



VOSH-ONE

Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity / of New England

Winter/Spring 2011-2012



At the Boston meeting, V/I president Ellis Potter, OD, presented the Humanitarian-of-the-Year award to Don Kuehn, OD, of Kansas, (r) whose dedication to VOSH dates back to the early 70s, when VOSH founder Dr. Franklin Harms used to round up colleagues, then fly them in his own plane to places where there was great need of their services.

V/I Annual Meeting in Boston ... a student's perspective

By Kristin White,

SVOSH-NECO president,

New England College of Optometry

This year, VOSH-INTERNATIONAL (V/I) held its Annual Meeting in Boston, providing a unique opportunity for New England College of Optometry SVOSH students. Until recently, we hadn't had much of a chance to interact with other schools' SVOSH chapters, but this past summer, Drs. Greg Pearl (V/I President) and John Spencer (board member of V/I) initiated a quarterly student VOSH conference call. For the first time, SVOSH participants were able to connect with our counterparts around the country who are trying to do the same thing at their schools: provide eye care to an international community and make that opportunity available to everyone interested at their schools.

Because the V/I Annual Meeting was to take place on the campus of NECO, we thought, what better way to be good

The Torch is passed...

At the VOSH-ONE Chapter Annual Meeting in May 2011, then president Lee Lerner, OD, handed over the VOSH-ONE presidency to Wendy Crusberg, OD, of Dover, NH. The treasurer's position also shifted, from Joe D'Amico, OD, to Andrea Murphy, OD, of West Lebanon, New Hampshire. Her duties will now encompass responsibility for maintaining our membership list, a separate position previously held by Dr. Jennifer D'Amico. The two newest Board leaders represent a significant shift from the older, founding guardians, to a younger generation of dynamic leaders who were inspired by their significant VOSH experiences while students at the New England College of Optometry. We welcome their vision and pledge our ongoing support.

About our new VOSH-ONE president: Dr. Wendy Crusberg (below r.) graduated from the New England College of Optometry in 2010. While in optometry school, she actively participated in the student chapter of VOSH-ONE and was president of the student chapter in 2009.

While in school, she participated in eye care missions to both the Dominican Republic and to Colombia. Following graduation she continued her involvement in VOSH and was very happy to accept the nomination for VOSH-ONE president. Dr. Crusberg is licensed to practice in Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

She currently works at Jordan Family Eyecare in Rochester, NH, alongside another past VOSH-ONE president, Joseph "Jay" Jordan. She enjoys all aspects of optometry, but holds special interests in the treatment of low vision, the use of specialty contact lenses, and the diagnosis and treatment of binocular disorders. Dr. Crusberg is a member of the American Optometric Association, the American Academy of Optometry, and the Maine and New Hampshire Optometric Associations. Dr. Crusberg resides with her husband in downtown Dover, New Hampshire. She enjoys traveling, running, biking, hiking, and cooking in her spare time.



About our new treasurer/membership secretary: Dr. Andrea Murphy (below l.) graduated from the New England College of Optometry in 2008. While in optometry school she was an active member of the student VOSH-ONE chapter and was president of the group in 2007. She participated in missions to Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic during that time. Following graduation, Dr. Murphy pursued a residency in ocular disease and low vision at the Jesse Brown VAMC and Hines VAH Blind Rehabilitation Center, both in the Chicagoland area, and is ACOM (Advanced Competency in Medical Optometry) certified. Dr. Murphy has been a staff optometrist at the White River Junction VAMC in White River Junction, Vermont since 2009.

She greatly enjoys serving our Veteran population and specializes in the treatment and management of ocular disease and low vision. In addition, she provides training to an abundance of rotating student interns and residents and holds adjunct clinical faculty positions both at the New England College of Optometry and Ohio State University.

Dr. Murphy is a member of the American Academy of Optometry, the AOA, the National Association of Veterans Affairs Optometrists, as well as the New Hampshire Optometric Association.

