



Good fortune overcomes 'curse' of avoidable blindness

"I felt we were cursed. How else do you explain a disease that affected my grandparents, my father and now me?"

These despairing words came from Joseph Kosencha, an 18-year old who lives in a tiny village called Isampiw in rural Kenya. For over 10 years, Joseph had suffered pain and constant tearing in both eyes. With his discomfort worsening over the years, activities like going to school and looking after animals became almost unbearable. In effect, his life was put on hold – he believed it was only a matter of time before he became blind.

Fortunately for Joseph, his luck changed one day, thanks to a chance meeting with his uncle. The uncle had heard a public health

broadcast coming from a loudspeaker mounted on a vehicle that was driving through the sparsely-populated area. The message informed listeners about an upcoming free eye screening, sponsored by Operation Eyesight. Imagine Joseph's excitement to hear this news!

Joseph attended the screening, where his eye condition was assessed as *trachomatous trichiasis*, very common in Kenya's Maasai Mara region.



Ric Rowan

We hope these playful Kenyan children will never struggle with trachoma, like Joseph did!

Since many people live in close proximity to cattle and goats, they are constantly exposed to disease-carrying flies; and general hygiene is poor because clean water is not readily available to wash faces and hands. This creates a vicious cycle of infection, disease and eventual blindness.

Soon afterwards, Joseph's surgery was performed at Kilgoris district hospital in Narok County. Thanks to Operation Eyesight's generous donors, he did not have to pay for his surgery or medication.

Today, Joseph reports he can open his eyes fully without pain or tearing. He is happy to be back in school, where his grades have improved along with his eyesight, and he intends to pursue his dream of becoming a preacher. He says he'll advise his father and grandparents not to be afraid of eye surgery, and plans to be an ambassador for trachoma control in his village.

"I am grateful to the doctors for alleviating my misery! To the people in Canada who made it possible, thank you very much. God bless you."

To learn how we're eradicating this terrible yet preventable disease, visit blog.operationeyesight.com and search for trachoma.



Dressed in his school uniform, Joseph smiles shyly at the photographer.

Gift dilemmas? We have the answer!

When it's time to think about holiday giving this year, consider two gifts in one! A gift from Operation Eyesight sends a beautiful message to a friend, family member or colleague, while helping us transform the lives of children, families and communities in Africa and India. Call us at **1-800-585-8265** or visit operationeyesight.com/giftguide to learn more.



Thanks for making our AGM possible!



A few of our longest-time supporters!

Close to 100 of our donors, supporters (including representatives of both the Jenkyns and Gullison families), board members, friends and staff gathered in Calgary on June 12 for our annual general meeting. Cake was eaten, drinks were enjoyed, our donors and supporters were celebrated and everyone sang "Happy birthday, Operation Eyesight." Such a great party couldn't have happened without our sponsors who made the event possible. Thank you to Active Accounting, Davis LLP, Greg McKernan Graphic Design, Maillot Homes, Renfrew Insurance; and Sure Systems. **We appreciate your support!**

You told us... why you read SightLines

"I give what I can so that others can have their sight restored." That sentiment was echoed many times in the responses to our SightLines reader survey earlier this year. We always love to hear from our donors and supporters, and this time was no exception! Our readers shared stories and told us why they give – and just what Operation Eyesight means to them.

The responses were full of common themes. Many respondents knew one or both of our founders, Art Jenkyns or Dr. Ben Gullison. There is no doubt that these two remarkable men made an impact on and touched the lives of many, many people. Other respondents have carried on traditions of giving inherited from their parents. Another common theme is empathy with the blind. Many of our respondents have struggled with their own eye problems, and they understand what it means to live with low vision or no vision at all. Finally, many donors were impressed by the work that we do, and wanted to help those less fortunate than themselves.

It was wonderful to receive so many replies and so many heartfelt stories of support. Operation Eyesight is thankful for all of our donors. **We couldn't do it without you!**

"I remember the Gullisons coming to Lancaster Baptist Church (Fairville United Baptist it was then) and showing us slides via their Magic Lantern of people receiving cataract surgery. My parents were long-supporters of the program, as I have been for most of my life."

"I once sponsored a clinic in memory of my parents. You sent me 40 pictures of the folks who had received sight as well as the cloth banner that was used the day of the clinic. It was wonderful! I was so impressed!"

