



Two thirds of all blind children are girls You're helping to restore their sight!

The sad truth is that women and girls are far more likely to lose their sight than men and boys. This issue of *SightLines* is devoted to shedding light on this unacceptable problem. We hope that by the time you're done reading, you'll be inspired to **help more women and girls see again.**

For every blind boy there are 2 blind girls

Everyone deserves to live free of vision problems. Women should have the freedom to work, care for their families and enjoy their lives, untroubled by growing darkness. Girls should have the freedom to grow and learn without blindness stealing their futures.

So why are they more likely to be blind or visually impaired? There are a lot of reasons, but **the simplest answer is that women and girls are less likely to receive care to protect and restore their sight.**



Stella, a community health worker in Kenya, examines a young girl. You can read more inside about how female health workers like Stella are ending blindness at the local level.

According to the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, they face financial, social and even distance-related barriers to get the information and support they need. That's why an estimated 56 percent of blind adults are women, while an estimated two-thirds of blind children are girls.

With your support, we've embraced the United Nation's **Sustainable Development Goal #5 Gender Equality,** and we help our partners provide **equal care for everyone,** regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or financial means. In the coming pages, you can see how every day, our supporters like you are ending the

conditions that leave too many women blind or visually impaired. **With your help, we won't stop until nobody is suffering from blindness that can be cured or prevented.**

None of this would be possible without your amazing support! You're transforming the lives of women and girls! From all of them and us, thank you!

Why are so many women blind?



Less financial resources



Inability to travel to seek care



Lower perceived value of the female gender



Lower literacy and lack of information

You are **empowering women** to transform their own communities!

In poverty-stricken areas of developing countries, women are often expected to assume traditional gender roles, looking after the household and raising children. They are often less respected than men. They have few opportunities to pursue education and a career. Even if they dream of a more fulfilling job like Amita in Nepal (see Amita's story on the next page), they are often restricted to staying at home to look after their families.

Our Hospital-Based Community Eye Health Program model educates mostly women as community health workers (CHWs). These CHWs are fully trained to organize screening programs, conduct door-to-door surveys and get help for those who need it. They hold educational sessions about issues like maternal and pre- and post-natal health and teach people good eye health-seeking behaviour.



Community health workers educate their communities and eliminate avoidable blindness one household at a time.

It's a unique opportunity for women to work outside the home, earning an income and the trust and respect of people in the community as experts in their field. It's also a great example for young girls in the community to see women succeeding in a career that makes a real difference.

Since the start of this program, hundreds of women have made an impact on their communities as CHWs. It's because of their diligent work that we have been able to declare over 1,000 villages avoidable blindness-free... and counting!

Your support for this program has empowered women in these villages to become eye health experts and transform their communities. Thank you so much!

Irene and Akua are just two of the **many women you've helped!**



"I worried a lot and I was scared I would die early in life," says 56-year-old Akua from Ghana. Losing her sight meant she had to rely on her children for financial support. Eventually she was examined and diagnosed with cataracts at Saltpond Government Hospital. She was initially scared of the surgery that could restore her sight, but a nurse named Gladys reassured her. Now Akua can see again! Thanks to you she's returned to work, selling fish and charcoal!!



Little Irene was born in 2012, three years after Operation Eyesight drilled a borehole in Siabaswi village, Zambia. She doesn't remember what it was like to be without clean water, but her mother Katherine does. Women and girls could spend all day collecting water, and the unclean river water used to give the family monthly bouts of diarrhea. Now, thanks to you, children like Irene can get fresh water from a safe source close to home!

Amita is **changing lives** through a career that has changed *her* life!

Amita lived the typical life of a young woman in Tokha Saraswati village in Nepal. Married at the age of 19, she kept busy taking care of her family. **She had dreams of a rewarding career serving her community as a nurse, but her family couldn't afford for her to go to school.**

The opportunity to become a community health worker gave Amita the fulfillment she always wanted. She is so happy that it allows her to help people in her community. She's educated people to understand that superstitions do not affect health issues.



24-year-old Amita (centre) has become a trusted eye health expert for people in her community.

Also, she's helped them learn what they need to do to look after their own eye health. **She has become a respected expert in the area where she lives.**

"Now whenever people have problems with their eyes, they come to me for a solution," she says proudly.

Your generous support provides training and fulfilling opportunities for women to make a huge difference in their communities! Thank you!

Rehabilitated boreholes are **revitalizing communities** and **creating new opportunities** for women!



With newly rehabilitated boreholes right in the communities, women no longer need to walk for hours to find a source of fresh water.

commonly falls to women and girls. This time-consuming activity takes away from other important tasks, such as education, employment and spending time with family. **Depending on the area, the journey can also be dangerous, and the water from unprotected sources may not be safe.**

In Canada, it can be easy to take for granted that our families have fresh, safe water for drinking, cooking and bathing. In developing countries, safe water often isn't easily available. You probably can imagine that drinking contaminated water can lead to sickness and death, **but did you know that a lack of clean water can also lead to blinding diseases such as trachoma?**

The task of hauling fresh water for long distances most

Thanks to our generous donors, we've drilled and installed 126 new boreholes in Zambia in areas where clean water was desperately needed. Donors like you made it possible to train and empower people in these communities to maintain the boreholes and improve sanitation habits, reducing the occurrence of serious illness and trachoma over time.

