



After receiving cataract surgery in Jorhat, India, Gadami smiles through her tears while her granddaughter, Junu, gives her a hug.

## Your impact, half a world away

Reaching the remote village of Kachikata, in India's northeastern Assam state, is no small task. The journey from Jorhat, the nearest city, begins by jeep on rough roads leading down to the Brahmaputra River. From there, travellers climb onto a tiny ferry, big enough only for a handful of passengers, that takes them to Majuli Island. After the boat arrives on the island's shores, the journey continues by motorcycle, tractor or bullock cart to reach the village.

This makes medical care difficult to access, especially for seniors like Gadami.

For six years, the grandmother lived with cataracts in both eyes. As her vision worsened, she became reliant on family members to help with even simple tasks.

"There was no doctor, no eye camp, nothing," says our Program Manager Tapobrat Bhuyan, describing the community when he first visited it in 2021. But all of this has changed, thanks to your support for our community outreach programs.

*Read more inside* →

**Watch a video about our work on Majuli Island!**



*Continued from cover*

When community health volunteer, Dipen, met Gadami during a door-to-door screening, he referred her to a nearby eye camp. There, she was diagnosed with bilateral cataracts, and agreed to make the long journey to Jorhat, where she received sight-restoring surgery at our partner hospital, Chandraprabha Eye Hospital, free of charge.

Gadami's granddaughter, Junu, was by her side to comfort her during the hospital stay and share in her joy when the bandages came off.

Now back in Kachikata, Gadami's world has opened up. With her independence restored, she can once again walk around the village, visit friends and fully enjoy her time with her grandchildren.

*Your support is helping us reach people like Gadami who might otherwise have lived with blindness needlessly. Thank you!*



Health workers take the small ferry to Majuli to run an eye screening camp for those living on the river island.

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## A Vancouver donor's dedication to the Gift of Sight

Having undergone cataract surgery himself, Vijay Verma knows just how important good vision is to quality of life.

"The gift of eyesight is the best thing you can give to anybody. It just changes their whole world," he says. "You can make donations for food and things like that, but it disappears after two days. Eyesight stays forever."

The longtime donor first heard about Operation Eyesight as a member of the India Club of Vancouver. The group raised more than \$100,000 for our programs over the years through annual walkathons in Stanley Park, with Vijay overseeing the event during his years as club president.

Supporting Operation Eyesight has also been a family affair for the Vermas, with Vijay's wife, Shiksha, and their three grown children all



Vijay and his wife, Shiksha, pose for a photo at an event in Vancouver.

involved in fundraising activities. Now, a third generation is also making a difference. In the past few years, two of their grandchildren raised \$575 apiece through online fundraising campaigns.

*Thank you, Vijay and family, for your incredible support!*



Five-year-old Grace and her brother, Isaac, pose with their mother, Samanta, after getting cataract surgery at Ghana's Watborg Eye Services.

## Siblings' cataracts diagnosed, thanks to school screening

The oldest of four kids, 14-year-old Isaac is his mother's biggest helper – assisting with chores like cleaning, sweeping and looking after his younger siblings. But a few years back, Isaac started having problems finding things around the house.

One day, his mom, Samanta, sent him outside to sweep the compound, but he came back complaining that he couldn't locate the broom. When she went to look for herself, she saw the broom lying on the porch in plain sight and realized there was something wrong with Isaac's vision.

As a single mom, Samanta works hard as a trader in the marketplace in their village of Oponso, in Ghana's Central Region. She knew that an eye exam, and any subsequent treatments, would be out of her budget.

Hope arrived during an eye health screening at Isaac's school, where staff identified his eye condition. His younger sister, five-year-old Grace, also got a referral for further examination.

The school eye health screening was made possible through our partnerships with Ghana Health Service and Ghana Education Service and funded by the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Child Blindness Program.

