

A VISION FOR CHANGE



Nick (far right) with his family.

Since 2015, Nick has been an avid supporter of Seva Canada, raising nearly \$3000 through his "Vision for Change" fundraising campaign. His efforts began while he was still in high school in North Delta, BC, driven both by being inspired by Seva Canada's mission and his personal experience with vision loss.

Over 15 years ago, Nick's father was involved in an industrial electrical explosion that left him permanently

blind. This accident profoundly affected the entire family, forcing Nick to take on adult responsibilities while still in his adolescence. *"Seva's work overseas resonated with me,"* Nick says. *"Knowing the impact that vision loss has on individuals and their families, I wanted to help provide hope and access to care where it's needed most. My father's blindness was not just a physical challenge,"* Nick recalls. *"It affected his mental health deeply and placed an immense*

burden on our family. Watching him struggle and seeing my mother juggle full-time work and caregiving inspired me to make curing and preventing blindness my life's mission."

Nick's passion for the cause has only grown stronger over the years. Now, as he nears the completion of his medical degree in the U.S. and prepares for a residency in ophthalmology, Nick envisions a future where everyone has access to high-quality eye care. *"My father, in one sense, was fortunate enough to have amazing ophthalmologists provide care for him since his accident. However, I know that this is not available for everyone globally. Seva provides hope that limited access to eye care may cease to exist one day."*

Through his continued efforts and future work in ophthalmology, Nick hopes to bridge the gap in global eye care access. With supporters like Nick, the vision of eliminating preventable blindness is closer to becoming a reality. If you'd like to support Nick's efforts, please visit his fundraising page at:

<https://bit.ly/VisionForChange>



LEARNING AND GROWING TOGETHER

Dear Seva Canada community,

Since my last letter to you I've had an extraordinary visit to Seva Canada's partners in both Nepal and India – the places where Seva's mission took root.

I'm delighted to share that today in these places, many of our hospital partners are moving toward financial sustainability. Due to decades of partnership, they can provide world-class eye care for their own people with reduced dependence on foreign donations.

Yet, the worldwide need for eye care is still enormous, and Seva Canada supports programs at all stages of development.

Financial support for direct eye care services is most needed in the places historically neglected by foreign aid. Places where eye doctors and nurses are excellent, and committed, but there are never enough of them. Places that do a lot with little, and are usually located at the end of a long and bumpy road.

Fundamentally, Seva's main role in these places is to equip the hospitals, find patients suffering needlessly from vision loss, and fund eye care that will give those patients independence,

and the ability to lead lives full of all the benefits that come with clear vision.

But the long view is arguably of equal importance— Seva Canada's other key role is to support our partners to pursue cost recovery, to measure the quality of their care, to conduct original research and create new knowledge, to translate that knowledge into practice and to share it with the global eye health community.

In large part due to this second set of activities, our longest-term partners are now considered thought leaders and mentors to other eye care programs. Aravind Eye Care System, our oldest partner who famously pioneered financially self-sustaining eye care, needs no foreign support for its core program delivery. Its primary partnership with Seva is now focused on helping eye hospitals around the world be and do better.

The through-line is you, our donors – who support both direct services and capacity-building, both of which are at the heart of our mission.