Dr. Murphy resides in West Lebanon, New Hampshire and enjoys reading, running, traveling to visit family/friends, and college football (Go Mizzou.)

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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.

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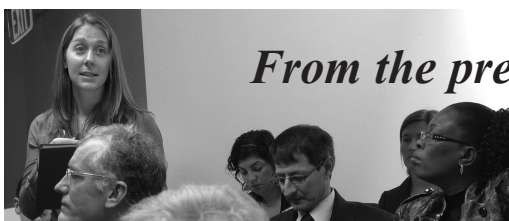
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Please visit us at

www.vosh-one.org



VOSH-ONE president Wendy Crusberg reporting on our Chapter activities at the V/I meeting

From the president's desk

For yet another year, VOSH-ONE members have gone above and beyond by utilizing their optometric skills to bring eye health care to people in need all over the world. As the new VOSH-ONE president, it gives me great pride to represent such a truly inspiring organization. This year alone, VOSH-ONE members participated in eye care missions to Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, and El Salvador, just to name a few.

In addition to the usual mission trips, this year was unique for VOSH-ONE in that we had the pleasure of hosting the VOSH/INTERNATIONAL Annual Meeting right here in Boston, MA. The meeting was held at the New England College of Optometry on October sixteenth, coinciding with the American Academy of Optometry Annual Meeting. Presenters from all over the world gathered to discuss past, present, and future mission trips, as well as to brainstorm ways to create more sustainable eye care throughout the world. Presentations were given by representatives from a number of different volunteer organizations including Optometry Giving Sight, ASAPROSAR (Salvadoran Association for Rural Health), AFEO (African Council of Optometry), CRUDEM (Center for Rural Development of Milot, Haiti), and ALDO (Latin American Association of Optometry). Presentations were also given by companies introducing new optometric "gadgets" aimed at easing the delivery of optometric care in a rural setting (hand-held auto refractors, ready-made glasses kits, new technology to detect cataracts with the touch of a button, etc).

Also worth mentioning was a presentation done by Dr. Harry Zeltzer, OD, a VOSH-ONE founding member, V/I webmaster, and overall VOSH enthusiast. He painted a wonderful picture of how VOSH-ONE came to be and highlighted all of the things our organization has been able to accomplish over the years. His presentation had us all engaged; I don't think he could have done a better job representing our group.



Dr. Harry I. Zeltzer speaking about our history

Looking ahead to 2012, VOSH-ONE is excited about what we have to come. Of course many of us have plans for upcoming eye care missions, but we have other orders of business to look forward to as well. Providing scholarships to students at the New England College of Optometry is a new tradition as of last year, one we plan to continue. Two scholarships will be awarded to students who demonstrate true potential for leadership and volunteer initiative. Last year's scholarships were awarded to Jenna Walden, a fourth-year student from the class of 2011, and James Sanborn, a third-year student from the class of 2012. Jenna and James were very appreciative of our generosity.



NECO student James Sanborn, shown here with colleague Mary Conroy, was one of two recipients of the first annual VOSH-ONE travel scholarships.

In addition to providing scholarships to students, VOSH-ONE has also undertaken the project of re-vamping the VOSH-ONE website this year. In a world where electronic media is becoming more and more prevalent, we strive to keep up. Watch for changes and updates and be sure to provide us your email addresses and changes so we can keep you informed.

All in all, it has been a busy year for VOSH-ONE, and as always there is so much more to do! I look forward to sharing the journey with all of you as president and have high hopes for what we will achieve in the year to come.

Joint mission to Costanza, Dominican Republic, April 30-May 6, 2011

By Derek Feifke, OD

On this, my first trip to the Dominican Republic, I represented VOSH as part of a multidisciplinary team including a local Dominican physician, ENT specialist, dentist, pediatrician and five nurses.

I was the first optometrist to serve the "Constanza Mission" team. My fourteen-year-old son accompanied me. Our team included three Rotarians who are introducing a desperately needed water filtration system to the area, along with five Peace Corps volunteers.

