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Rotary International 2001-2002

# Avoidable Blindness

*"Next to life itself, God's most precious gift is sight - Protect it, Save it, Restore it."*

## Task Force

### Thought for October . . . "The Ways We Choose"

*With the tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001, I felt challenged to write something meaningful for the heroes who gave their lives in seeking to rescue others. However, I turned to a book entitled "THE WAYS WE CHOOSE" signed by Dave Carey to Doyle on 9-12-00 just two years ago. This book tells of the ordeals of 5 years in the "Hanoi Hilton" from August 13, 1967 until March 14, 1973. He writes;*

God has equipped us so that we are remarkably resilient, tough, strong creatures. Could you do what I did? I think so. I am sure of it.

Faith Beyond Understanding:

In fact, I know that if the circumstances are right or wrong, I should say you too will rise to the occasion. You will do what you have to do, do your best, grow through trials and tribulations, keep your sense of humor, and keep the faith: faith in yourself, in those around you, in your country, and most important, in God.

The most important is faith in God? Yes. I am often asked what played the key role in my survival. My response always is, "It was my faith." My experience as a POW is reflected in the image of the trail of footprints in the sand. First there are two sets, side by side; then one set for a space; then two again. The text is "Lord, I've been reviewing the footprints of my life, and I can see those times when we walked together. However, I see there were times when there is one set of footprints. Where were you then? And the Lord replies, "My child, those were the

times when I was carrying you."

That was my experience in the prisons of Vietnam. There were times when I was just along for the ride. It was out of my control; I was, as we say in aviation, out of airspeed, altitude, and ideas, all at the same time! At those times, Jesus Christ carried me.

A person in an automobile accident, or falling from a cliff, instinctively calls out for help to God. Deep down, we know and believe. God has created us with a vacuum in our souls that only He can fill.

A Matter of Choice:

I'm sure you already knew, intuitively, all the points I've tried to make here. The real question is this: What do you choose to do about them? How do you choose to live your life and do your job? In fact, I think that is probably the most important thing that can be learned from my experience. We have the ability to choose.

How do you choose to live your life? How do you choose to do your job day in and day out? How do you choose to deal with adversity? How do you choose to take yourself into the future? How do you choose to handle change? How do you choose to grow and learn? How do you choose to keep the faith?

I am reminded of this verse by Henry Beechard:

'God asks no one if they will accept life. That is not the choice. You must take it. The only choice is how.'

The most important question to ask is not  
*(continued on page 6)*

## Matching Grant Update, Districts 3020, 6060

*The following is an update from Todd Lindley, Asst. Governor, District 6060*

The Matching Grant application between Districts 3020 and 6060 went in the mail today to Evanston for 1,400 eye surgeries. Our thanks to DG Dr. Reddy for his assistance and to PDG Dr. Megur for his assistance in finding Dr. Reddy. Also our thanks to Doyle Dannenberg who has helped organize this well tuned structure.

When added together with our first Matching Grant with Dr. Megur's home club for 1,500 eye surgeries, District 6060 Rotarians are now sponsoring one eye surgery per Rotarian. District Governor Bill Schuck, DGE Jerry McClanahan,

and all the Assistant Governors are preparing to roll out our announcement of this project. Web pages are being prepared explaining how the surgeries are done. We would love to receive some .gif or .jpg pictures of eye surgeries in India and especially in 3160 and 3020 that we could feature on these web pages. It would add a great deal of appeal and make them more enjoyable reading.

We all need to rally our troops now and increase Rotary's giving to The Annual Programs Fund so that Matching Grants such as these will not be turned away due to lack of funds in the future. My greatest thanks to all of you.

### Useful Addresses:

#### **OEU WEBSITE:**

www.giftofsight.com

#### **E-MAIL ADDRESSES:**

Kim Veness:

venessk@giftofsight.com

Don O'Dwyer:

o'dwyerd@giftofsight.com

Art Porter: glasses and frames:

portera@giftofsight.com

## Operation Vision: Final Report

Starting 31 March 2001, Operation Vision has, in 5 months, delivered 6,861 pairs of prescription eyeglasses to indigent patients according to their requirements as determined by local optometrists. In addition, the Hospital de Ninos (where the stockroom is located without cost) has delivered 137 to needy children and 2 clubs will utilize an additional 500 in the next week.

