



40  
YEARS

# EYE CONTACT

## SEVA CANADA NEWSLETTER

FALL 2022

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# MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD THROUGH THE POWER OF SIGHT



ELIZABETH KISHIKI (KCCO) WITH MICHEL MAURER IN TANZANIA

*"When the bandages are removed and you see the smiles on their faces and the relief in their eyes, it's really a wonderful experience,"* recalls Michel Maurer about his trip to Africa with Seva Canada. Over the past 25 years, Michel has been a Seva volunteer, Board Member and proud donor.

Michel, originally from Montreal, now lives in North Vancouver. Michel's career was in human resources for both Deloitte and A&W.

In the late '90s, Michel asked his good friend and former Seva Canada Board Member, Dr. Peter Nash, if Seva

needed any help. Michel facilitated a strategic planning session for Seva Canada and was later recruited to Seva's Board of Directors. Over the next 15 years, Michel served in various board positions including treasurer, Board Chair, and Executive Committee member. Michel was also responsible for the hiring

of Seva's Executive Director, Penny Lyons. As Penny tells the story, in 2006 when she was a fairly recent Seva Canada Board Member, Seva began a search for a new Executive Director. During a board meeting Michel turned to Penny and asked: 'why aren't you applying?' The rest is history.

Michel travelled to Tanzania to share his knowledge and expertise in strategic planning and management training and was instrumental in the creation of the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO), Seva's partner in Africa. Michel continues his work with KCCO as a Board Member. He also visited our partner in India, Aravind Eye Care

System, to both learn and share his management expertise. Michel had the opportunity to meet the late Dr. Venkataswamy, the legendary ophthalmologist who established Aravind. *"That trip was an eye opener and good reinforcement of my commitment to Seva and to making a difference,"* said Michel.

During his travels, Michel saw the impact of Seva's eye care programs on individuals, families and communities firsthand and was a very effective advocate for Seva Canada.

*"I'm grateful that I've had friends who were motivated to make a difference in the world and that gave me an opportunity to do this kind of work. I'd encourage people to find an opportunity to do meaningful work that gives them personal satisfaction and makes a difference,"* said Michel about his time volunteering with Seva Canada.

On behalf of Seva Canada and our international partners, thank you Michel for your decades of commitment to improving the lives of those in need through the power of sight.

# 40 YEARS OF AWESOME!



## Dear Seva Canada Supporters,

"It's all done with people" is a phrase that's been repeated over and over during our 40-year history. I heard it during my first Seva Canada Board Meeting in 2005 when I started as a volunteer. It's more than just a saying; it is the backbone of Seva Canada's success.

We have highlighted many people over the years who have contributed so much. In our 40<sup>th</sup> year celebration we want to thank, again, those who shared their skills, time, expertise and resources.

### *Thank you;*

To all the experts who provided training to our programs: teaching surgical and management skills, research methodology, human resource processes and procedures; cost-recovery analysis, and population-based assessments of equity to ensure high-quality, sustainable programs that reach those most in need.

To our corporate partners, granting agencies and foundations, who generously fund our work and encourage others to do the same.

To the talented photographers and videographers who volunteer to capture Seva's work in the field with both brilliance and compassion so we can share the impact of your generosity with donors, funders and all Canadians.

To our office and home-based volunteers who make thank you calls, organize shipments, count inventory and keep the office running smoothly.

And finally, our sincerest thanks to all of you, our donors, who have given for years (some from our very first year) and new donors, who will continue to restore sight and prevent blindness for years to come.

Truly, it is all done with people. People just like you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Penny Lyons".

**Penny Lyons**, Executive Director

# LET'S CELEBRATE 40 YEARS OF AWESOME!

JOIN US ON NOVEMBER 18, 2022 FOR OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

In this, our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, we want to celebrate all that we have achieved with you - our donors, advocates and volunteers, our program partners and international staff!

In 40 years of giving and supporting, you have transformed the lives of people in need through the power of sight! Over 5 million people have received sight-restoring surgery and can now see the faces of their loved ones, are independent, can succeed in school, earn an income and support their family and community. Millions more people have accessed essential eye care services including glasses and medicine.