Our team set up clinics in the mountainous region of Constanza. This beautiful part of the Dominican Republic is at the highest altitude in the Caribbean at about 4500 feet and is also home to the tallest waterfall in the Dominican Republic.

The Constanza Mission was established six years ago. Mission founders have worked with the local hospital to upgrade and improve facilities since then. A full-time Dominican doctor works at the hospital overseeing patient care in the Mission's absence and mentoring local health care workers. A medical team from the South Shore Hospital visits the same region twice a year and the area

has seen a substantial improvement in the standard and sustainability of medical care.

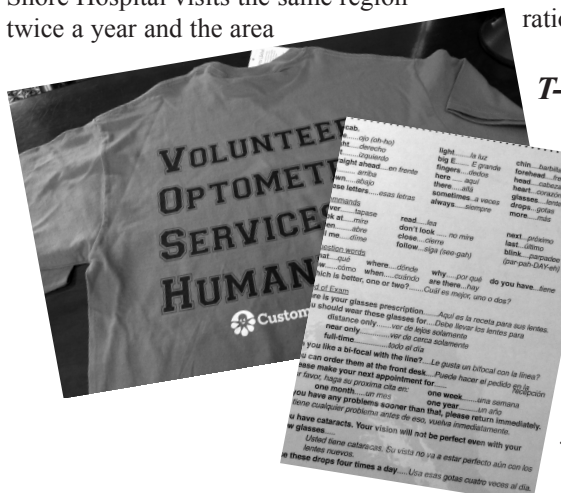
In addition to the clinic in Constanza, we held others in surrounding barrios in the mountains. Patients were first triaged by the nurses and then examined by the doctors. As always, there was a high demand for our services. I examined and treated 150 patients and dispensed about three hundred pairs of glasses. Complicated lens prescriptions have been made up by my office lens lab and will be sent to Constanza.

An ophthalmologist from the South Shore Hospital will join a mission next May and perform surgery on sixteen patients who were identified for cataract and pterygia surgery.

Being a part of a multi-disciplinary team is most beneficial to the patients and very satisfying to the health care team, in that varied and multiple health care issues can be addressed at once. For myself, I found that I learned much from the other clinicians, and similarly they were able to call upon me to address ophthalmic issues that would not have been addressed had I not been on the team. I feel that all VOSH missions benefit from this type of collaboration.



Dr. Feifke checking the pressure of a patient's eye



T-SHIRTS and POCKET-SIZE SPANISH-ENGLISH CARDS: SVOSH-NECO

initiated two popular fundraisers prior to the VOSH/INTERNATIONAL Annual Meeting. Students continue to offer green t-shirts with the VOSH logo for \$15 and handy laminated pocket-size English/Spanish reference cards for just \$3 each. To order or for further information, contact Kristin White at Kristin_white@neco.edu

Upcoming VOSH-ONE Eye Clinics

Have you contemplated joining a VOSH trip, but then hesitated to follow through with a call for more details? Please don't hesitate to e-mail or call one of the trip leaders listed below to talk about taking part in a VOSH-ONE eyecare clinic. They are passionate about the project they are involved in. If these dates or sites don't work for you, go to www.VOSH.org for information regarding additional VOSH trips scheduled by other Chapters.

● Jenifer Ambler, OD, of Vermont continues as leader of the eyecare section of a combined eye/dental care team that's been dubbed the "Sight and Bite" group. Dr. Ambler will be returning sometime in February 2012 and is seeking more ODs so they can see more people. Team will once again serve in Suchitoto and Apopa, El Salvador. Contact: amblerj@sover.net

● In late January, 2012, faculty members and students from the New England College of Optometry will return to the Bluefields area of Nicaragua to work with Bob Peck, program coordinator of a team of Williams College students. Contact: harbe@neco.edu

