

VISION 2020: THE RIGHT TO SIGHT



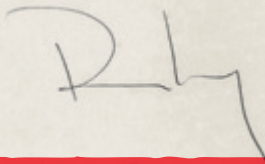
Dear Seva Canada Supporters,

For those of us interested or involved in the global fight against blindness, 2020 is an important year. This is the year when the main causes of preventable and treatable blindness were to have been eliminated. In 1999, VISION 2020 was launched by the World Health Organization and over 20 non-government organizations, including Seva Canada, dedicated themselves to the prevention and management of blindness.

Worldwide, we haven't done what we hoped we would. Why not? There are many competing priorities in health and a lack of understanding of poor vision's impact on people's broader socioeconomic outcomes. Poor vision can have a deep impact on education and work opportunities, but its urgency is overshadowed by infectious diseases, natural disasters, famine, and political instability. Even in situations where relevant government ministries understand the importance of eye care and are eager to address it, they are often faced with questions on what to do, where to start, and how to increase access to eye care services. It's not as simple as giving away free glasses or flying in foreigners to do surgery. Health interventions require substantial local investment in infrastructure, training and population-level behavior change.

While some countries have almost reached VISION 2020's goal, most have not. Eye care organizations have made enormous gains in the fight against blindness and visual impairment. People living in remote and rural area have far greater access to high-quality eye care and the focus on reaching women and girls has lessened the gender disparity in the treatment of blindness.

We are clearly moving in the right direction with high-quality, financially sustainable eye care services provided by locally trained professionals. However, if we are to achieve our goal of a world free of avoidable blindness, we must accelerate expansion of successful eye care programs to meet population needs and take better advantage of government health systems, albeit often very poorly funded in most low-income settings. More and more, we need to introduce local funding innovations for revenue generation while still serving the poor. Only then will preventable and treatable blindness be eradicated.



Penny Lyons, Executive Director

"WE'RE ALL JUST WALKING EACH OTHER HOME"

IN MEMORIAM, RAM DASS



Of course, there would have been no Seva without Ram Dass. Seva was born out of an impossible brew and Ram Dass was a key ingredient. Our organization was formed by some of the World Health Organization doctors who eradicated smallpox, the Hog Farm commune that gamely rode funny-painted buses from Glastonbury, England, to Kathmandu, joined up with the followers of Neem Karoli Baba who had gathered in his ashram in the Himalayan foothills, and ultimately combined forces with the irrepressible Dr. Venkataswamy (Dr. V) and the Aravind Eye Hospital family.



SEVA'S ORIGINAL BOARD

Ram Dass was the thread that wove all these disparate gems together in a necklace that was Seva. He was the frequent partner-in-crime to guru-clown Wavy Gravy and a spiritual fellow traveller to Dr. V. He was the combatant-in-chief and mutual foil to Dr. Nicole Grasset, the French-Swiss epidemiologist who headed the smallpox program in India.

To Girija and me, he was family. He was the Ram Dass we heard at the Unitarian Church in San Francisco in 1970 who led us to meet our teacher, Neem Karoli Baba. At Maharaj-ji's ashram, Ram Dass, or RD as we called him, was an older brother, light-bearer, moral compass and godfather to our children.

To Seva, he was co-founder, architect, spiritual Northstar and servant, teacher, friend and super-fundraiser. Whenever Seva's bank account was near zero, Ram Dass would offer to go on a 20 or 40 city lecture tour, keeping none of the ticket proceeds for himself. All of it went to giving back sight, donating all the proceeds to Seva.

Of course, Ram Dass was much more. He was our spiritual uncle. He was an inspiration – reminding us to slow down and treat each other with the same love and compassion we wished for our projects and the blind we served. As we worked alongside him, he sprinkled his canny subtle spiritual magic on us all. RD taught us to not only "be here now" and embrace life, but also to not fear death, but see it as the capstone of a life of service.