Join us in celebrating all these accomplishments alongside 3 members of our most longstanding eye care programs - Parami Dhakhwa from Seva Nepal, Sunil Joseph from Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology (LAICO) and Paul Courtright from the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO).

## EVENT DETAILS:

Date:	November 18, 2022
Time:	7pm PST
In-person Location:	VanDusen Botanical Garden BMO Great Hall 5251 Oak St, Vancouver, BC V6M 4H1
COVID:	Your safety is very important to us. Currently, VanDusen does not require its guests to wear a mask or to be vaccinated. We will continue to monitor the situation and as we get closer to the date we will update you with any changes to the regulations.
Zoom Details:	<a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84778069858?pwd=S2kxU0VXMWhHMDU1ZHp0SUtKTWpkUT09">https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84778069858?pwd=S2kxU0VXMWhHMDU1ZHp0SUtKTWpkUT09</a>

## PLEASE RSVP

In-person RSVP:	<a href="https://bit.ly/inpersonAGM">https://bit.ly/inpersonAGM</a>
Zoom RSVP:	<a href="https://bit.ly/ZoomSevaAGM">https://bit.ly/ZoomSevaAGM</a>

## A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT OUR GUESTS:



**Parami Dhakhwa**  
*Seva Nepal Program Manager*

Parami has been with Seva Nepal for 19 years and currently holds the role of Program Manager. Parami has implemented numerous eye care programs throughout Nepal. She liaises with local partners including eye hospitals, District Eye Care Centers, Community Eye

Centres, as well as the Seva Canada and Seva Foundation offices. She also coordinates training programs at Seva's partner hospitals and is responsible for the administration of Seva Nepal's finances and grant management.

Always open to learning and expanding her knowledge, Parami has recently added research to her portfolio. She is currently working on 2 studies with the Reiyukai Eiko Masunaga Eye Hospital in Banepa, just outside of Kathmandu. She is investigating how to increase the number of referrals from the general hospital of retinal patients to the Eye Hospital and how to increase the number of surgical eye patients coming back for follow-up visits.

In her spare time, Parami enjoys spending time with her husband and young daughter.

*Continued on next page >*



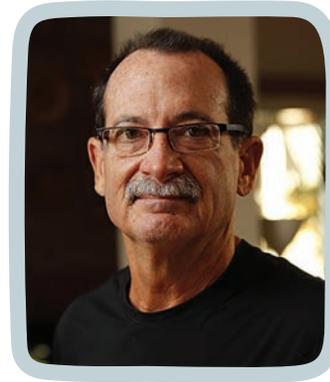
**Sanil Joseph**  
Senior Faculty LAICO

Sanil Joseph is a Senior Faculty & Hospital Management Consultant at the Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology (LAICO), Aravind Eye Care System in India. He has been with Aravind since March 2005. His major responsibilities include anchoring health services/epidemiological research initiatives, consultancy for capacity building of eye care institutions in India and other low-income countries, designing and conducting management training programs for eye care personnel. Sanil has been involved in around 45 consultancy projects, half of which are with institutions in low-income countries other than India. He has travelled to 17 countries on over 30 mentoring or training assignments. Training programs organised by his team have been attended by participants from over 40 countries.

Sanil holds an MSc in Public Health from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, University of London (2013) and a Masters in Hospital Administration (MHA) from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, India (2001). He is currently working on his PhD at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He is the recipient of the prestigious International Masters Fellowship from The Wellcome Trust UK (2012-15). In 2012 he was recognised with the Outstanding Young Professional award by the Junior Chamber International - India.

