There are about 50 students in each of the 4 classes, so each of the core faculty have an enormous set of responsibilities, frankly much more than at NECO or other American optometry programs. This year, one of my former students at NECO, Dr. Ving Vu, is a visiting faculty member through BHVI and VI support, providing many skills and experience that are enhancing the teaching and clinical programs. There is also a much smaller program in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon as we know it). Another former NECO student will be spending a year helping out in that program, starting in a few months.

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Vietnam

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The students are wonderful, eager to learn, very conscientious in their studies, and hard working. Some speak good English, others not, but whenever I am teaching, either faculty or students interpret, rather seamlessly at that. The clinical programs are expanding pretty rapidly, and we are adding significant new clinical venues on a steady basis. The patients are wonderful and appreciative of the care and attention they receive. Hanoi is a huge, intensely busy, and very interesting in many ways. The people are extremely friendly to Americans, especially given the history. It is a wonderful place to visit.

There is a great need for additional faculty to provide more clinical experience for the students. That presents an opportunity for VOSH members to help provide

some supplementation to the faculty. There have been a few Vietnamese-American optometrists

that have come over and spent a few days or weeks working with the students in various ways, and there is a great opportunity for other Americans (not necessarily Vietnamese speaking, but obviously quite helpful) to do the same. There would need to be at least weeks or months of commitment. If anyone is interested, please email me and we can talk some more.

Bruce Moore OD,
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ORLANDO
3rd World Congress of Optometry

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPTOMETRY WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY

Join Us

For the 3rd World Congress of Optometry presented in partnership with the American Academy of Optometry.

October 23-27, 2019

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Visit worldcongressofoptometry.org