In memory of that sweet soul Baba Ram Dass, let us pledge to fill our endeavors with compassion, love and hope. That is our tribute to our beloved brother and friend, who was born Richard Alpert and enlightened us all on his life-long journey to become Ram Dass.

Warmly,
Drs. Girija and Larry Brilliant
Seva co-founders

CELEBRATING THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

SEVA CANADA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Seva Canada's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held November 15th at VanDusen Botanical Gardens in Vancouver. Seva's AGM has some similarities to a corporate AGM – we introduce our leadership (our volunteer Board of Directors), we have an auditor review our finances and finally we talk about our successes and our challenges. It is here that we see the greatest difference between a charitable organization and a for-profit organization. Seva Canada's success depends on revenues (charitable gifts), but we are equally indebted to our partnerships with donors, volunteers and supporters, universities and teaching hospitals, foreign and Canadian governments and all those across Canada and globally who champion our work to restore sight and prevent blindness.

The power of Seva's partnerships was the focus of this year's Annual General Meeting.



SASIPRIYA (SASHI) KARUMANCHI, BOARD MEMBER

Seva Canada board member, Sasipriya Karumanchi (Sashi), a consultant at Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology (LAICO), described how Seva and its partners "can achieve greater outcomes for the larger good through collaboration." Sashi recounted how Seva Canada helped Aravind solicit support from the Canadian government to establish a manufacturing facility in India, called Aurolab. Aurolab went on to reduce the price of intraocular lenses used in cataract surgery from over \$300 to less than \$3, making high-quality cataract surgery affordable for all.



DR. VIVIAN YIN, BOARD CHAIR

Dr. Vivian Yin, Seva Board Chair, surgeon, researcher and teacher in ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery, discussed how our partnerships with academia and other eye care organizations have made Seva a leader in treatable blindness research globally. For example, Seva's gender and eye care research with our partner in Africa, the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO) and the BC Centre for Epidemiological and International Ophthalmology (BCEIO), led to the discovery of gender inequity in the treatment of blindness and the creation of the Gender and Blindness Booklet. The booklet has been adopted by the International Agency on the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health (CanWaCH).

In addition, Seva's partnerships with national and international ophthalmology societies, like Women in Ophthalmology, helps foster the development of future leaders in our partner countries, making an impact that goes beyond the specific hospitals we serve.

In Seva's experience, big breakthroughs and progress don't happen in silos. Seva Canada will continue to nurture our existing partnerships and create new ones within Canada and in each of our program countries to meet the eye care needs of the global aging and growing population.

Our success depends on transcending differences, championing equity and embracing diversity. We cannot achieve this alone so we work with trusted and long-standing program partners around the world. With them we put our best, shared goals forward: high-quality eye care available to all, a commitment to innovation, equity, sustainability and evidence-based development.

We look forward to seeing you at our next AGM on November 6th, 2020!



FROM PROBLEMS TO SOLUTIONS: TRANSLATING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

The problems faced by the global eye care community are well-documented yet the solutions are not. While we know how many people are blind, where and from what, this knowledge alone will not cure blindness. The most successful eye programs are those who put their research into action, transforming what they know into what they do. This process of 'knowledge translation' is at the core of Seva Canada's approach to partnerships and programming. While each country we work in is unique, the process we undertake is always the same: we establish a program

team, including technical experts, clinicians and local community members. We work together to generate local evidence, discuss the results, explore gaps, and clarify the stories that data alone cannot tell. Once we know the root causes, we brainstorm possible solutions and develop interventions to be tested locally and, if successful, disseminated globally. Only by continually generating, translating and testing knowledge, will we reach our goal of eliminating avoidable blindness.



PRESCHOOL SCREENING: A VIABLE OPTION TO SCREEN CHILDREN FOR EYE DISEASE?

Most eye care programs in developing countries don't do research. Instead, research is typically carried out by local doctors who come across a problem, have an idea on how to solve the problem and decide to test their idea.