"Dr. Ben Gullison spoke at our church years ago, telling about 'Baby Red Jacket,' a two year old who had cataracts. Since I had cataract surgery when I was 42, I knew I would support Operation Eyesight when it was formed. It is a wonderful charity. God bless!"

"Because I consider eyesight as a most precious gift and would like everyone - especially the less privileged financially - to have good eyesight. It is also my moral duty to help the needy."

"The Operation Eyesight program is concrete and specific with a clear 'vision.' I have been wearing glasses for 58 years. My correction is now in the range of -9.5, so I know what a difference the possibility of improvement makes!"

"I have seen the good work done by this organization. As someone who has required glasses/contact lens/surgery to help my vision, I realize how important it is to be able to see well."

Five decades of giving... wow!

One of the perks of being a 50-year old organization is we hear wonderful stories about our donors' connection with us... sometimes for 50 years! We really treasure these stories and we love to hear them, so our thanks go out to Percy Campbell and Audrey McIntosh for sending the following two letters.

How long have you supported Operation Eyesight? What does it mean to you? Let us know at communications@operationeyesight.com, or call us at **1-800-585-8265** and ask for Communications. *We'd love to hear your story!*



Our founder Art Jenkyns.

2013 is the year of my 80th birthday and marks 50 years since I was first involved with Operation Eyesight. Did you know that it was first called the Little Red-Shirt Club (only very briefly) and then the Dr. Ben Gullison Club, but he would have none of that. I was a member of the Baptist Men of First Baptist Church Calgary on the evening when we were holding a meeting in the basement of the church when Dr Gullison, on furlough leave, projected slides illustrating his work at Arogyavaram in Sompeta.

Art Jenkyns was our president at the time and Dr. Ben made a concerted effort to convince him that the Baptist Men, under Art's direction, should take up the cause to support his eye work in Sompeta. After a great deal of careful consideration, Art finally agreed, and look what happened!

At that time, it cost \$10 per cataract operation, so with the view of marking my personal anniversaries, I scrambled together the numbers as follows: $(50 + 80) \times 10 = \$1,300$ as the enclosed donation. I know it will be very well used. If by chance it helps to construct a water well that would be quite appropriate, because I spent my career as a water resources engineer.

Percy Campbell, Ottawa, ON

After reading *SightLines Spring 2013*, I decided to write to let you know our experience with Operation Eyesight. In 1963, we heard Dr. Ben Gullison speak at a local church here in Summerland. I also met his wife at a Mission Circle meeting. My husband and I have been supporting Operation Eyesight ever since then. We entertained Art Jenkyns in our home when he was visiting here.

So we have had a long connection with Operation Eyesight and are still supporters. In the last few years, my husband developed age-related macular degeneration, and receives treatment from an Indian doctor in Kelowna every six weeks, which has maintained his vision, and we are very thankful for that. When we go for his next appointment, we will take *SightLines Spring 2013* [issue]. Many blessings as you continue this wonderful work.

Audrey McIntosh, Summerland, BC

see...what a lasting gift can do

The gift of sight transforms lives and communities. Designating a gift to Operation Eyesight in your will is your opportunity to leave a lasting legacy of sight and hope for the most vulnerable people in India and Africa.

For more information, contact Jennifer Diggins at **1-800-585-8265** or digginsj@operationeyesight.com.

Together, we can do great things – for all the world to see.



Working 'narrower and deeper' continues to strengthen hospitals, benefit communities

To mark Operation Eyesight's 50th anniversary in 2013, each issue of *SightLines* this year has featured an article about our history. This month, we present highlights of the past 10 years and a glimpse into the future.

Over the past 50 years, Operation Eyesight has supported hospitals in a number of countries, including Haiti, Peru, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malawi, Bhutan, El Salvador, Rwanda and more. In those countries, we operated as a humanitarian charity, investing our donors' funds almost exclusively in the provision of cataract surgeries.

Over the past 10 years, we've evolved from that charity model to a true development organization, dedicated to eliminating avoidable blindness. Today, we work in India, Kenya, Zambia and Ghana, where we don't just fund cataract surgeries – we manage a comprehensive range of all levels of eye care, from training community workers to building or refurbishing hospital infrastructure. We have strong relationships with governments in the countries where we work. These partnerships encourage the program ownership and participation of communities, regions and countries that is crucial to sustainable development.