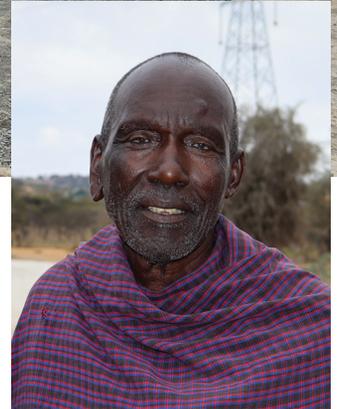
The program trains community health nurses and school employees to perform basic eye screenings. Students requiring follow-up are then referred to the nearest hospital. Because of the increased efficiency, entire schools – students and teachers alike – can be screened in a fraction of the time it would take otherwise.

Samanta brought the two children to our partner hospital, Watborg Eye Services, in nearby Accra, and both were diagnosed with cataracts. They were quickly scheduled in for surgery, which was provided free of charge.

Three weeks later, our program staff caught up with Samanta, who was thrilled with her children's progress. She says little Grace now spends more time outside playing with her friends. As for Isaac, he once again helps around the house, happy that his future is back in focus.



Patients line up outside the Kajiado County Eye Unit on its opening day in August 2023. The new eye unit, where Parmuat was among the first surgical patients, was established by Operation Eyesight and the County Department of Health and constructed in partnership with CBM Christian Blind Mission.



Parmuat, a herder from Kenya, is back to grazing cattle after getting cataract surgery.

## Back to herding with eyesight restored

Herding cows is such a fundamental part of Maasai culture that it is common to hear people in that community greeting each other with, “I hope your cattle are well!”

So, when 70-year-old Parmuat, a Maasai herder in Kenya’s Kajiado County, thought he might have to sell off his cows, he was devastated.

Several years ago, Parmuat looked outside his home and couldn’t see his cows anywhere. When he found them, he realized they had been right in front of him all along, on a hill near the house. He hadn’t been able to see them because of his increasingly blurry eyesight.

As his vision got worse, Parmuat found it harder and harder to care for his herd. He didn’t know how else to make an income, and he worried that he and his wife would become a burden to their 12 children, now grown up and raising families of their own.

Parmuat’s luck changed when a community health assistant, whom we’d trained in primary eye care, knocked on his door during a door-to-door eye screening and diagnosed him with cataracts.

Just a few weeks later, Parmuat learned he would be among the first patients to get cataract surgery at the new eye unit at the Kajiado County Referral Hospital.

After surgery, when a nurse removed the gauze from his eyes, Parmuat marveled at his restored vision. “Everything was clear again,” he says, “as if the sun suddenly came up.”

Now back at home with his wife, Parmuat says that he doesn’t need to sell any cows... in fact, he adds with a twinkle, he’s thinking about buying a couple more.

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# There are many ways to give the Gift of Sight

## Try our new online donation tool

We recently launched a new fundraising tool on our website! Whether you're making a single donation, updating your monthly pledge or giving a gift in tribute, we hope you find the new platform makes giving the Gift of Sight easier than ever. We've introduced new eCards and a variety of payment options. Try it out for yourself at: [operationeyesight.com/donate](http://operationeyesight.com/donate)

## Leave a legacy of sight and hope

Making a charitable gift in your will can significantly reduce your estate taxes, helping you continue to provide for your loved ones while supporting our sight-saving work for years to come. These gifts are easy to arrange and won't affect your income today.

## Become a monthly donor

Monthly donors support our efforts with a predictable and sustainable flow of income, enabling us to build our programs, expand operations and respond nimbly to emergency situations. Join the movement today! Fill out the attached form or sign up on our website.

## Gift stocks & annuities

Giving a gift of stock removes the taxation of capital gains, making it the most tax-effective way to donate.

For more information on the various options, visit [operationeyesight.com/give](http://operationeyesight.com/give)



Nurses Tiwonge (left) and Chrissy recently received training on operation theatre protocols. Now they are assisting cataract surgeons at Mzimba South District Hospital, our partner in Malawi. They say they are grateful for the training provided by Operation Eyesight and happy that they can help patients in need.

Your donations are hard at work – from supporting the capacity building of hospital staff to covering the cost of critical surgery supplies. Thank you!

## Get in touch

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