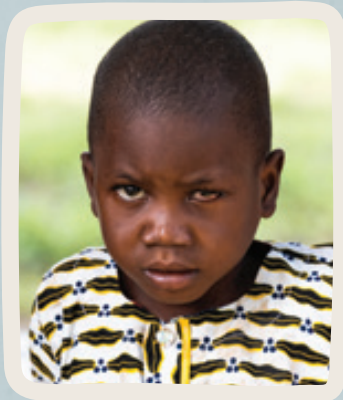
Hari Thapa, Senior Optometrist at Lumbini Eye Institute in Nepal, works in the pediatric eye unit and is always thinking of ways to address the problems he sees in his young patients. A common issue Hari came across was children with treatable eye conditions coming to the hospital too late to be helped. Hari realized that most children were not being screened early enough for eye disease for them to benefit from care. Frustrated by the situation, Hari came up with an idea to screen children in preschools so they can get the timely eye care they need to maintain healthy vision.

Hari wanted to find out the prevalence of visual impairment in preschoolers in the Lumbini Zone. How many children actually attend preschool? Can visual acuity be accurately tested in schools, rather than at the eye hospital, for this age group? These questions would determine whether 1) the school screening solution was feasible, 2) if it is likely to be successful and 3) if it warrants the time and financial investment needed. After navigating through these questions, Hari came to the conclusion that he needed to know more and obtained Seva's support in developing and implementing a pilot test. If the results of the pilot are promising, Seva will help Hari to secure the support he needs to test his hypothesis on a larger scale, and to share what he learns with his peers in Nepal and the global eye care community, who can use the results to improve their pediatric eye care programs and save the sight of more children.

IT'S JUST AN IRRITATED EYE – YOU'LL BE FINE



WARNING – THIS STORY IS NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART!



OMONUWA BEFORE TREATMENT

By the time they arrived, Omonuwa was inconsolable. The doctor sat him down and with the help of the nurse and his father, they managed to calm him so his eye could be examined. Upon inspecting Omonuwa's eye, the doctor lifted his eyelid and attached to the top of his eyeball was a

Omonuwa, a young boy in Benin, had been complaining about his eye for a few weeks. His father, frustrated with his young son, told him "it's just irritated, you'll be fine". Omonuwa continued to fuss and complain to his father. Finally relenting, he took Omonuwa to the nearby community eye centre.

parasitic worm about 5 centimetres long! The doctor removed the worm and continued to look for any other foreign bodies.

When Omonuwa's father saw what had just been removed from his son's eye, his entire demeanor changed. He realized that there was actually something to be very concerned about and his son's protests had been justified. He instantly became more understanding and compassionate towards his young son.

After a thorough examination, Omonuwa was given antibiotic tablets and cream and was able to go home. He was no longer in discomfort and his health and sight were saved.

Parasites are common in low-income countries and Omonuwa likely washed his face with contaminated water and picked up the worm. Thankfully, a Seva-supported community eye centre was nearby to treat him and prevent any vision loss. Now Omonuwa can go to school, play with friends and have a bright future.

YOUR LEGACY IS THEIR FUTURE



ANJANA AND HER MOTHER

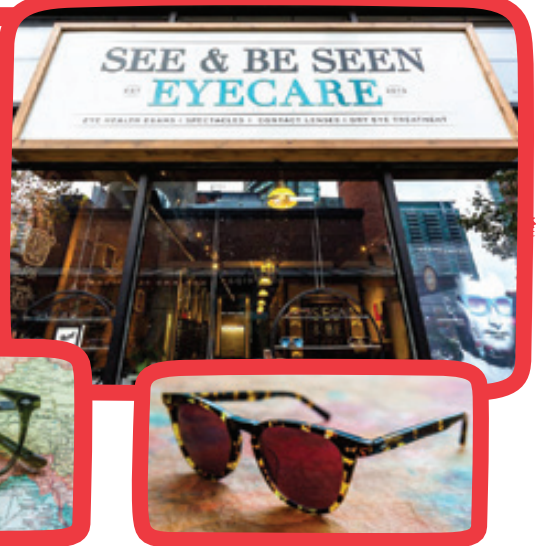
"Now that our daughter can see, she will be able to read and write. She will be able to work. Now she has a future."