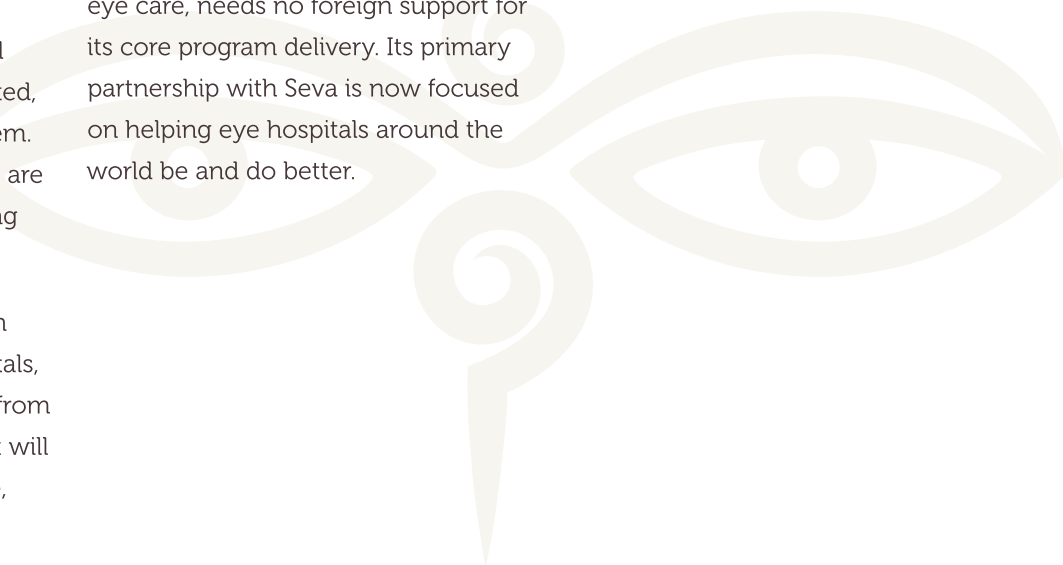
Thank you for supporting Seva Canada's programs at every stage of "development." We are so grateful to be on this growth journey with you.

Yours in Seva,

Liz Brant

Executive Director

P.S. – Our new website is live! Please check out seva.ca for our new look and content.



THE EVOLUTION OF SEVA CANADA'S PROGRAMS

2024 Annual General Meeting – Please come and celebrate with us!

We are delighted to invite you to celebrate our 42nd Annual General Meeting and Donor Appreciation Event on Thursday, November 14th. Please join the Seva Canada community to celebrate *The Evolution of Seva Canada's Programs* with our special guests – Priya Reddy and Dr. Binita Sharma. You can be a part of the evening in person or via zoom.

Our guests are joining us from India and Nepal, the places where Seva first began, and our mission and vision were conceived. The night will commemorate the success and growth of their eye care programs along with a sampling of culture and food. Enjoy some samosas and momos (dumplings) as you mingle with our special guests, the Board and staff, and recognize the many amazing achievements of our Seva Canada Community.

ABOUT OUR SPECIAL GUESTS:



Dr. Binita Sharma Seva Nepal's Country Director, is an ophthalmologist, eye health leader and skilled medical administrator. Throughout her career Dr. Sharma has advocated for high-quality eye care programs for those in

need. She is passionate about gender equity and works with hospitals to promote a culture where women are invited to participate and are valued. Dr. Sharma firmly believes that people must be the priority in any program and teamwork is the key to achieving impact.

involving eye screenings to help eradicate childhood blindness for the more than two million children suffering needlessly worldwide. She has also provided consulting services for eye hospitals across the globe to enhance their eye care services through training, capacity building, and resource management.



Priya Reddy, MBA Seva Canada's Program Consultant since 2021, is a PhD candidate, a Hubert Humphrey Fellow and a Fulbright Scholar. Priya is an enthusiastic, inquisitive and skilled researcher. Her

research focuses primarily on improving eye care services for marginalized and poor populations in India, Nepal, and Africa, with an additional focus on the needs of girls.

Priya has also worked for our partner in India, Aravind Eye Care System, and designed and managed projects

Event Details: **New day and time**

Date: Thursday, November 14, 2024

Time: 6 pm PST mingle/reception,
6:30 pm PST start

In-person Location:

VanDusen Botanical Garden, Floral Hall,
5251 Oak St, Vancouver, BC, V6M 4H1

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84159869573?pwd=XWFiy1Dr6Lwq30CCbhPnoSJiMUhokd.1>

Meeting ID: 841 5986 9573

Passcode: 994434

Please RSVP:

In-person: <https://bit.ly/2024AGM-InPerson>

Zoom: <https://bit.ly/2024AGM-Zoom>

LOVE YOUR EYES AND PROMOTE CHILDREN'S EYE HEALTH THIS WORLD SIGHT DAY!



On October 10th, 2024, World Sight Day will shine the spotlight on children's eye health. Without eye care, children lose out on opportunities to learn, socialize, and thrive. In fact, children in low- and middle-income countries with vision loss are 2 to 5 times less likely to be in school.

