



40
YEARS

EYE CONTACT

SEVA CANADA NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

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PAYING IT FORWARD SO EVERYONE CAN ACCESS EYE CARE



LAURENT PERRAS

"The idea that I might lose my vision made me realize how valuable sight is," said Laurent.

Laurent Perras, an English professor and member of Seva Canada's monthly donor community ForSight, knows the importance of healthy vision firsthand. Laurent has a progressive disorder called pseudoxanthoma elasticum, or PXE for short. PXE causes calcium and other minerals to accumulate in the elastic fibers of the skin, eyes, and blood vessels, which can result in reduced vision.

Laurent was grateful to receive the costly PXE treatment free of charge in Canada, and wanted to pay it forward. When his ophthalmologist recommended he get involved with a vision charity, he began researching several organizations. Laurent decided Seva Canada, with its programs that impact disadvantaged individuals even in the remotest communities, was the best choice. *"I know what it's like to be fearful of losing this vital sense, and I recognize that I am extremely fortunate to have consistent support from top eye specialists. It gives me great comfort to know that eye care intervention is available for people who do not have or cannot afford care, before more serious eye problems occur. Saving someone's sight gives that person a safer, freer world."*

In 2014, Laurent became a ForSight donor so he could make an impact every single month. *"Donating every month makes me feel like I'm making a small difference. It's simply amazing that a 15-minute cataract procedure can change someone's life."*

Laurent also enjoys reading Seva's inspiring stories of people who have been given the power of sight.

"I'm always deeply moved by the stories of socially-vulnerable children. It's heartbreaking to think about children who don't have access to eye care. But then you read one of Seva Canada's stories [about a child who has been helped] and it's really heartwarming."



BABY JOJO AFTER CATARACT SURGERY WITH HER MOTHER IN BURUNDI

Thank you, Laurent, for your ongoing monthly support. Because of your generosity, people in low- and middle-income countries will continue to receive the precious gift of sight – and hope for a brighter future.

THE RECIPE FOR EYE CARE PROGRAM SUCCESS



Dear Seva Canada Community,

It has been a joy reconnecting with the Seva community over my first few months as Seva Canada's new Executive Director. I've enjoyed learning about everything you've accomplished in the years since I was Seva's Development Director. I am in awe of how you have grown Seva Canada, funded countless surgeries, glasses and medicines, and strengthened our eye care programs to be even more robust and resilient.

I also learned my new responsibilities included introducing you to the theme of our spring newsletter – The Recipe for Success. I knew we'd have great information to share with you, but also that I'd personally have trouble holding back the puns – so please forgive me in advance!

In this newsletter you'll learn the key elements or "ingredients" needed to set up an eye care program for success, from how we choose where we work, to who we partner with, to best practices in program delivery (see pages 4 & 5).

Now, every good cook needs to use what's fresh in the local marketplace, and Seva Canada is no different. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions in eye care – the culture, geography, local health care systems and prevalent eye health concerns can look very different from country to country. Strategies that work in Nepal, for example, may not make sense in Tanzania. This is

why our method is to support our local in-country partners to decide how to deliver care in the most effective way in their country.

And when our key ingredients and method come together, who provides the fuel that actually gets things cooking? Our Seva Canada donor community, of course! Through your donations, fundraising efforts, volunteerism, and product purchases, Seva donors nourish our programs and make them thrive.

Please enjoy this newsletter. I hope it provides food for thought about how your support sustains effective eye care programs – helping people see today, tomorrow, and far into the future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Liz Brant".

Liz Brant, Executive Director



Penny Lyons retired as Seva Canada's Executive Director at the end of 2022 after leading the organization for 16 years.

When Penny began as Executive Director in 2006, Seva Canada mainly raised funds and sent them overseas. That all changed as Penny redirected

the organization, channeling our efforts into more active roles locally, nationally and internationally.

Travelling, meeting, speaking and persuading, Penny led Seva Canada to become instrumental in the success of a widely-praised global movement for gender equity in eye care. Her belief in and bold support of the first community ophthalmology program in Africa (the Kilimanjaro Center for Community Ophthalmology, KCCO) provided more equitable and durable

population-based programs on the continent. This led to Seva and KCCO sharing the Champalimaud Award, the most prestigious award in eye care.

And as revenues grew and programs thrived, she reminded us that it is all done with people, and that it all has to be done with dignity.

Penny, we are forever grateful for your leadership.

From the staff and board of Seva Canada

SPOTLIGHT ON PENNY LYONS

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF AWESOME!

SEVA CANADA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)



Seva Canada held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 18, 2022, marking the exciting milestone of our 40th birthday with the theme, "40 Years of Awesome." Guests joined both in person at the VanDusen Garden and via Zoom. The evening began with a warm welcome from Jill Guthrie, Board Co-Chair, followed by the approval of the 2021 AGM minutes.