We're also working on restoring dysfunctional boreholes. Towards the end of 2018, 19 boreholes were rehabilitated in Zambia's Sinazongwe District, with plans for more to come. Women and girls, who no longer need to spend hours hauling water, are given greater opportunities to learn, earn money and spend time with family and friends.

Thanks to YOU, the people in these villages have access to safe water! They can wash their hands and faces and prevent the spread of trachoma.



Children in Mukka village, Zambia were very excited to feel water coming out of a borehole that had been dry for years!

How can you **leave a legacy** in your will?

We sat down with our Legacy Giving program manager, Susan, to answer some of our donors' most popular questions about leaving a gift to Operation Eyesight in their will.

What's the most important thing to know about leaving a legacy gift?

Susan: That you don't have to be rich to leave a legacy gift. Some donors think you need to have gold bricks sitting in your garage to leave a gift in your will, but that's not the case at all!

How can someone leave a gift in their will?

Susan: This is where having a will is important. Having a will makes it easy to designate how much you want to leave to the charitable organization of your choice.

There are two ways to leave a legacy gift: You can designate a specific amount if you know how much you'll have once your assets have all been allocated. Or, if you're not sure how much money will be left over, you can simply leave a percentage of the residue as a gift.

How can I learn more?

Susan: Just get in touch! I'm always happy to chat.



Susan Deike, Legacy Giving program manager

Your legacy gift could **help generations** with the **gift of sight!**

Blindness from cataracts struck 65-year-old Sarubai like a lightning bolt in her already impoverished life. Sarubai, from Maharashtra, India, worked as a maid to take care of her son, who has intellectual and physical disabilities. As her blindness worsened and she became barely able to recognize clothes or utensils, she was fired, one-by-one, from the households where she worked.

Every sunrise was a new challenge and Sarubai had no other family for support. Four years after she began to lose her eyesight, she was totally destitute.

That was when she met Shabana, a community health worker from our partner, Community Eye Care Foundation. Shabana was doing a door-to-door survey in the slum where Sarubai lived. Sarubai poured her heart out to Shabana, though she didn't believe anyone could help. Imagine her joy when Shabana assured her that help was available, and that Sarubai wouldn't need to pay. **Because of you, Sarubai received cataract surgeries at the hospital. Now she can see again!**



*Sarubai and Shabana, after Sarubai's surgery. **You** have made the story and the friendship of these two women possible.*

With no family to help, Shabana herself stayed with Sarubai at the hospital after her surgery, and she brought food for Sarubai and her son back home.

Sarubai is now confident and happy, and she's gone back to work and can care for her son. She expresses her heartfelt gratitude to you for making this possible! **What a difference you've made!**



Designating a gift to Operation Eyesight in your will is your opportunity to give the gift of sight and leave a lasting legacy of hope for everyone impacted by blindness. For more information, contact Susan at 403-670-2635 or toll-free at 1-800-585-8265, or email her at DeikeS@operationeyesight.com.

This young artist is giving the precious **gift of sight** and **changing lives!**



Anyone can make an incredible impact with the gift of sight. Victoria has, and you can too.

"I'm Victoria and I'm a 17-year-old Chinese Canadian currently living in Toronto. In the fall I hope to study illustration. Meantime, I have a part-time job as an art instructor. As soon as I started working, I made the decision to donate a third of my paycheque to a charity of my choice.

Connect with us



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I found a website listing the most accountable international charities, and Operation Eyesight was on that list.

I think eyesight is the most important thing to me as an artist. To think there are people living in poverty who suffer with avoidable sight loss makes me realize how important my sight is. Because of this, I want to give others the same privilege. Donating to cure blindness can last someone their whole life.

I wanted to get a job so that I could decide where to donate my money. Donating \$100 was a lot to me, but it felt like the right thing to do. I asked myself, what was I going to do with \$100 anyway? **By donating to Operation Eyesight, I can give people sight-saving eye surgeries, so they can see for the rest of their lives.**



Victoria is helping people like Deborah (left), who received a pair of new prescription eyeglasses. Today, she's a happy, studious teenager!

After donating, I felt like I was part of something bigger and beyond myself. I didn't feel entitled to the money, and letting it go to a cause felt good.

I encourage others to donate to charities and organizations as well, because donating is such a good feeling. Especially if it's for a cause you stand behind."

Thanks for sharing your story with us, Victoria! We're so grateful for your support.

Tell us your story! How and why do you support Operation Eyesight? Call us toll-free at 1-800-585-8265 or email us at info@operationeyesight.com. We'd love to hear from you!

Make your gift today!



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.

Operation Eyesight Canada
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

Operation Eyesight Canada is a registered charitable organization.
#11906 8955 RR0001

Operation Eyesight USA is a registered charitable organization.
#20-2682468

Yes, I want to brighten the future for a blind woman or girl!

By mail: Operation Eyesight Canada
Suite 200, 4 Parkdale Crescent NW
Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 3T8

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

By telephone: 1-800-585-8265 (Toll-free in Canada & the USA)

By emailing this form to: admin@operationeyesight.com

By scan or fax: 403-270-1899

Online: operationeyesight.com/donate

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

\$50 \$30 \$20 \$10 Other \$ _____ \$5 min

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: _____

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Please send me:

Information about how to leave a gift in my will

2017 Annual Report

Tell us your story!

I support Operation Eyesight because: _____

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.

Thank you!



Please cut or tear this page out before filling it out and mailing it back to Operation Eyesight.