



## Once he struggled in school; now Mahesh has a bright future!

When his father was killed in an accident six years ago, Mahesh was only nine years old. Now 15, he lives with his mother Sailu and two younger siblings in Fatehnagar slum in the city of Hyderabad, India. Sailu supports the family as a daily wage labourer, earning around INR 5,000 (\$92 CAD) per month. The little family barely manages to make ends meet.

Now in the equivalent of grade 10, Mahesh is a very conscientious student who wants to achieve good marks so he can take post-secondary training. He dreams of getting a job so he can support his mother and siblings.

However, over the past year, a secret anxiety gnawed at him: his marks were going down! His family started losing hope that he would pass his upcoming secondary school exams. What would become of them?

The decline in performance was not without reason: Mahesh found it extremely difficult to read the blackboard in school, and found it challenging to write in dim light. He didn't want to worry his mother, knowing Sailu would struggle to find money for treatment.



Santosh Moses

*Mahesh and his mother thank the community health worker (at left) for helping him obtain his new eyeglasses.*

Fortunately, Mahesh attended a school located in an area where Operation Eyesight was promoting eye screening for all students. A community health worker identified Mahesh's eye problem, and brought him to the local vision centre, where he was diagnosed with uncorrected refractive error and prescribed eyeglasses. Considering his family's economic status, he was given a pair of brand-new, custom-fitted glasses completely free of cost, thanks to Operation Eyesight's generous donors.

Today, Mahesh is able to read and write without difficulty. He is preparing for his examinations and has

regained confidence that he will do well in his studies and have a bright future.

But that's not all! When the school principal learned about Mahesh's story, he requested that the project team screen all the students in his school. The happy result: three of Mahesh's schoolmates were diagnosed with uncorrected refractive errors – and they too have been provided with eyeglasses!

*While we have concluded our five-year project in Fatehnagar slum, our impact on community eye health in that district will continue for many years to come! Visit our website to learn more about our work in India.*



## We ♥ our donors!

From our patients and partners to our staff and volunteers, we are so grateful for your generous support of our work! To demonstrate our gratitude, visit [operationeyesight.com/ourdonors](http://operationeyesight.com/ourdonors) to watch a brief feel-good video featuring some of the people you've helped and some of our staff. We guarantee a smile! Tell us what you think of it at [info@operationeyesight.com](mailto:info@operationeyesight.com).

# Your support helps people see hope for their future

## Giving back through song

Summer Joy and Jim Webb hosted a folk club evening at their home in Merville, BC in February. Many of the audience members performed, making it a riotous evening as they celebrated the "Valentine-y Time of Year" in song. Admission was free or by donation, with the \$220 in proceeds going to Operation Eyesight.

Summer, of the Mostly Merville Ceilidh band, and her daughter Jenni, who plays for the Island Girls, are long-time supporters of



*Jenni (left), Summer (right) and Jenni's daughter, Freya, hold a fabric poster that was displayed at an eye camp in Zambia.*

Campbell River for your ongoing support. You are forever changing the lives of children, women and men in developing countries – one knee-slapping song at a time!

supporters of Operation Eyesight. In 2002, they played at a ceilidh dance in Campbell River, BC to raise funds for a surgical eye camp in Zambia.

Thank you to all of our friends in Merville and

## Saying 'I do' care

It was wedding bells for this happy Victoria, BC couple and the gift of restored sight for others when Neal and Tiffany Bhagwanani were married last September.

In lieu of wedding favours, they made a \$500 donation to Operation Eyesight on behalf of their guests. A card explaining the gift was placed at each person's seat.



*Tiffany and Neal Bhagwanani*

"We wanted to give our guests a gift that was more longer-lasting," says Neal.

Years ago, Neal had the opportunity to visit a hospital in India and see the work that organizations like Operation Eyesight do first-hand. "It really hit home," he says. "I got to see people go from struggling, to very quickly having their vision returned."

Thanks to this couple's generosity, others in developing countries will have their sight restored too. Thank you for making Operation Eyesight part of your special day; and congratulations, Tiffany and Neal!



## 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](mailto:info@operationeyesight.com).**

# see...what a lasting gift can do

Designate a gift to Operation Eyesight in your will... it's your opportunity to leave a lasting legacy of sight and hope for people in Africa and India.

Contact us at 1-800-585-8265 or [info@operationeyesight.com](mailto:info@operationeyesight.com) to learn more.



## In your own words...

Why do you support Operation Eyesight? Have you found a unique way to support our cause? We would love to hear your story and share it with our family of donors. Send a note to [info@operationeyesight.com](mailto:info@operationeyesight.com) today. Your words may inspire others!

The enclosed might seem small but it represents hours of walking up and down the shoulders of the highway in search of beer cans. Once I reach \$10, it is deposited so that I can make a donation to a worthwhile charity such as yours. I trust that this meagre amount can be put to good use. With my best wishes always - especially to those out in the field,

Barbara Jardine  
Neepawa, MB.