Next, Venus Duplin of RHN Chartered Professional Accountants, presented the auditor's report for Seva Canada's fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, which showed net assets of \$1.34M. Following Venus' presentation, RHN was reappointed as Seva's auditor for another year.

The last order of business was board elections, at which time the board welcomed new members Brigid Cakouros (Postdoctoral Associate in Global Health at Yale School of Medicine), Maggie Edwards (Human Resources Executive), and Sanil Joseph (Senior Faculty and Health Care Management Consultant with the Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology).

Following the business portion of the AGM, Penny Lyons, Executive Director, took the stage to thank Seva Canada's donors, program partners, volunteers, board, and staff. She also announced her retirement, and introduced Seva Canada's incoming Executive

Director, Liz Brant. Penny concluded her retirement announcement with heartfelt words of farewell: *"My 16 years of service to Seva, beside our dedicated partners and my fabulous staff, has been an honour and a privilege and I am forever grateful for the opportunity."*

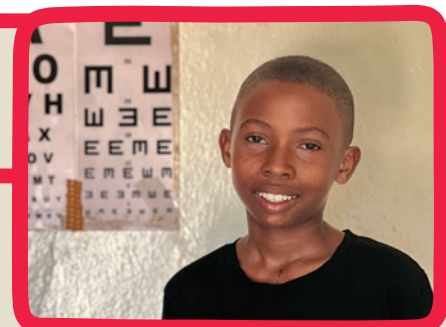


To wrap up a very special AGM, Penny hosted a panel discussion with Parami Dhakhwa (Seva Nepal), Sanil Joseph (Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology), and Paul Courtright (Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology).

To learn more about this year's AGM, visit seva.ca/40-years-awesome

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

A gift in your Will could transform the lives of thousands of people in need. After you've remembered your loved ones, consider a gift to Seva Canada. Your bequest, large or small, will ensure poor and marginalized people in low- and middle-income countries receive the power of sight for generations to come.



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

THE RECIPE FOR EYE CARE PROGRAM

Every Seva Canada eye care program is customized to meet the specific needs of each country and community. However, the recipe for success always includes the following ingredients.



THE GENEROSITY OF SEVA CANADA DONORS!

Without you, none of this is possible!



THE COUNTRY

A place where:

Eye care is needed and national and local governments support development of accessible services.

Current services are:

Limited / Unknown / Too far away / Too expensive / Poor quality



A NATIONAL OR REGIONAL PARTNER

Who:

- Has a strong national presence and works with the implementing partner(s) to:
 - Provide administrative and clinical training
 - Source equipment and supplies
 - Develop population-based programs that provide services equitably: independent of ethnicity, sex or capacity to pay



THE IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Who:

- Is an eye hospital or eye unit with strong leadership
- Is committed to meeting their community's needs
- Sets high standards for quality
- Works effectively as a team
- Is respected by the community

M SUCCESS!



DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

That:

- Actively engage with community members to find people in need of care and connects them with services
- Overcomes barriers to accessing care by providing:
 - A financial structure whereby paying patients subsidize patients too poor to pay
 - Transportation
 - Food
 - Lodging



EXPANSION OF CLINICAL SERVICES

That:

- Are high quality, high volume, and low cost
- Are financially sustainable
- Provide ongoing training
- Have up-to-date equipment, consumables and medications
- Monitors and evaluates activities to support decision-making and continuous improvement



EYE CARE FOR ALL

Including:

- Medicine
- Surgery
- Glasses

The power of sight for those in need today and for generations to come!



SEVA CAMBODIA STAFF HONoured WITH ROYAL ORDER

We have lots of ways of measuring success at Seva – and one way to tell we're meeting local needs is when our overseas teams are recognized for their achievements by their own people. We are very proud to share that several Seva Cambodia staff members have received prestigious awards conferred by the King and Prime Minister of Cambodia:



Ratana Vann, Program Director, received a *Medal of Monisaraphon*, *Royal Order of Mahasena - Knight Grand Officer* (Royal Decree from the King)



Roshan Bista, Program Coordinator, received a *Royal Order of Monisaraphon-Chevalier* (Sub-Decree from the Prime Minister)



Sophon Vin, Program Coordinator, received a *Royal Order of Monisaraphon-Chevalier* (Sub-Decree from the Prime Minister)

These Royal Orders are given for outstanding accomplishments in the fields of education, arts, science, literacy, or social work – and they make Ratana, Roshan and Sophon part of the Royal Order founded by King Sisowath of Cambodia over 100 years ago. This is significant recognition of the unwavering commitment of our staff to improve the lives of Cambodians through eye care.