● Additional ODs are welcomed to assist with a multi-disciplinary medical mission (ASAPROSAR) when it returns to Santa Ana and San Miguel, El Salvador, in late January 2012. Contact:

harryizeltzer@comcast.net

● SVOSH-ONE, the student VOSH group at the New England College of Optometry, is planning a student trip during spring break, April 2011. Faculty Advisor is Bina Patel, OD. Contact: PatelB@neco.edu or Kristin_white@neco.edu

● Trips to Solentiname, Nicaragua and an orphanage in Haiti are in planning stages for 2012. Contact Joe D'Amico, OD: eyeclam@aol.com

Please share this newsletter with your patients, colleagues and friends.

SVOSH-NECO serves Batey San Gonzalo, Dominican Republic, April 2011

By Mary Conroy, NECO class of 2012

On April 9, 2011, 15 NECO optometry students and five optometrists departed Boston for an 8 day mission trip to the Dominican Republic.

Batey Gonzalo is a very poor village in Monte Plata whose primary source of income is sugar cane and cattle farming. The population includes field laborers well into their seventies, still forced to work to feed themselves and their families. Malnutrition and poor access to health care are both serious problems affecting the residents of this village year round.

This was our fifth collaboration with the Batey Relief Alliance (BRA). The BRA is a non-profit organization that was established 10 years ago to help eliminate the longstanding disparities in healthcare & education present throughout the bateys of the Dominican Republic.

The clinic site was a community building in the batey located an hour bus ride away from the hotel. In this building with no electricity, we were able to create a functional clinic with four stations: an entrance-testing station, six refracting lanes, an ocular disease station, and an optical dispensary. It was organized so

everyone involved would be able to spend time at every station before the week was over.

On Thursday afternoon the village received its usual afternoon rain. But this time it was accompanied by some fierce winds which, unfortunately, ripped a large section of the building's roof off as we were giving exams. Rain began to pour in on all the students and the patients, but because of everyone's quick thinking and the cooperation of villagers, students and doctors were able to grab our equipment and quickly run to the vans to prevent any water damage to supplies. It was quite an intense experience that students will never forget.

Villagers worked hard to clean the water and mud out of the building after the rain stopped so we were able to finish giving exams on Friday, our last clinic day.

Over the course of the week our group examined approximately 1,000 patients, from infants to the very elderly. Some people traveled hours from the surrounding villages to be



seen and lined up well before we arrived to ensure they received an exam form.

Despite the weather-related problem, the student VOSH mission to the Dominican Republic 2011 proved to be a great success. We experienced a great sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction in knowing we were able to provide the gift of sight for many people, a gift that is truly priceless.

SVOSH-NECO wants to serve on your VOSH team

Remember what VOSH was like when you were a student? Looking to enhance your VOSH trip and share it with some who have never had such an experience? Invite SVOSH-NECO students on your next trip! Due to the growing interest in international eye-care here at NECO combined with the way our trips are typically geared towards third-year students who have completed a certain number of volunteer hours, many students who are interested in participating are unable to. We are doing our best to change this! If you would like to invite a small group of NECO students (at least 2) on your next international clinic, please contact: Kristin White at Kristin_white@neco.edu with information about trip dates, location, cost, and number of students you would like to bring! Thank you for considering this unique opportunity on your next VOSH clinic!



Above: Monika Oseicka with a patient; Top right: Priscilla Lenihan testing a young girl Bottom r.: Lining up and waiting patiently to be seen

MAKE A NOTE:

Our Chapter website: www.VOSH-ONE.org

Our student Chapter-One website: svoshneco.org

Our parent organization website: www.VOSH.org

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You may also want to note these dates:

VOSH-ONE Annual Meeting/Elections, early May 2012

in the NECO Clausen Room, Beacon St., Boston (9AM-NOON)

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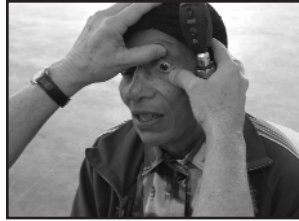
VOSH/INTERNATIONAL Annual Meeting, October 2012