Each weekend (except for holidays) a Rotary club, which has paid \$100 to TRF for the privilege, has conducted a campaign in a very poor neighborhood, organizing the prospective recipients through cooperating organizations (schools, churches, municipalities, etc) and advertising with posters and flyers. They have then conducted the operation which includes a screening (eliminating those who do not require corrective eyewear), an eye exam, and the selection by the patient of a frame from an ample assortment. Each patient pays \$1.50 (or, in rare cases, the club subsidizes the patient).

Within 2 weeks, the appropriate eyeglasses are delivered to the patient in an attractive case with the Rotary wheel and a slogan ("Service in the Community"). Further, in the course of the eye exam, ophthalmological problems are discovered which are referred to Rotarian ophthalmologists or local medical centers.

Cataract cases are scheduled and performed through the RC El Rimac program without cost.

Lenses were donated by Polycore, Singapore, a large plastic lens manufacturer, and frames by Operation Eyesight Universal, an NGO in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Cases were purchased locally. An MG for \$20,000 enabled the purchase of 5 sets of trial case, trial frame, retinascopes, and ophthalmoscopes which were donated to the local optometric school which provided as many as 10 last year students and professors each weekend at no cost. Part of the MG funds were used to pay for edging and surfacing of lenses, purchase of cases, and incoming freight costs for donations and purchases.

At the end of this program, which was sponsored by D-4450(Lima), RC Westlake Village, D-5240 and other clubs in that district, there remain about 1,000 frames (in a poor assortment), 4,000 pair of finished and semi-finished plastic lenses, about 2,000 pair of reading lenses (purchased additionally), and the instruments.

Because of the enthusiasm of the 30 clubs who have participated in this program (3 of them conducting 2 campaigns each), RC El Rimac has determined to continue the program. Accordingly, an additional donation of 8,400 frames is ar-

## Operation Vision (*continued*)

iving from OEU and 2,000 pairs of lenses from Polycore. With the receipt of these donations in the next 60 days, the program can be renewed.

RC El Rimac has decided to make the program self-sustaining to a great extent by retaining all of the \$1.50 collected from patients (previously, half of this was given to the operating club to cover their expenses) and the \$100 entry fee will be utilized to buy an auto-refractor and to pay incoming freight expenses. If the program continues at the same volume level, the patient fee and entry fee should be sufficient to pay all costs except incoming freight.

Because of the success of this program, it is strongly urged by the two originators of this system, Bing Han and

Martin Singer, that it be replicated in other countries in need of this type of help. A manual exists which can serve as a guide for new programs and the originators would be pleased to offer direct assistance. It is further recommended that both lens and frame inventories be centralized at OEU, who have indicated a willingness to serve as a stock focal point. SOLA has agreed to cooperate with lens donations from its factories in Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela and it is hoped that Silor, Hoya, and other lens factories will follow suit. By centralizing inventories, it will make it easier to ship balanced inventories to new programs.

The Avoidance of Blindness Task Force now has a completed project to serve as an example for other countries.

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## The Guildford Charity Eye Project

The Rotary Charity Eye Project, started in District 1250, was masterminded by the Rotary Club of Guildford in Surrey, England. It is a unique programme of comprehensive eye care, combining the provision of sophisticated equipment (with the aid of a Matching Grant from Rotary Foundation), the training of doctors and eye surgeons and the sponsoring of cataract operations.

A Rotarian surgeon from Guildford went out to Calcutta to work with local doctors at the Rotary Eye Hospital to find a lack of good quality equipment which precluded modern surgery for cataract, glaucoma and retinal diseases.

Guildford combined with Clubs in Districts 1250, 1140 and 1090 in England, 1720 in France and 7090 in Canada to raise 25% of the funds required for equipment, with Calcutta providing 25% and a 50% Matching Grant. A truly international project.