Sanil is also a talented singer! Listen to some of his music:

- *Enga Madura*, meaning 'our Madurai' is a peppy song about the city where Aravind is located:  
<https://bit.ly/OurMadurai>
- *Oru Thuli Velicham*, meaning, 'A Drop of Light,' is a tribute to Dr. V – the founder of Aravind Eye Care System, made for his birth centenary:  
<https://bit.ly/DrVsong>



**Paul Courtright**  
KCCO

Paul Courtright is the co-founder of the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO), a professor at the University of Cape Town and a Seva Canada Board Member. Paul and his wife, Dr. Susan Lewallen, established the KCCO in Moshi, Tanzania in 2001 and lived there until 2012, spending the next 4 years in Cape Town, South Africa.

Paul started work in the eye care field in 1979 as a Peace Corps volunteer working with leprosy patients in South Korea. After completing his Masters (1984) and Doctorate (1988) he worked in Egypt and Ethiopia (1 year each), Malawi (4 years), Tanzania (11 years) and South Africa (4 years).

He and Susan moved to San Diego, into a life of semi-retirement in 2016. Currently a consultant, Paul is the Trachoma Technical Lead for Sightsavers' trachoma elimination programs in 22 countries in Africa. He has published 282 scientific articles and book chapters.

Paul has been working with Seva Canada since the mid-1990s. He is an avid fan of Seva Canada for many reasons, including the professional way in which Seva Canada approaches its engagement, the willingness to respond to needs identified in the field, and the courage to invest in new ideas, new areas, and new people.

Paul is also the author of *Witnessing Gwangju*, a memoir of the May 18, 1980 uprising in South Korea that led to the democratization movement in that country.

## PLEASE NOTE:

**Voting:** Everyone is welcome to attend the AGM, however, to be considered a member of Seva Canada Society and eligible to vote at our AGM, a person must have donated a minimum of \$20 between November 6, 2021 and November 14, 2022. Any member may be nominated to the Board of Directors by submitting a letter signed by a nominator and a seconder, both of whom must be members in good standing of Seva Canada Society. Letters can be sent to the Seva Canada office to the attention of the Chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee.

# LOVE YOUR EYES! WORLD SIGHT DAY, OCTOBER 13, 2022



World Sight Day is on Thursday, October 13, 2022 and together with the global eye care community, we will be focusing attention on the importance of eye care for all. Please join us by prioritising your own eye health.

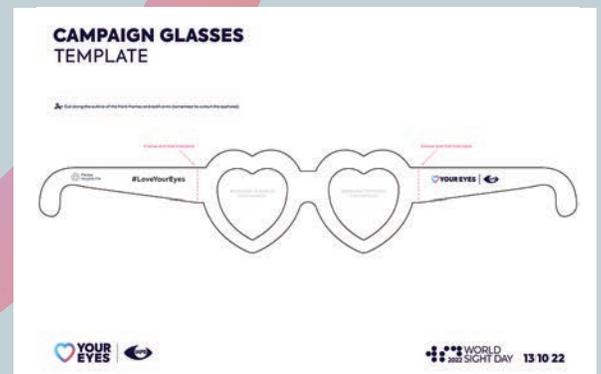
Nearly everyone on the planet will experience an eye health issue in their lifetime, however, more than a billion people worldwide do not have access to the services they need for healthy vision.

**The good news is that this global issue is solvable!**

Together, we can realize our vision of a world in which no one is needlessly blind or visually impaired and where access to high-quality eye care services are readily available to everyone.

So, this World Sight Day, #LoveYourEyes and join the millions of others worldwide who will be doing the same. Simply:

1. Book an eye exam to safeguard your vision
2. Download and cut out a pair of heart glasses them at [seva.ca/worldsightdayglasses](https://seva.ca/worldsightdayglasses)
3. Take a photo wearing your heart glasses and post it to your social media accounts with the hashtag #LoveYourEyes
4. Tag @sevacanada and @aiapb
5. Share and encourage others to #LoveYourEyes



## MAXIMIZE YOUR IMPACT WITH A GIFT OF SECURITIES RESTORE SIGHT AND REAP SIGNIFICANT TAX BENEFITS!



When you make a gift of securities, you're providing life-changing medicine, sight-restoring cataract surgery, and prescription glasses to men, women, and children in low- and middle-income countries. Plus, you won't pay any capital gains tax and you'll receive a tax receipt for the full market value of your donation. That's a lot of bang for your buck!