Please find enclosed a donation towards your work improving people's lives in developing countries re eye care. We are a small group of women who run a local thrift shop (all voluntary) and raise money for our own community and where we see need. Check for €500 [is enclosed].

Yours faithfully,  
Muintir Bháire Community Social  
Support Group Charity Shop  
Bantry, Co. Cork, Ireland

## Ophthalmologists rally for eyesight

Dr. Andy Kalevar is a fourth-year resident in ophthalmology at Montreal's McGill University. During the first year of his residency, he decided he wanted to get involved with something charitable and take on a project for which he would be responsible. With his active lifestyle and love of playing squash, a charity squash tournament seemed like a great idea. And given his occupation and the fact that wearing protective eyewear while playing racquet sports can protect one's eyes, he felt fundraising for Operation Eyesight was a natural fit.



The "Right to Sight" tournament just concluded its fourth consecutive year, with 60 registered participants. The event continues to grow with more players signing up each year, and more students offering Andy their support. "Eventually, I hope the tournament will be one of the largest of the year," says Andy.

Thank you to Andy and his fellow residents for donating their time and making this tournament a success!

# SAVING SIGHT ON ASIA'S LARGEST RIVER ISLAND

One of the female community health workers who were recruited on Majuli Island. These workers conduct surveys, give eye and general health education events, liaise with government, organize screening programs, and ensure patients obtain treatment.

Our hospital partner Chandra Prabha, located in the city of Jorhat, India, is an affiliate hospital of the LV Prasad Eye Institute, also a partner of Operation Eyesight and also a World Health Organization collaborating centre.



Refractive error, the primary cause of visual impairment, can be easily resolved by an eye exam and a pair of eye glasses. Now residents such as these can access eye care services.



It's now cheaper and easier to locally produce eyeglasses, rather than ship donated pairs from Canada. That's why Operation Eyesight stopped collecting used eyeglasses many years ago!

**H**ave you ever heard of Majuli Island? It's no great surprise if you haven't. It's located in the Brahmaputra River in India's remote northeastern state of Assam.

Because of its isolation, the island had extremely limited health facilities, and no eye health care at all for its 150,000 people. In 2012, Operation Eyesight launched a hospital-based community eye health project there.

Located south of Majuli Island is the city of Jorhat, where our partner Chandra Prabha Eye Hospital is based. Together, we share the mission of ensuring that nobody should be blind because they are poor or because they live too far from a hospital or a doctor. That shared mission, made possible by our generous donors, was what brought us to Majuli Island.

The island is battered by floods three months of the year, cutting off the twice-daily ferry that is the only transportation to the mainland. Its residents face significant erosion of their home. These were just some of the

physical factors the new eye health project had to overcome.

The project's first phase involved recruiting staff, including 10 local community health workers, and conducting door-to-door surveys. This comprehensive study discovered that a shocking six percent of the island's total population suffered from cataracts, and another six percent had other blinding conditions.

As a result, two vision centres were permanently established on the island, manned by trained vision technicians. These centres are open for walk-in

visits, comprehensive eye exams and the distribution of eyeglasses. They provide referrals for surgery and care at Chandra Prabha, which supplies treatment for all Majuli islanders, regardless of their ability to pay.

There is still much work to be done, such as increasing immunization coverage to 100 percent, eliminating vitamin A deficiency blindness and ensuring that women receive ante-natal and post-natal care. Our donors should be proud that they have brought sight and hope to Majuli Island!



*Majuli's community health workers go door-to-door to ensure that vision problems are both diagnosed and treated.*



MYANMAR

see

# Smart phone app developed to screen for vision problems

Tackling childhood blindness and visual impairment in low-income countries presents considerable challenges. Infrastructure and human resources are seriously lacking, and systems for accurately testing children for eye conditions and improving follow-up rates are often inadequate or non-existent.

If we could improve the way that children's eyesight is screened and treated across low-income countries, could we be a step closer to eliminating avoidable blindness?



Ric Rowan

*New technologies can diagnose eye problems, helping children to retain their sight.*

A recent grant to Operation Eyesight from Standard Chartered Bank's Seeing is Believing program could pave the way for an effective approach to screening millions of children with vision problems. We have funded a pilot project in Kenya that could revolutionize the way children's eyes are tested, using the recently launched Portable Eye Examination Kit (Peek) smartphone app.

Researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine worked with ophthalmologist Hillary Rono at Kitale District Hospital in Kenya to run the school-based project. Once finished, the researchers will be able to evaluate if the Peek app can be used effectively by teachers to test children's vision and improve detection for those with sight problems.

"In Kenya, few schools have a school screening program available," says Dr. Rono. "The team hopes the device will be as accurate in the hands of teachers as by specialists using traditional hospital-based tests."