A single vocation GSE brought four eye surgeons from Calcutta and one from Nepal for training at Moorfields in London and other hospitals. They now provide first class treatment for all types of eye diseases in their own countries. The new millennium was celebrated by en-

couraging 20 Clubs to fund 100 operations each – 2000 to celebrate 2000!

Clubs from other Districts in England, France and Canada have once again combined to equip a new small eye hospital in Hooghly, 25 miles north west of Calcutta.

**Similar small hospitals are planned if only other clubs and districts would like to join the project.**

If you would like more information or would consider joining the project contact or even thinking of becoming a volunteer, contact –

President Samar Das  
Rotary Club of Guildford  
11 Levylsdene  
Guildford, England GU1 2RS  
Tel: (01483) 536706  
Fax: (01483) 505737  
Email: samardas@easicom.com

Or for any assistance -  
Area Co-ordinator PDG Norman Cooper  
Email: cooper.tarves@virgin.net

**A ROTARY GENERATED,  
ROTARY FUNDED,  
ROTARY ACTION PROJECT**

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## The Glaucoma Foundation, NY

The Glaucoma Foundation is an international not-for-profit organization dedicated to eradicating blindness from glaucoma.

They are ready with resources to partner with other organizations dedicated to eradicating blindness from glaucoma. They have a world-wide toll-free hotline number: 1-800-GLAUCOMA (800-4452-8266)

**E-mail:**  
glaucomafdn@mindspring.com

**Web site:**  
<http://www.glaucoma-foundation.org/info>

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## Project: Kannoli - Vision Saver

Rotary Club of Madras Fort with the assistance of Sri Sankara Health Centre, Pammal has been performing FREE Cataract Surgeries with IOL under their project "Kannoli - Vision Saver" through rural outreach programme. During this Rotary year 2001 – 2002 Rotary Club of Madras Fort and Sankara Eye Hospital will be able to achieve 10,000 Surgeries. A copy of the project report and Achievement & Benefit to the Community follows. For more information, contact:

Rtn. S. Visvanathan  
 Website: www.kannoli.com  
 E-mail: sankarai@vsnl.net  
 Website: www.rc-madrasfort.org.in

### Matching Grant Request

Dear Rotians,  
 RC Petlad, India (Dist.3060) has conducted many cataract surgery camps since last five years. Now our club has a little funds for the same. We wish to continue this project with the help of Matching Grants. We will be highly obliged if any club can sponsor (contribute) US \$1500 for this Avoidable Blindness MG Project. Please contact me for the further details.

Yours-in-Rotary  
 Rtn. Kalpesh Trivedi  
 IPP, RC Petlad. Dist. 3060  
 trivedi\_kalpesh@yahoo.com

**Kannoli – Vision Saver** project was launched in December 1994 by Rotary club of Madras Fort. Suitable infrastructure was created at Sri Sankara Health Centre, Pammal for Community eye care and to perform high quality free cataract surgeries at the doorsteps through rural outreach programmes to every one regardless of their caste, creed, religion and socio economic status.

#### **Kannoli – Vision Saver:**

- reaches out to those who are in need
- helps you to help those in need of eye sight
- who don't have near and dear to take care
- who can't make it to a hospital
- offers more than sight – Total care with love

#### **The need:**

- That one fifth of the world's blind population live in India.
- That 12 million Indians are totally blind and 45 million are visually handicapped.
- That each year 4 million new cases of cataract are added.

#### **Aim:**

- Millions of men, women and children in rural villages, tribal hamlets are in need of quality eye care – Let us reach out to them.

Rotary Club of Madras Fort has equipped **Sri Sankara Health Centre**, Pammal

with:

- Out patient Department
- 77 beds for inpatients
- Two air-conditioned operation theatres
- Highly trained and committed human resource.

The outreach camps are being conducted on every Sunday, patients found fit for surgery are brought to the base hospital every week, admitted, operated for cataract with **IOL**, supplied medicines, served food during their stay and dropped back in their village, all absolutely **free of cost**.