We refer to our work now as being "narrower and deeper" – "narrower" because we carefully choose the countries, regions and partners we work with to make a bigger investment with them; and "deeper" because in the communities where we do operate, we create maximum impact.

As a faithful donor, you will be pleased to know that Operation Eyesight is the only international non-governmental organization working in eye health to have made these important changes and to have achieved these notable results. We are proud to say that we are recognized as a leader and an innovator in the international eye health community. **And we couldn't have done any of it without your generous support!**

A few milestones of the past 10 years:

- 2005** We open two tertiary-level eye hospitals in India.
- 2005** Our founder Art Jenkyns passes away.
- 2007** Our first drilling project strikes water in Kenya.
- 2007** We open a new eye hospital in India.
- 2008** Marathon runner Norma Bastidas completes seven ultramarathons on seven continents in seven months, raising money for us and other eye health organizations.
- 2008** We begin a longstanding partnership with Standard Chartered Bank's multinational "Seeing is Believing" program.
- 2009** We reduce the number of our Indian hospital partners from 41 to 17, thus emphasizing quality over quantity.
- 2011** After we finish drilling 51 waterpoints in Kenya's Narok District, findings show trachoma has decreased by 65 percent in this region.
- 2011** We open an ophthalmologic operating theatre complex in Rwanda.
- 2012** We open a secondary eye hospital in Ghana and a tertiary-level ophthalmic centre in Zambia.
- 2013** Developed by our Indian staff, our "Hospital-Based Community Eye Health" model is endorsed as best practice by Vision 2020 India.

What's the vision for Operation Eyesight's future?

After years of refining our partnerships and consolidating our operations, we have developed a wealth of skills and expertise not only in eye health, but in implementing community development programs, managing water projects, and training.

"We regularly hear from organizations eager to partner with us or hire our expertise to help them reach World Health Organization's standards of quality care," says Brian Foster, executive director. "We envision working more closely with other eye health organizations as the next step in Operation Eyesight's evolution."

While we will continue to help individuals and communities, our ultimate goal is more far-reaching: to help enable every developing country in the world to achieve a comprehensive health care system that includes eye care – a system that they can sustain without foreign support. We hope you will continue to support us in this ambitious goal!



Supporters offer congratulations on 50 years

Thanks to our donors, Operation Eyesight has been saving sight and preventing blindness for 50 years! We have received kind and encouraging words from political leaders, hospital administrators, and officials in the international eye care community. Here's what they had to say...

How long have you supported Operation Eyesight? What does it mean to you? Let us know at communications@operationeyesight.com, or call us at **1-800-585-8265** and ask for Communications. We'd love to hear your story!

Iwould like to commend all those associated with Operation Eyesight for their commitment to the fight against global [avoidable] blindness. You can take satisfaction in knowing that you have made and continue to make a profound difference in the lives of so many people, the world over.

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada

With deep sense of appreciation and gratitude, I extend my congratulations to Operation Eyesight on the event of 50th anniversary celebrations. Siloam's association as Operation Eyesight's partner for the last 14 years has been one of trust and co-operation. Providing the gift of sight, for all the world to see has been Operation Eyesight's sincere commitment thus decreasing the avoidable global blindness. I wish the OE team the best in their future endeavours.

Dr. K. Shobha Naveen
Director, Siloam Eye Centre

Providing compassionate support and quality treatment is an important part of eye care. It brings optimism and a sense of stability to those in need. I am hopeful that Albertans will become active participants in your vision, whether it is raising funds for cataract surgery, providing custom-fitted prescription glasses or supporting prevention programs related to eye health.

Your commitment to preventing and treating avoidable blindness is an inspiration and an example to be followed. I wish you the best on your continued efforts in providing quality eye care to vulnerable communities around the world.

The Honourable Alison Redford
Premier of Alberta

Those of us fortunate enough to live in Canada are often unaware of how environmental factors in the developing world can cause blindness. Operation Eyesight works with partners in communities in Africa and India to provide quality eye care programs and sustainable community development. For the people Operation Eyesight assists, the ability to see is often the difference between a life of poverty and a life of promise.

I commend everyone who has been involved in any way with Operation Eyesight over the past five decades for all they have done to assist those in need. I wish Operation Eyesight much success as they continue to prevent and treat avoidable blindness throughout the world.