We are grateful for Seva Cambodia's partnership and are proud of Ratana, Roshan and Sophon. Their dedication makes it possible for us in Canada to make an impact in the lives of Cambodians through the power of sight. They are shining examples of the spirit of "Seva," selfless service.

Congratulations Ratana, Roshan and Sophon!

RAM PRASAD KANDEL, THANK YOU FOR YOUR "SEVA", SELFLESS SERVICE



RAM PRASAD KANDEL EARLY IN HIS CAREER LEADING A DEAF, BLIND AND MUTE WOMAN TO AN EYE SCREENING.



PENNY, KANDEL AND KEN HIKING TO INAUGURATE THE COMMUNITY EYE CENTRE IN BAJURA

Your journey with Seva began by walking ancient trails in the highlands of a land so beautiful, troubled and poor.

We cried together watching children in rags playing in the dirt, so thin and with flies covering their faces.

We visited villages perched on hillsides where houses emptied, so grateful to welcome you back.

We helped you teach eye care professionals to work outside clinic walls and beyond city streets.

We celebrated as fewer and fewer people in the hills needlessly became blind.

We celebrated as more and more people in remote regions received care.

Thank you for spending an uncountable number of difficult days far away from your family.

Thank you for devoting your life to helping people the world has left behind.

Kandel, our friend, my friend, long may our journey together continue.

-Dr. Ken Bassett
Seva Canada Program Director

After 25 years of service, Seva Nepal Program Director, Ram Prasad Kandel, stepped down in January 2023. Please join us in thanking Kandel and wishing him the very best for what is to come.

LOSING HIS SIGHT BUT NOT HIS HUMOUR



When our partners in Burundi first met grade 10 student Thierry, he seemed shy and too serious for his young age. He appeared to stare at the eye care team intently, but then cracked a smile and began making jokes. Deep down, he was a fun-loving teen, but he had developed a reserved demeanor at times – life had not been easy for Thierry over the past few years.

Thierry began suffering from cataracts in October last year. **His cataracts didn't appear gradually; the cloudiness came rapidly, affecting his vision in both eyes.** He kept going to school as long as he could, but when he could no longer see the blackboard or read his textbooks, he dropped out. He did his best to help at home with small chores, until he couldn't even manage those.

His mother took him to the general hospital where a doctor confirmed he had bilateral cataracts. Since this was a general hospital, there weren't any ophthalmologists



to treat him and he was referred to a nearby Community Eye Centre (CEC). At the CEC, Thierry and his mother were told about the Seva-supported Child Tertiary Health Centre (CTSOE), the only Eye Hospital in Burundi providing surgery for children and youth, at no cost.



At the CTSOE, Thierry received sight-restoring surgery on his right eye, thanks to the generosity of Seva Canada donors. **When the bandage came off the next day, he was so excited. He could see again! He couldn't wait to go back home and get back to high school.** He wanted to learn and hang out with his friends.



Thierry was able to catch up and finish the school year along with his classmates, no doubt cracking a few jokes along the way.

Soon, with the support of donors like you, Thierry will have the same life-changing surgery on his left eye.

HOW YOU HAVE HELPED



73% of people struggling with vision loss worldwide are over the age of 50. 90% live in low- and middle-income countries where access to eye care is limited.

Your generosity this past holiday season will change this reality for thousands of adults living with blindness and vision impairment.

Thanks to your support, we reached our matching campaign goal!

Hundreds of donors like you contributed, with the first \$100,000 matched by an amazing, anonymous donor. **A combined \$229,000 was raised in total, to help aging adults regain their sight and reclaim their lives!**

Because of you:

- **3,800 adults** will receive prescription glasses, bringing their world into focus
- **400 outreach workers** will be trained to identify, counsel, and refer community members to local eye care services
- **2,400 adults** will receive sight-restoring cataract surgery including transportation and follow-up care
- **800 adults** will receive the power of sight through ongoing glaucoma treatment

THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN A SUCCESSFUL EYE CARE PROGRAM IS **YOU!**

Donate today to provide healthy vision to people in need, now and in the future

Four out of five people who are blind don't have to be. Your support of Seva Canada's "recipe for success" ensures people living in extreme poverty and isolation receive life-altering eye care, regardless of their ability to pay, gender, race or religion.

Please give generously today:

\$25 provides **prescription glasses** to five kids, so they can see and succeed

\$50 restores an adult's eyesight through **cataract surgery**

\$75

helps fund the **training of an outreach worker** to find people with eye disease and connect them with the services they need

\$100

supports an **ophthalmic nurse's training** so they can provide basic eye care to a community

\$250

helps **train a surgeon** to perform thousands of cataract operations per year

\$ _____

choose to **give any amount** to help provide people with power of sight

Please mail in the enclosed form or visit seva.ca/recipeforsuccess to make your gift today!