The Kannoli – Vision Saver Project, presently performing **150** free cataract surgeries per week. The hospital is basically performing mass cataract surgery with **IOL** implantation. All these activities are carried out with the assistance from "Sight Savers International" – Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind, U. K, and from various Philanthropists / Institutions.

We welcome those who care deeply for the suffering humanity and extend their assistance with the following equipments to provide Comprehensive, high quality, cost effective, readily available Eye care to every one. This will improve service delivery, update the equipment and facilities to take up mass scale preventive Eye care for the poor and school children.

#### **EQUIPMENTS:**

1. Yag Laser: 26080 US\$ (Rs.12.00 Lakhs)
2. Phaco Emulsification Unit: 17390 US\$ (Rs. 8.00 Lakhs)
3. Fundus Camera: 17390 US\$ (Rs. 8.00 Lakhs)
4. Argon Laser: 15220 US\$ (Rs. 7.00 Lakhs)
5. Slit Lamp: 9780 US\$ (Rs. 4.50 Lakhs)
6. Tonometer: 7610 US\$ (Rs. 3.50 Lakhs)
7. A & B Scan: 6520 US\$ (Rs. 3.00 Lakhs)
8. ECG Monitor & Recorder: 3260 US\$ (Rs. 1.50 Lakhs)
9. Pulse Oxymeter (NIBP):1630 US\$ (Rs. 0.75 Lakhs)
10. Oticare: 1090 US\$ (Rs. 0.50 Lakhs)
11. Generator: 8695 US\$ (Rs. 4.00 Lakhs)
12. Van / Jeep: 10870 US\$ (Rs. 5.00 Lakhs)

## Project: Kannoli (*Continued*)

The average cost per surgery is around 25 US\$ (Rs.1250/-) per patient. The average expense per day for food to the patients is around 25 US\$ (Rs.1250/-).

We also welcome your support for:

1. Sponsoring Surgery to poor (25 US\$ per patient)
2. Sponsoring food to 50 patients (25 US\$ per day)

### Total number of Free Surgeries Performed:

1994 – 1995	43
1995 – 1996	185
1996 – 1997	474
1997 – 1998	487
1998 - 1999	1054
1999 – 2000	2754
2000 – 2001	6615

Government of India has recognized Sri Sankara Health Centre to receive donations from foreign sources under FCRA. We welcome your valuable assistance in this “MISSION FOR VISION”.

During 1998-99 an average of 20 Free cataract surgeries per week have been performed. During 1999-2000 an average of 53 Free cataract surgeries is achieved. In this Millennium we have increased the surgical output to 150 surgeries per week.

Divine Vision – Screening of 3.5 Lakhs School Children belonging to Government, Municipal, Panchayat & aided schools at Chennai and suburbs for visual defects is being done by Sri Sankara Health Centre. So far we have identified 5709 school children needing spectacles. This Screening is in progress.

Data	As on 3/31/01	4/01	5/01	6/01	7/00-6/01	7/01
Total cataract surgeries performed	11612	778	535	678	7388	562
Total population covered	3 Million	-	-	-	1.5 Mill.	-
Total camps conducted	301	18	13	16	129	13

### Screening of School Children for Visual Defects

	Tiruvallur Dist. Schools	Chennai Corporation Schools
Students Screened	150,310	139,576
Number of Schools	852	369
Free Spectacles Distributed	811	2481

## Bangladesh Club Looks for International Partner

Bangladesh is an underdeveloped country with 55,598 sq Miles having a population of 130 million. Average literacy rate is 24%, US\$273.00 is annual per capita GDP, and 70% of the population lives in serious poverty.

In our RI District 3280 we have 96 clubs with a total of 2600 members. Among them our club, R.C. Dhanmondi Dhaka is the biggest, having 70 members. Our club organized 12 eye camps last year with the help of a local sponsor. We operated (cataract surgery) on about 1500

extremely poor patients, provided glasses to about 5200 poor patients and provided medicine to 15,360 patients absolutely free of cost.