Location to be announced

Mission to Matagalpa and St. Emelia, Nicaragua, March 2011

By Joe D'Amico, OD, Trip Leader

We had the best trip...but then that's the way I always feel at the end of a productive VOSH week. Our small group of fourteen was assisted by a well-organized farm workers' collaborative, Asociacion de Trabajadores del Campo (ATC). It was fortunate that we had their help as customs in Managua has gotten more difficult to navigate successfully. In the past, you went to the customs area and pushed a button. If you got a green light, you were done and brought all your bags into the country. If you got a red light, you had to talk your way into bringing all your bags into the country.



All bags are now screened. I was about to have my bags confiscated, but was able to enlist the help of a porter and got through. One bag full of glasses was temporarily lost by the airline. In addition, Dr. Chris Fields lost 4 large bags of clinic

supplies to the custom agent on arrival. Representatives of ATC successfully negotiated with customs so that we had all bags on the second full day of clinic.

The team headed north for three and-a-half days of clinics. We used a school in Santa Emelia in the hills outside of Matagalpa for 1 ½ days. In San Nicolas exams were done on the second floor; dispensing was on the first floor. We had to do exams on the ground level for several people who couldn't climb the stairs. In Esteli (where one can get good cigars and custom cowboy boots) we used a building that was under construction. Our final clinic day was spent just outside of Managua at La Escuela Obrera Campesina Internacional.

During our clinic days, we saw just under 1,000 people. We had a good supply of glasses and gave multiple pairs to most people. Upon returning home, I had 50 pairs of glasses made up by Essilor

which Dr. Jay Jordan brought back to Nicaragua on a return trip.

We're especially grateful to our all-around helper/driver/translator Roger Barrios and his wife Arlen Arce who were extremely helpful throughout the week.

I hope to be able to spend more time in Esteli in the future. As we continue forward, we need to get letters from the Ministry of Health to get through customs or we need to work with a group with clout like the ATC.



Seasoned dispensary volunteers Leslie Caputo(l) and Judith West fill a prescription.

Student perspective on V/I Annual Meeting in Boston

Continued from page 1

hosts and hostesses than by offering SVOSH students from other schools the chance to stay with us? We called this the "Be Our Guest" program, a spin on Couch Surfing, where we offered our guests a couch or a futon, or if you were lucky, an air mattress. In exchange, we made some great friends and shared some interesting VOSH ideas! It made us proud to host not only at our apartments, but also in the beautiful setting of our Beacon Street school - our second home where most of us spend the majority of our time.

After a flurry of emails, the VI meeting had arrived, and SVOSH students finally

got to meet the people on the other ends of that conference call. For us students, we really enjoyed being able to meet each other at the pizza party/social the evening before the official meeting. It was an informal way to get to know each other and talk about how our trips are run, and learn from each others' successes, no matter how small. I was so inspired by talking to future colleagues in their SVOSH endeavors at their own schools, especially Southern College of Optometry which hosted 9 trips over one week last year that encompassed more than a quarter of their school's student population.

I was inspired not only by my fellow VOSH students, but also by the speakers at the all-day VI meeting on Sunday. To hear all that has been done on so many fronts and to know that VOSH has reached and collaborated in nearly all corners of the globe is a powerful realization. The lecture hall where

I've spent countless hours previously was somehow transformed as I was taken away to the places where these VOSH experiences are taking place: Western Africa, Haiti, Nicaragua, El Salvador,... It made me truly believe that the dream I have envisioned of sustainable eye care across the world will one day be realized.

It means a lot that VOSH/INTERNATIONAL is working so hard to incorporate students and facilitate our joint efforts. It shows us that while so much has been done already in VOSH, we are the new generation, and our ideas are encouraged and will be heard because of the willingness and acceptance of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL. With collaboration comes the spread of new ideas, and we're excited to say we'll be sharing our first NECO-SCCO joint trip this Thanksgiving led by Dr. Greg Pearl to El Salvador.