– Anjana's parents

After you've remembered your loved ones, consider a gift in your Will to Seva Canada and give the power of sight for generations to come.

For more information, contact Penny at **604-713-6622** or email fundraising@seva.ca

SEE & BE SEEN EYECARE



SCENE EYEWEAR

See & Be Seen Eyecare in Toronto is Seva Canada's newest corporate supporter and we'd like to welcome them to our community.

Founded by Priya Malik-Patel and her husband Dr. Ritesh Patel, See & Be Seen Eyecare is dedicated to delivering the ultimate optometric experience because they know how important vision is to one's quality of life. They also believe in giving back and created their own line of glasses called Scene Eyewear to do just that.

We had the opportunity to talk to Priya and learn a little more about her and her husband, their passion for eye care, and why they partnered with Seva Canada to help kids see.

Q: Can you tell us a bit about yourself and why you went into eye care?

Priya: My husband I founded See & Be Seen Eyecare in 2013. Ritesh being an Optometrist, and myself being a Marketing Leader for Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, we have a wealth of experience in eye care and share a passion for helping people see their best. Providing a unique patient experience (at every touch point in our patient journey) is something that really differentiates us in the industry.

Q: What is Scene Eyewear and why did you create it?

Priya: At See & Be Seen Eyecare we believe that your eyewear should not only provide comfort and style, it should also come with an added sense of purpose. This supports our core values of giving back and helping the world see their best.

A marriage of German and Japanese craftsmanship, Scene Eyewear is a perfect balance of new-age design meets vintage handmade artistry.

Our mission is to provide high-quality, uniquely designed eyewear while helping others with each purchase.

We believe in the power of purpose. We don't just make eyewear. Our goal is to help the world see better and is the heart of everything we do.

Q: Why did you decide to support Seva Canada and specifically our pediatric eye care programs?

Priya: We built our partnership with the goal of providing healthy eyesight for everyone and using vision as a conduit to unlocking human potential. By purchasing one of our Scene Eyewear frames, we seek to provide a visually impaired child the chance to have life-altering cataract surgery that will have a monumental impact for the rest of their lives. Through Seva's "So Kids Can See" program, for every 5 pair of glasses we sell, we cure a child's blindness with cataract surgery including a lens implant, follow-up care, along with glasses, medicine and transportation.

Q: In learning about eye care in low-income countries, what was something that surprised you?

Priya: That the majority of the world's blind are women. The drastic disparity among children, where girls make up 2 out of 3 children living with treatable blindness REALLY stuck with us and motivated us to use our platform to bring awareness and address this critical issue. Our hope is that with more females receiving treatment, there will be greater access and ability to learn. As Michelle Obama once said, "when girls are educated, their countries become stronger and more prosperous."



PRIYA MALIK-PATEL, CO-FOUNDER

Learn more at seeandbeseeneyecare.com

HOW YOU HAVE HELPED

The power of sight means so much more than just good vision. It means a lifetime of independence, productivity and fulfilment. Thanks to you, we are closer to realizing our vision of a world in which no one is needlessly blind or visually impaired.

We ended 2019 with a special matching campaign to help marginalized people in low-income countries get the eye care they need. A generous donor matched gifts so the Seva community's gifts of sight could help twice as many people see and succeed.

Now, adults will be able to see, work and earn an income and kids will be able to go to school and fulfill their dreams.



BECAUSE OF YOU:

- **186 children** and **2,488 adults** will receive the power of sight through **cataract surgery**
- **2,630 children** and **2,640 adults** will see clearly with **prescription glasses**
- **9 cataract surgeons** will be trained to **restore sight** for their communities
- **110 community field workers** will be trained to **find people** with eye disease and ensure they get to the hospital for care

Thank you for transforming lives with your generosity and support!