This time we are looking for an International Partner (Rotary club of another country plus NGO & Donor) to start an Eye Camp and also to provide free Glaucoma screening and medication to the disadvantaged people of our country.

Contact: Rotarian A.B.M.Ziauddin  
Club Secretary, RC of Dhanmondi Dhaka  
Email: bipulint@bttb.net.bd

## Professional Shows Interest in Programs

*Dear Fellow ABTF*

*Members:*

*following is a message from Dr. Juan Rocco of San Juan, Argentina, a member of the American Foundation of Ophthalmology who wishes to participate in our Rotary Avoidable Blindness Program.*

*-Doyle Dannenburg*

“I’m an ophthalmologist from Argentina and would like to collaborate with your Organization. I’m a member of The Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and of them received notice about yours.”

Dr. Juan Rocco  
Jujuy 145 (sur)

San Juan - 5400-Argentina  
Email: eye2001@yahoo.

com

Tel: 54-264-4226071

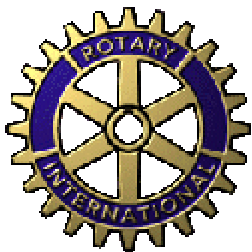
"How do you do it?" but "How do choose to do it?" It is not what inevitably happens to you in life that is important; it is how you choose to deal with what happens. All my experience teaches me that everything is a matter of choice, and we are all capable of making those choices.



In the first line of A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens wrote, "Twas the best of all times, and 'Twas the worst of all times." He was absolutely right! Whatever challenges you are facing, this is the best of all times for you to be who you are, working where you are working, living where you are living, doing what you're doing, working with the people with whom you work. It is also the worst of all times for you to be who you are, working where you are working, living where you are living but you must choose to make it the best and not the worst. My advice, hope, and prayer is for you is that you choose to make this the best of all times. May God bless you and our country as you "make your choice".

O. Doyle Dannenberg  
Assistant General Chairman ABTF

**Don't forget to check the Avoidable Blindness Task Force website for updates and project ideas! [www.rotarytaskforces.org/avoidable\\_blindness](http://www.rotarytaskforces.org/avoidable_blindness) Once you're at the site, go to the "What's New" page to see what's been added since your last visit.**



Go to the **Downloads** page on the Avoidable Blindness Task Force Website to find:

- An order form for the Optima Braille Slate
- A background document which explains the full program

[www.rotarytaskforces.org](http://www.rotarytaskforces.org)

## You Can Give a Blind Person Literacy

One of the greatest opportunities available now to Rotarians is to make a small contribution of \$10 to sponsor a Braille slate. Read on to find out also how this sponsorship can go towards making a contribution to **Rotary Foundation** in the name of the club. - Pay your annual commitment while doing something to counter blind illiteracy!

In every country in the world, there are schools in which blind persons are training and from which scholars graduate without owning a Braille slate - their pencil and paper. This is often because of the cost of these devices.

In South Africa this year, every scholar leaving the schooling system will receive an Optima Slate on graduation. They will all have been trained in its use and will enter the world with the ability to communicate in writing using a portable device which fits in the pocket of their shirt.

The Rotary club of Hatfield in Pretoria in District 9250 has facilitated the manufacture in South Africa of a world class Braille slate which contains a unique and comprehensive array of features not contained in any other slate now available. It is available ex store at \$10 which is a considerable saving on exist-

ing available devices. When a club purchases a slate from the project through Hatfield club, their Rotary Foundation account will be credited with \$2, through the Fiscal Agent. Buy more and gain more credit!

Rotary clubs can liase with local Associations for the Blind to determine the needs in their own community and obtain supplies from this project. They could similarly ensure that all blind school graduates own their personal Braille slate - and know how to use it.

Rotarians can order these direct through the Rotary club of Hatfield by filling out an order form available for download **on the ABTF website**. It can be processed by e-mail. Also on the website you can find a background document which explains the full program.

Imagine if you were the group who in the next 5 years were able to mobilize the power and capabilities of blind persons now not able to see a future for themselves. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely in Service through Rotary  
Hank Doeg  
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