TRADITIONAL NEPALESE MOMOS, MMMM



Raju Tuladhar is a friend of Seva Canada. He is a Nepali trekking guide and an accomplished tapestry artist. Years ago, he took care of our team of local and visiting staff, donors and board members, when we travelled to the remote area of Bajura, Nepal, to set up a Community Eye Centre.

He invited us to his home in Kathmandu. His lovely and gracious wife, Gita Gurung, treated us to homemade momos, a traditional Nepalese dumpling. They were so delicious we asked for her recipe so we could share it with you, our donors. Please enjoy!

Total time: 2hr 40min

Ingredients:

Dough:

- 4 cups all-purpose flour (add more as required)
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 ½ cups room temperature water
- 1 pinch of salt

Filling:

- 200 grams paneer
- 300 grams green cabbage
- 1¼ onions
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp momo masala (can be purchased at specialty stores, online on Amazon or <https://liamfoods.ca/>)
- 1 tbsp coriander
- 1 tbsp cumin powder
- 1 tbsp mustard oil

Sauce:

- 250g tomatoes
- 2 garlic cloves
- ½ tsp cumin seed
- 1 tbsp mustard oil
- ½ onion
- fresh green coriander
- 1 green chili
- 1 tbsp roasted sesame seeds
- salt to taste

Directions:

Dough:

1. In a large bowl, combine 4 cups flour, 1 tbsp oil, a pinch of salt and 1½ cups of room temperature water.
2. Mix well, and knead until the dough becomes a smooth ball.
3. Add more flour as needed to keep it from sticking.
4. Put back in the bowl, cover with a damp cloth and let rest for at least 30 minutes.

Filling:

1. Finely chop the paneer, cabbage and onions.
2. Add 1 tbsp momo masala, ½ tsp salt, 1 tbsp coriander, 1 tbsp cumin powder, 1 tbsp mustard oil and mix together by hand and put to the side.



Sauce:

1. Sauté 250g of tomatoes, 2 garlic cloves, ½ tsp cumin, 1 tbsp mustard oil and ½ an onion.
2. Let it cool down.
3. Blend with coriander, 1 tbsp roasted sesame seeds and 1 green chili depending on hotness desired, until smooth.
4. Salt to taste.

Assembly:

1. To make the wrappers:
Break off a 1 inch piece of dough (weighing approximately ½ oz) and form it into a ball. Place the ball on a flat surface and roll it into a 3- to 4-inch circle with a rolling pin, ensuring that the middle portion of the wrapper is slightly thicker than the edges. This will keep the dumplings together during filling and steaming.



2. Place 1 tbsp of the filling in the middle of a wrapper. For packing, hold the wrapper on one palm, and with the other hand bring all edges together to the center, making pleats. Moisten the edge of the wrapper with water before sealing.
3. Pinch and twist the pleats to ensure the complete closure of the stuffed momo.
4. Spray a steamer pan with cooking spray.
5. Place the momo in the prepared steamer pan.
6. Repeat with remaining wrappers and filling.
7. Fill the steamer pot halfway with water and bring to a boil. Set the steamer pan with the momos on top of the pot and cover with a tight lid. Steam the momos until cooked through, 8 to 9 minutes.

Option and our recommendation:
Make your momos crispy by putting them into a sprayed frying pan once steamed.

DOING GOOD BUSINESS AND GIVING BACK

"To restore someone's sight seems to be as close as you can get to a true miracle!"



THE WESTERN PINE REALTY TEAM

From a young age, Jon Lumer knew he wanted to make a difference. After completing his Bachelor's Degree at Concordia University, Jon travelled to Guatemala several times, volunteering to support education and housing projects. This experience helped him understand the struggles of people living in poverty, and cemented his commitment to giving back, no matter where life took him.

Jon went on to pursue law school, worked as a criminal defense attorney in Montreal, and eventually moved to Vancouver to start a second career in real estate. Together with his wife, Jon opened his own real estate agency, Western Pine Realty, with philanthropy built right into their business model.



JON LUMER

"The strategy that we have in place now is very meaningful to me. It helps me feel motivated knowing we're making a positive impact," says Jon.

When any property is sold, Western Pine Realty donates 10% of the commission to one of ten high-impact charities Jon has carefully selected. Clients get to decide which charity receives their donation. Seva Canada was added to the list after Jon read Peter Singer's book, *The Life You Can Save*. *"Seva definitely grabbed my attention. To restore someone's sight with something as simple as a pair of glasses is truly amazing."*

To date, Western Pine Realty's charity program has raised enough money to fund 50 cataract surgeries. *"It's incredible that such a small donation can make such a big impact in someone's life. It feels really tangible."*

We'd like to thank Jon and everyone at Western Pine Realty for changing lives through the power of sight!

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- and middle-income countries to receive surgery, glasses and medicine, so they can 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 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

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