We also look forward to our next conference as we chat with not only our future colleagues but our new friends, to share ideas and work toward providing the best care to those most in need.



THE VOSH/INTERNATIONAL BOARD gathered for a photo following the Annual Meeting held at the NECO's Beacon St. campus on October 16. Dr. Bina Patel (front, right) who's also a board member of our Chapter and on the faculty of NECO, deserves well-earned kudos for coordinating the successful V/I event.

The best VOSH experience includes making friends

by Kate Meisner, age 16

Ever since I started going to El Salvador with my mom, Dr. Jenifer Ambler, way back in 5th grade, I have always been the youngest of the group. Not only the youngest, but usually, the only person under 30. I didn't really have a problem with that, because I had - and still have - friends native to the country, but I guess it was, in a word, ... annoying. The adults always tried to "include" me, but it never really worked. I spent many meals and gatherings either staring into space and not paying attention or trying desperately simply to comprehend what everyone was talking about. Or, I would attempt to keep myself busy in our room until my mom came through the door asking what I was doing by myself, away from everyone else.

Thankfully, all this changed this past February 2011. We had put the word out that we wanted more helpers, including minors, especially ones who spoke good

Spanish. I spread the word around. Several people expressed interest, but only one came through and actually went on the trip. He was two years older than I am and we barely knew each other, but by the end of the trip we became pretty good friends. He was taking advanced Spanish and I was sort of intermediate.

The group included an optometrist from near Albany, New York. She brought her entire family, which included her husband, daughter, son, and her twin boys, all of whom were slightly older or younger than me. All together we were six kids from the States, plus we had our translator's children: a boy, a girl, and a baby girl. The girl and I are the same age and we have been friends since I started going on these trips.

Having several people my age to talk to

and be with was great. I mean, it's true, as I've gotten older I have been able to understand the adult conversations more, but having other teenagers there was

incredible. We worked well together in the clinics, hung out evenings and, of course, we talked about everything under the sun. None of us will ever forget the time we had dancing in the rain, having the Salvadoran kids kick our butts at sports, stuffing ourselves with amazing food, walking down the cobble-stone streets with linked arms, staying up late to talk and

see the sunrise.

We had become so close over the week that we were sad it all had to end. We vowed to stay in contact no matter what. Meeting up in person isn't so easy, but, meanwhile, we talk on Facebook.



Kate (r) with one of her Salvadoran friends.



VOSH-ONE

Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity of New England

Please join VOSH-ONE and help provide the gift of sight to needy individuals in other countries as well as within our own borders. All VOSH-ONE members are members of VOSH/INTERNATIONAL.

Whether you are interested in taking trips, making a donation, have glasses and equipment to offer or just want to be informed of our projects, we value your support. VOSH-ONE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Annual dues, just

\$40

Enclosed is an additional donation of

\$_____ to further the work of
VOSH-ONE.

Please send your
tax-deductible check to:

VOSH-ONE

Dr. Andrea Murphy

Treasurer

18 Winter St. West

West Lebanon, NH 03784

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Tel. () _____

e-mail _____

Be sure your writing is legible and don't forget to let us know if your email address changes.

Eyecare clinics on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua continue

by Bob Peck,

Adjunct Professor, Williams College

The Winter Study January Course at Williams College, entitled "Culture & Eye Care on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua" will embark on its 10th expedition this January 2012.

This year's effort will bring the number of examinations to about 30,000 patients, giving reading and distance glasses to about 65 to 70% of those examined and sunglasses to all. The 2012 course will bring a total of 124 Williams students to examine the realities of the Third World.

Optometrists Elise Harb, OD and Katie Field, OD have supervised the students' exams on many of these trips. Williams College, N.E. College of Optometry and a Nicaraguan non-profit foundation have enabled these educational and humanitarian efforts to be possible.