WHAT IS 20/20 VISION?



We often refer to "20/20" vision but what does it actually mean? 20/20 is a term used to express normal visual acuity measured at a distance of 20 feet or 6 metres (6/6 vision). If you have 20/20 vision, you can see clearly at 20 feet what a person with normal vision can see from 20 feet.

However, if you have 20/60 vision, it means that a person must be as close as 20 feet to see what a person with normal vision can see from 60 feet.

A person is considered blind if their vision is 20/200 meaning that they can see something 20 feet away that a person with normal vision can see from 200 feet away.

It can also work in reverse, if a person has 20/10 vision it means that they can see something from 20 feet away that a normal person can see from only 10 feet away. They have bionic eyes!

Does 20/20 vision mean you have perfect vision?

20/20 vision only refers to the sharpness or clarity of vision at a distance. There are other critical vision skills, including peripheral vision, eye coordination, depth perception, ability to focus and ability to see colour, that contribute to your overall vision.

It's important to get your eyes examined by an eye care professional on a regular basis to check all aspects of your vision health.

20/20 OR NORMAL VISION

A person with 20/20 vision can read the circled line from 20 feet away.



20 feet



20/60 OR IMPAIRED VISION

A person with 20/60 vision can read the circled line from 20 feet away. However, a person with **normal vision** can read the same line from 60 feet away.

Normal vision



60 feet

Impaired vision



20 feet





GIVE EYE CARE TO MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

POOR PEOPLE IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES OF
LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES SHOULDN'T BE
DENIED ESSENTIAL EYE CARE SERVICES SIMPLY
BECAUSE OF WHERE THEY LIVE.

The burden of most eye conditions and vision impairment is not borne equally. Currently, 89% of people living with treatable blindness and visual impairment live in rural areas of developing countries where access to eye care is scarce. By bringing eye care to these vulnerable populations, you are empowering them to get an education, work and lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

Four out of five people who are blind don't have to be. Your gift today will ensure that people living in extreme poverty and isolation, get the eye care they need and deserve. Your investment in sight is an investment in the potential of people.



☐ **YES! I want to help marginalized people in rural communities get the eye care they need to reach their potential.**

Please accept my gift of: \$ _____

I prefer to give by:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

☐ My cheque to Seva Canada is enclosed

Credit Card # _____

Exp. date _____

Cardholder Name _____

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

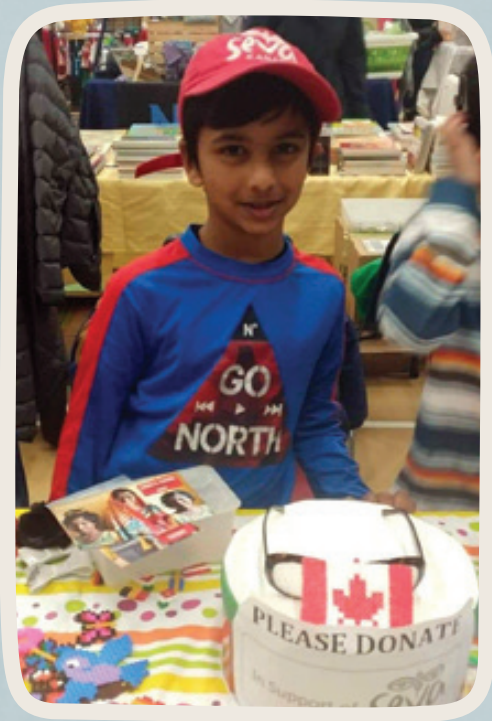
Email _____

A tax-deductible donation will be issued to the name on the cheque or credit card.

Please send your donation to Seva Canada using the attached envelope.

Seva Canada Society
Suite 100 – 2000 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 2G2

INSPIRING SEVA DONORS



Tanay

7-year-old Tanay is already a loyal Seva Canada supporter and fundraiser. For a second year in a row, he fundraised at his school's craft fair. He sold handmade bead crafts, Harry Potter wands and asked for donations for Seva's eye care programs. He educated people who came to his booth about cataracts and shared stories of people who had been given the gift of sight.