For more information, contact Paul at 604-713-6622 or email [fundraising@seva.ca](mailto:fundraising@seva.ca).

# THE POWER OF SIGHT PODCAST IS HERE!

## LISTEN ON YOUR FAVOURITE STREAMING APP TODAY

Your fall playlist just got better! **The Power of Sight**, a 3-part podcast series in celebration of you, our donors and your dedication and support over the past 40 years is now live. This heartwarming and inspiring podcast series tells Seva Canada's story with firsthand accounts by staff, board members and our in-country partners in India, Nepal, Burundi, and Tanzania.

In episode one, **Why Sight?**, we look at why eye care is at the forefront of our mission. 1.1 billion people live with vision loss and 90% live in low- and middle-income countries where access to care is limited. And the need is growing. Unless there is significant investment, current eye care services are unlikely to cope with future needs.

*"As in most of the countries, in Nepal, blindness is a big issue, but what I see different is the care that is provided in developed countries and support you have. We don't have that in this country."* Parami Dakhwa, Seva Nepal Program Manager

In part two of our series, **Development with Dignity**, we discuss why fostering dignity among our partners, giving leadership roles, autonomy to make decisions, and equity in achieving development, isn't simply measured by the growth of programs and the number of eye patients successfully served. Development must advance human dignity both for local eye care professionals and the very poor people they often serve.



In our final episode, **Equity**, we look at how, with the support of donors like you, Seva Canada works to ensure equity in access to quality eye care services across all our programs. Everyone deserves the right to sight, regardless of where they live, their age, their religion, their income, or their gender and sex.

Listen and share the podcast today! **The Power of Sight** podcast is live on your favourite streaming app or you can visit [www.seva.ca/power-sight-podcast](http://www.seva.ca/power-sight-podcast)



*"She had never seen her two-year-old son, and her husband led her on a 10-day walk to the eye camp where I operated on both her eyes. I actually got a picture of her with her hand on her child's head. She said 'you have given me divine eyes.' And yeah, I still get choked up thinking about it."*

– Dr. Marty Spencer ophthalmologist and Seva Canada Board Member

Listen on:



# TIBETANS AND NEPALIS GET ESSENTIAL EYE CARE SERVICES!



For centuries, Tibetans have lived in and travelled freely throughout the high Himalayan regions bordering the relatively recently established countries of China and Nepal. A large portion of the Nepali/Tibetan population remain isolated in remote mountainous regions receiving few health care services, including eye care.

More and more, with increased Nepali government support and improved transportation, Seva Nepal has extended its network of Community Eye Centres (CECs) to provide permanent, year-round services to the remote, predominantly Tibetan population.

This year, with your generosity, Seva Canada will support the establishment of a Community Eye Centre in Tharpu, in partnership with two primarily Tibetan rural municipalities - Taplejung and Pachthar.

Staffed by local ophthalmic personnel, trained by Seva and equipped with sophisticated examination and refraction equipment, the Tharpu Community Eye Centre will provide diagnosis and treatment of most eye conditions, including glasses and medicine. People with more severe conditions will receive a tele-ophthalmology consultation for further treatment with the ophthalmologist in Itahari.

With your support, Seva Canada plans to create a network of CECs in Tibetan regions of Nepal to reach the unreached.

# MADAGASCAR GETS ITS SECOND COMMUNITY EYE CENTRE!



Similar to most ancient tropical islands situated between Asia and Africa, Madagascar reflects multiple foreign influences, including the French colonization in the past century. While rich in natural resources and agricultural land, rapid population growth and a series of political crises have left the island grossly under-developed

economically, with a very weak health care system and no eye care services outside of regional capitals.

For the past decade, Seva Canada, through its partnership with the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology, has helped to develop very successful eye care programs in four regions within the SALFA (Malagasy Lutheran Church's Health Department) health care network. In 2020, Seva Canada donors funded the establishment of Madagascar's first Community Eye Centre (CEC) in the Antalaha District of Sambava with SALFA. A second CEC is currently being created in Antsohihy in northern Madagascar.