Peek enables data to be instantly loaded into a dedicated online system, so the results can be immediately accessed by hospital staff. This will save significant time for teachers and allow referrals to be made more swiftly. It also allows teachers and doctors to check on those who have not come for treatment. Hospitals will be able to let teachers

know by text message whether a child needs to come in.

The possibilities for this innovative app are huge! Operation Eyesight thanks Seeing is Believing, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) for their funding and support with this innovative project.

## Long-term donor shares his passion and expertise with staff

Brian Lee has worn many hats: keynote speaker, CEO, author, City of Calgary alderman, Alberta MLA and long-time donor to Operation Eyesight. But there was something Brian felt was missing: he had never "rolled up his sleeves" and helped out first-hand in the developing world. So he made it his personal mission to offer his services to Operation Eyesight.

Brian is a Certified Speaking Professional, known for his expertise in improving the patient experience and bringing transformation to healthcare organizations. What better way for him to help Operation Eyesight than to deliver presentations to our international healthcare staff?

"I was excited to do something worthwhile that mirrored my professional experience," he says.

Brian recently spent 10 days in India and a week in Ghana. He delivered seven presentations, speaking to hospital staff and



*(Left to right) Nathaniel Anim, acting administrator of Watborg Eye Services; Brian Lee; Dr. Boateng Wiafe; and Emmanuel Kumah, our country manager of Ghana, hold a Canadian flag outside Watborg Eye Services.*

community health workers on how to provide a caring, compassionate experience to patients. He also spent a great deal of time listening and learning about Operation Eyesight's work in the communities.

"I was impressed with the calibre of staff, and their dedication and passion for making a difference," he says. "Operation Eyesight is well served by great people on the ground."

Brian knows first-hand that the work Operation Eyesight does is transformative. "It's life-changing for people," he says. "What more meaningful thing can you do for people than restore their sight?"

*We truly cannot express our gratitude, Brian. Not only are you a loyal donor, but you've given so much more: your time, your expertise and your passion. Thank you!*

# 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](http://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, Suite 200, 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](mailto: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

### My details:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Province/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal/Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### More great ways you can help:

Have you included Operation Eyesight Universal in your will?  Yes

Would you like information on this and other planned giving opportunities?  Yes

2014-nl2apr

### 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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.  
Editor: Lynne Dulaney, [admin@operationeyesight.com](mailto:admin@operationeyesight.com)

Operation Eyesight  
Suite 200, 4 Parkdale Crescent NW  
Calgary, AB Canada T2N 3T8  
Tel: 403-283-6323 Fax: 403-270-1899 Toll-free: 1-800-585-8265  
[admin@operationeyesight.com](mailto:admin@operationeyesight.com)

Operation Eyesight Canada is a registered charitable organization.  
Canadian registration #11906 8955 RR0001  
Operation Eyesight USA is a registered charitable organization.  
United States registration #20-2682468

## Overcoming flies, cows and 30 km to save sight

Thirty kilometres may not seem like a big distance to us, but it was a huge barrier for Norkitoip, a 45-year old Kenyan mother of eight. Norkitoip was afflicted with trichiasis, a condition whereby repeated trachoma infections turned her eyelashes inward to rub her cornea. Although she described it as "painful and uncomfortable," she and her husband could not afford for her to travel from her village of Erupata to reach medical help that might save her eyesight.

Instead, Norkitoip and other Maasai community members who suffered from the same condition resorted to dealing with it as best they could. That meant a painful yet temporary solution – pulling out their eyelashes with tweezers made by a local blacksmith! Worse, all 12 of the children tested in



*This child is receiving tetracycline, an antibiotic, to help combat a trachoma infection. Because of the provision of clean water, this disease can be eliminated from regions like Narok District.*

the village had active trachoma infections, ensuring that they would suffer the same fate.

Maasai tribes are vulnerable to trachoma because they often live in close proximity to their cattle, whose dung provides a perfect breeding ground for the flies that spread trachoma. The communities are also hampered by the scarcity



*Norkitoip (background) talks to a staff member, while a community health worker translates.*

of water for personal hygiene. Without face and hand washing, infection is spread readily.

Thanks to support from Operation Eyesight's generous donors, Norkitoip and other village women received free transportation to Narok District Hospital for surgery to fix their

in-turned eyelids. The children were given antibiotics to clear their infections.

These treatments are part of the World Health Organization-endorsed SAFE strategy, which Operation Eyesight implemented in Narok District in 2007. SAFE stands for Surgery, Antibiotics, Face-washing and Environmental change to combat trachoma.

According to an impact assessment conducted by our staff in 2010, the SAFE strategy has been effective in reducing Narok District's prevalence of active trachoma from 30.5 percent to 11 percent. Our kind-hearted donors make it possible to bring clean water for sanitation to villages like Erupata. Because of them, people like Norkitoip will no longer suffer this awful disease. **Thank you!**

Join the Conversation

OperationEyesightUniversal

OpEyesightUniversal

Operation Eyesight

@OpEyesight

blog.operationeyesight.com

operation-eyesight

OpEyesight