His Worship Naheed K. Nenshi
Mayor of Calgary

As a proud and grateful partner of the Operation Eyesight Universal community, I congratulate this wonderful organization on its 50th anniversary! I wish to join you in celebrating the glorious legacy that continues to inspire many, and share an unbounded optimism in your continued impact and relevance in shaping and enriching the lives of countless people, both young and old, through your work. Operation Eyesight is very much like a family dedicated to lifting the human race, especially the poor, through the fight against avoidable blindness.

Jared E. Anekeyah
Regional Manager,
Kenyan Water Resources Management Agency

At this 50th anniversary of a successful journey, Operation Eyesight Universal deserves much appreciation from many many beneficiaries. I wish the organization to grow in the coming days ahead to serve humanity. In my native country of Bangladesh, Operation Eyesight Universal also contributed in the prevention of blindness programme, bringing joy and happiness to the beneficiaries and members of their families.

Professor Rabiul Husain
Regional Chair for South East Asia,
International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)

International program leadership moves to India

We're pleased to announce that the leadership of our international programs in Africa and India is now in the very capable hands of Kashinath Bhoosnurmath, formerly our senior director of India Programs. It's a bold move. Operation Eyesight is one of the first Western-based non-profits to move responsibility for its programs to an in-country leader.

"In the four years that he's been with Operation Eyesight, Kashinath's leadership and business acumen have shone through," explains Brian Foster, executive director. "We look forward to him applying these skills more broadly in all our work, ensuring that we serve the people of Africa and India through thoughtful planning, regular monitoring and purposeful evaluation."



Kashinath visited our Calgary offices in July of this year.

Kashinath has been and continues to be a key contributor to our mission to eradicate avoidable blindness and to promote Dr. Ben Gullison's vision "to provide the best for the poorest."

As senior director, International Programs, Kashinath takes over the work of Lorie Gibson, who left Operation Eyesight for new opportunities. We wish Lorie all the best in her future adventures!

India's northeastern gateway to eye health

Siliguri Greater Lions Eye Hospital, located in North Bengal, India, is an advanced secondary level eye hospital run by the Lions Club of Siliguri Greater. Operation Eyesight has been a key supporter of the hospital since its founding in 1981.

The hospital started in a modest fashion, offering only basic patient care services. Operation Eyesight team members advised management on technical and managerial issues, and provided funding for improvement in services and upgrades to the hospital.

Dr. Subrata Saha, the current medical superintendent, joined the hospital in 1997 when it was still a small organization catering mostly to the poor. At the time, non-paying and paying patients were seen in separate blocks. Operation Eyesight staff suggested several structural and systemic changes to introduce quality and equity. As a consequence of these changes, today non-paying patients are seen in the same rooms as paying patients, with treatment remaining the same for both, although non-paying patients wait a little longer than those who pay. Dr. Saha is proud to report that the hospital has improved by leaps and bounds in all areas.

In 2005, Operation Eyesight recommended and provided funding to start the transformation of the hospital into a tertiary eye care centre. Comprehensive eye examinations were made

mandatory for all patients; staff were sent for professional training; and the facility as a whole was upgraded. Both the optical shop and pharmacy were expanded at Operation Eyesight's recommendation – a marketing strategy that has improved sales and contributed significantly to the increasing revenue of the hospital.

"Siliguri is a strong and successful hospital partner that has really embraced Operation Eyesight's self-sustaining approach," says Kashinath Bhoosnurmath, our senior director of International Programs. "The doctors have helped thousands of people regain their sight, regardless of their ability to pay. We are proud to work with them!"



Give a tribute in someone's name

Losing one's sight can be much worse than simply being not able to see. In the developing world, where health care is often scarce or unaffordable, sight is life. Donating through a Tribute Gift recognizes someone you care about while also giving the gift of sight. Ask about gifts that celebrate people and gifts given in memory of loved ones.

*For more information, contact us at
1-800-585-8265 or info@operationeyesight.com.*

Send your gift today.

You can help someone see a brighter tomorrow.

Donate online!

It's secure, easy and puts your gift to work immediately.

Go to

www.operationeyesight.com
and follow the links.