Tanay raised enough to provide **2 adults with cataract surgery** and **glasses for 10 people!** Great job Tanay!



Trinity United Church, Sunday School

Sunday school teacher Gail encourages her young students to learn the value of giving back and helping those in need, even in countries far away. Her class made crafts to sell in order to raise funds for a variety of charities.

Her students, Jake, Anina and William, chose to raise funds for Seva Canada to give the gift of sight to children in Ethiopia. They made all sorts of crafts from bird seed ornaments, dinosaur gingerbread cookies, homemade dog biscuits, natural homemade deodorant, reusable beeswax food wrap, reusable produce bags to fairy gardens and lanterns. The students raised enough money to provide **a child with sight-restoring cataract surgery** and **glasses for 10 children!**

Thank you Gail, Jake, Anina and William, for making life brighter for children in Ethiopia!



Leslie Ikeda

When Leslie was retiring as a secondary teacher after 36 years, she knew she didn't want gifts. "I recently had cataract surgery on my eyes, and was grateful that I lived in Canada. When I retired, I knew that I didn't want retirement gifts. Instead, I thought of Seva, which I knew would use the donations carefully and wisely."

Leslie first heard of Seva's work when she was in Nepal in 2001, as one of the teacher sponsors of the Pinetree Secondary Global Perspectives program. **"I was impressed with how Seva wanted to empower local citizens to improve eye care in their communities."**

Thank you to Leslie's community who gave generously and restored the sight and independence of many people in need!

Today Leslie is enjoying her well-deserved retirement with lunches with friends, reading, walking, travelling and thinking about how she plans to further give back through volunteering.

PHOTOgraphie Festival

From November 1 – 3, 2019, the PHOTOgraphie Festival (photographiefestival.ca) took place in Vancouver to engage and inspire photographers along with the local community, through art, conversation and education. Produced by the Professional Photographers of Canada (BC Region), the event joined together community members, BC youth, and amateur and professional photographers, to participate in this visual interactive event that included educational seminars, gallery exhibitions and image competitions.

As a part of the festival, BC photographers were asked to share their most creative photos using the theme "eyes" on Instagram between Aug.1 – Sept. 30th. The entries were used to create a collective artwork (see photo) created by local photographer, Anna Beaudry, and printed by Canvas Plus, that was auctioned off with the proceeds going to Seva Canada.

The collective artwork raised enough to provide 40 kids or adults with prescription glasses or cataract surgery for 4 adults.

Thank you to the organizers for choosing Seva Canada as the beneficiary of this amazing festival!



BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

RESTORE SIGHT AND PREVENT BLINDNESS. EVERY MONTH.

Join ForSight, Seva Canada's community of monthly donors committed to providing the means, opportunity, and capacity for people in low-income countries to receive surgery, glasses and medicine that they need to build brighter futures. For more information, visit our website at seva.ca/monthly-giving or call 1-877-460-6622.

FOR SIGHT

"It hits my heart because sight is the most important thing in the whole world. By giving sight to people in remote areas – young and old people – you're giving them a job and freeing them to live independent lives."

– Current monthly donor

ABOUT SEVA CANADA

SEVA'S VISION

Seva Canada's vision is a world in which no one is needlessly blind or visually impaired.

SEVA'S MISSION

Seva Canada's mission is to restore sight and prevent blindness in developing countries.

SEVA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We are guided by:

- Our belief in equal access to eye care for all
- Our belief that with adequate resources, all people can meet their own needs
- Our commitment to working with international partners to build local, sustainable eye care programs
- Our respect for cultural, ethnic, spiritual and other forms of diversity
- Our commitment to inform and inspire Canadians to join us in achieving our mission

HONOURARY PATRONS

The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy
The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson

The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC
Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia

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