By establishing permanent facilities like Community Eye Centres, the Malagasy people receive high-quality eye care services in their communities while reducing costly outreach visits. Early results show remarkably high attendance and sufficient willingness from patients to pay both a small service fee and purchase glasses, making this CEC almost financially self-sufficient, in this impoverished land.

# SEEING SUCCESS IN SCHOOL



PREETI BEFORE SHE RECEIVED HER FREE GLASSES

*"Preeti, why are you being so lazy?! You are still not paying attention in class!"* scolded her teacher.

Embarrassed for being called out in class again, 7-year-old Preeti just wants to go home. She doesn't think she is as smart as her classmates who don't get reprimanded in class and get better grades than her. The only reason Preeti likes to go to school is to play with her friends.

Preeti lives with her mother and brother in the Dhanusa District of Nepal. Her father left their village to find work in the Middle East to support the family. Preeti's family knows the value of a good education for Preeti's future and encourage her to go to school even when she protests.

Thankfully, the Seva Youth Outreach Team visited her school to facilitate free eye screenings for the students and teachers. Preeti had never had her eyes or vision examined before. To her and her teacher's surprise, she was diagnosed with farsightedness and was prescribed

glasses. Her teacher was astonished that Preeti wasn't lazy, she just couldn't see the lessons on the blackboard!

Now, thanks to your support, Preeti is sure that her new glasses will help her improve her concentration and performance in class and she will start liking school!



PREETI AND HER BEST FRIEND

# HOW YOU HAVE HELPED



THE THMA PUOK COMMUNITY IN CAMBODIA WILL HAVE YEAR-ROUND EYE CARE; ALL THANKS TO YOU!



Thanks to your support this spring and a generous matching gift from Synergy Collaborative Health, we met our goal to help fund a Community Eye Centre (CEC) in Thma Puok, Cambodia. **Each year, this new CEC will see approximately 2,500 patients and provide hundreds of sight-restoring cataract surgeries at the Eye Hospital.**

Staff at the CEC will begin eye care training in the new year. The CEC should be complete by **late spring 2023** and ready to provide the people of Thma Puok with year-round access to essential eye care services!

## What is a Community Eye Centre (CEC)?

A CEC is a permanent eye care facility that is similar to an optometrist's office in Canada. It is staffed by a well-trained Ophthalmic Assistant who can treat 90% of all eye health conditions and provide medicine and glasses. For patients who require further care, such as cataract surgery, the Ophthalmic Assistant arranges transportation to hospital where surgery is provided for free.

# POWERING COMMUNITIES WITH SIGHT



Jenni Lynnea knows firsthand the importance of healthy vision. She experienced two retinal detachments in 2018, the first while travelling in Cambodia. In 2021, she underwent

bilateral cataract surgery. Grateful for her surgery, Jenni decided that she wanted to give back. She began researching organizations and causes to support. When Jenni found Seva Canada, she knew it was the perfect fit! *"As I've had eye issues myself, and since I have a passion for education and helping women and children, Seva really caught my attention,"* recalls Jenni.

As a retired high school counsellor and teacher, Jenni enjoys cycling, hiking, photography, as well as travelling and experiencing different cultures. One of her favourite places is Nepal. In fact, she has been to Nepal four times!

Jenni first visited in 1980 for a hiking expedition and in 1997, she took a leave of absence to teach workshops for teachers in Nepal and India.

During her travels, Jenni had the opportunity to visit Seva's eye care programs in India, Guatemala, and Nepal.

*"It's life-changing. I think we underestimate how much we value our sight, and the opportunities that we have as a result of good vision care. I like how Seva gives power to local communities, the organization makes a bigger difference that way!"* said Jenni.

# SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND POETIC PROSE FOR SIGHT



Dr. Janette Lindley and her husband Danny Peart have been Seva Canada donors for 30 years. They've held fundraisers and travelled to Nepal, Tanzania, Malawi, and Madagascar, to train program partners in surgical techniques.