Make your gift:



By telephone: Toll-free in Canada and the USA: 1-800-585-8265



By mail: Canada:
Operation Eyesight Canada, 4 Parkdale Crescent NW, Calgary, AB T2N 3T8

United States:

Operation Eyesight USA, 14900 Interurban Ave. S. Suite 271 PMB 35,
Seattle, WA 98168-4654



Fax or scan and email this form: Fax: 403-270-1899
Email: admin@operationeyesight.com



Yes! I will support Operation Eyesight's sight saving projects by making a regular monthly gift of:

\$50 \$30 \$20 \$10 Other \$ _____
(*\$5 minimum*)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I prefer to make a one-time gift of:

\$100 \$75 \$50 \$20 Other \$ _____

Payment options:

I have enclosed my cheque payable to Operation Eyesight (or a blank cheque marked VOID to pre-authorize a Monthly Gift)

Charge my: Visa MasterCard American Express

Name on card: _____

Card number: _____

Signature: _____

Expiry date: ____/____ Security Code: _____

This donation is made on behalf of: an individual a business

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Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$20 or more unless otherwise requested.

We do not sell, trade or otherwise share our mailing lists. The information you provide will be used to keep you informed and up to date on the activities of Operation Eyesight, including our programs, special events, funding needs, and more. If you have questions about our organization or wish to be removed from any of these contacts, phone us at 1-800-585-8265 or email admin@operationeyesight.com.

I understand that my monthly donation will be automatically withdrawn from my bank account or charged to my credit card. I can change or cancel my monthly contribution at any time. To obtain a sample cancellation form, or for more information about my right to cancel a PAD Agreement, I may contact my financial institution or visit www.cdnpay.ca.

I have certain recourse rights if any debit does not comply with this agreement. For example, I have the right to receive reimbursement for any debit that is not authorized or is not consistent with this PAD Agreement. To obtain more information on my recourse rights, I may contact my financial institution or visit www.cdnpay.ca.

Please note that if more funds are received for a particular program, project or item than required, Operation Eyesight will re-allocate the funds to areas of highest priority.

Operation Eyesight is an international development organization dedicated to eliminating avoidable blindness in the developing world. For 50 years, our efforts have brought sight to more than two million people and delivered treatment to over 33 million others for a variety of potentially blinding conditions. We work in partnership with medical professionals and community development teams in Ghana, India, Kenya and Zambia to offer high-quality, comprehensive eye care services with long-lasting results.

SightLines is published three times a year by Operation Eyesight.
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Challenge and adventure generate wonderful support!

This year has seen Operation Eyesight supporters travel across the globe to raise funds for our projects in Africa and India. So far, we've seen supporters challenge themselves with hikes or runs in Spain, Vancouver and Iceland.



Joan Taylor and Gerry Wright

Through our partnership with Race for a Reason, Joan Taylor and Gerry Wright of Campbell River, BC checked an item off their "bucket lists" when they journeyed to Spain in April to complete a five-day hike on the storied El Camino de Santiago trail. They found that being able to pair it with fundraising for Operation Eyesight was a dream come true! Joan

and Gerry well surpassed their \$2,000 fundraising target – in fact, they had done so two months before they left for Spain.

Vancouver was a different kind of challenge. Dean Loewen, who serves as president of the Mechanical Contractors Association of British Columbia (MCABC), and a group of colleagues

and friends from across BC completed either a five-kilometre run or half-marathon course at the Scotiabank Vancouver Marathon in June. They were inspired to



Dean Loewen (fifth from right) and some of the MCABC crew

raise money to support our water projects in Zambia by Brad Diggins, a major donor to Operation Eyesight and the chair of the Mechanical Contractors Association of Canada. And wow, did they raise money! At the time of writing, they had raised nearly \$20,000 and were still going strong.

Last but not least, Brad Diggins and his daughter Jennifer (who is one of our Philanthropy Officers) braved a 76-kilometre, seven-day hike over the rugged Icelandic terrain in July. It took them through valleys, along the base of two active volcanoes and by majestic waterfalls. The father-daughter team reached their \$10,000 fundraising goal within two days of being in Iceland, and they didn't stop there!

We're so thankful for these passionate, adventurous, generous supporters!

Interested in planning your own adventure? Check out operationeyesight.com/r4r or give us a call at 1-800-585-8265.

Race for a Reason



Brad and Jennifer Diggins

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