Janette, a comprehensive ophthalmologist, has worked across Canada. Danny, a personal trainer and published poet, has held poetry readings to fundraise for Seva.

We recently sat down with Janette and Danny to learn why they've supported Seva Canada for three decades.

**Seva Canada: How did you first learn about Seva Canada?**

**Janette:** Through Drs. Peter Nash & Linda Harth; Peter was a Board member at that time. I liked what the organization was doing and how they were doing it. Instead of a less sustainable model where surgeons flew in and operated, but little else was left behind, Seva was making a lasting impact.

**Seva Canada: What parts of Seva Canada's work interest you the most?**

**Janette:** I like the philosophy behind the programs – providing funding and expertise to the partners while giving autonomy to make program decisions. I also appreciate Seva's focus on women and children.

**Danny:** For me it's the people. I always enjoy seeing Seva staff at events and when we travel to meet program partners.

**Seva Canada: You've visited a number of our programs over the years, do you have a favourite story?**

**Janette:** In 2016 we travelled with my sister Susan, who is also an ophthalmologist and Seva donor, to Sambava, Madagascar, to work with Dr. Philippe Lantoniaina. Seva provided Dr. Lantoniaina with a green laser to treat diabetic retinopathy and we helped set it up. Philippe was quite concerned about the increasing prevalence of diabetes in Madagascar so training him to use the laser to help treat people in his community was such a great experience!

*"It was a great moment for us, at the SALFA Eye Clinic, Sambava, the meeting with you (Janette and Susan). Thank you for sharing your expertise with us on how to use the green laser, giving lenses, and contributing to the training of our new nurses,"* emailed Philippe after the training.

**Danny:** We brought soccer balls with us for the kids as well. While Janette and Susan were working in the eye clinic, I played soccer with the staff. We had lots of fun!

My favourite story is climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in 2007 to raise money for Seva. It wasn't just about us climbing a mountain; it was about helping people in need. *Climbing Kilimanjaro is quite a challenge but knowing we were supporting Seva and doing something significant gave us extra motivation to reach the summit.*

**Seva Canada: What would you say to a prospective donor about why they should support Seva's eye care programs?**

**Janette:** That restoring someone's sight can make such a huge difference in their life. When the patch is removed and you see the tears of joy and relief in their eyes, no one needs to say anything to know just how impactful seeing again is for them and their lives.

We met a man in Nepal whose wife left him and took their children back to her parent's home because he could no longer work and support the family. Once he had cataract surgery and could see again, he was able to work and reunite his family. It was just remarkable!

Thank you, Janette and Danny, for your decades of support. Your dedication to creating sustainable eye care programs is truly inspiring.

# HELP KIDS RISE AND SHINE WITH A PAIR OF GLASSES



YOUR GIFT WILL HELP PROVIDE **2,000 KIDS** WITH **GLASSES** THIS BACK-TO-SCHOOL SEASON.

For kids in low-income countries, education is the key to a better life. As the new school year approaches, children around the world are getting ready to head back to class. Many will need new prescription glasses to help them see the blackboard and read their textbooks.

But the majority of kids with vision problems live in low- and middle-income countries where access to eye care, even glasses, is limited. Without healthy vision, kids are more likely to fall behind in class, be bullied, and face social exclusion from their peers.

You can change this reality; a pair of glasses can reduce the odds of failing a class by 44%!

Help 2,000 kids in low-income countries rise and shine in class with a pair of glasses! A simple gift of \$25 provides 5 children with glasses in time for the new school year.

**\$25**

provides **5 children**  
with prescription glasses

**\$50**

provides **10 children**  
with prescription glasses

**\$75**

provides **15 children**  
with prescription glasses

Every donation helps provide a life-changing pair of glasses to a child in need!

Please mail in the enclosed form or visit [seva.ca/glasses](http://seva.ca/glasses) to make your gift today.

# 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](https://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 low- and middle-income 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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