At Seva Canada, we've seen over and over again just how life-changing it is for a child to get their sight back thanks to your support—from Hery in Madagascar, whose dream of becoming a doctor was restored after surgery alleviated



the traumatic cataract that kept him from seeing his textbooks—to Yvette from Burundi, whose sight and school attendance were restored after her congenital cataract was removed—and so many more.

There are hundreds of millions of children globally suffering needlessly from vision loss, just like Hery and Yvette. You can help them by wearing "Love Your Eyes" heart-shaped glass to show your support. Showing your support is more important than ever—a visible increase in public support lets decision-makers know that sight for all children is a priority that cannot wait.

Join Seva Canada and the International Association for the Prevention of Blindness in campaigning for all children, everywhere to have access to eye care by snapping a photo with your Love Your Eyes glasses starting today!

Become an advocate for vision on World Sight Day by wearing a pair of "Love Your Eyes" heart-shaped glasses. Contact us at admin@seva.ca for your pair of #LoveYourEyes glasses today.

Have kids in your life? Download some fun *Love Your Eyes* activities that kids of all ages can enjoy from word scrambles to colouring pages here: seva.ca/world-sight-day

Can you get Artie their glasses back?

Guide Artie through the maze to find their glasses.



Be Eye Smart and make sure you have your eyes tested regularly.



www.iapb.world



SEEING HER FUTURE AT 12,000 FEET



17-year-old Nepali teenager Kunsang cannot remember a time when she had clear vision. Seeing has always been a struggle for her, but eye care was always out of her reach. Her family simply couldn't find care they could afford. They struggled to get by in their mountain village, and Kunsang accepted that she would never see as well as other children. With resources so scarce, she was forced to drop out of school many years ago.

However, her parents were determined that Kunsang get an education despite their difficult circumstances and her age. Just over a year ago, they sent her to live in a Buddhist monastery in the Himalaya where she is working in the kitchen, making friends and going to class. At the monastery, Kunsang's life has changed in more ways than she could've imagined.

Shortly after arriving, Kunsang attended a school screening funded by Seva donors where she received

her first pair of prescription glasses. This simple pair of glasses enabled her to really take advantage of all the opportunities her new life provided – education, employment, socializing with friends and just being a teenager.

Today Kunsang is thriving. As one of the older students, she mentors her peers and helps them with their chores. They call her "Didi," or elder sister as a term of endearment and respect.



According to Kunsang, the best part of her new life is that she can now play basketball with her friends, her favourite sport, without the risk of tripping or falling. At an altitude of 12,000 feet, she is a sight to behold as she joyfully whisks around the court, relishing every moment of her newfound freedom.

A FOND FAREWELL BUT NOT GOOD-BYE TO SUZANNE GILBERT!



Suzanne Gilbert, a Senior Director at Seva Foundation, who worked closely with Seva Canada for four decades, retired from her staff position in July 2024. Her many roles at Seva started as a Co-founder and proceeded to include Executive Director, Program Director and Senior Director of Research. She chaired initiatives with the American Academy of Ophthalmology, International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, and served on a multitude of World Health Organization committees.

Suzanne collaborated with Seva Canada to conduct numerous research projects and to build research capacity in multiple eye institutions. Throughout her long and illustrious career, Suzanne has worked tirelessly to build resilient partnerships to strengthen service, training, and research. She will be missed by Seva Canada and many members of the global eye care community.

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"What did five decades in public health teach me? Well, beyond dancing back-up for Wavy Gravy (true story!), it really boils down to this: learning how to see the possible in the impossible."

– Suzanne

Thank you, Suzanne, for 45 years of passion, dedication and innovation - of Seva, of service – so that everyone, everywhere has access to eye care and the magic of seeing again!



Suzanne with Dr. Venkataswamy, Seva Co-founder and Founder of Aravind Eye Care System in India.

DIFFERENT PLACES - DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO EYE CARE



Every country where Seva Canada works shares a common goal: to reach as many people who don't have access to eye care as possible. Achieving this goal requires different tactics depending on the specific needs of the communities, and the health care systems that support them.

In Nepal and India, where Seva Canada has been working the longest, we partner with large, independent eye hospitals. These hospitals provide patients with any type of eye care they need from prescribing and dispensing glasses to complex surgeries. They also have large networks of Community Eye Centres (CECs) to provide care year-round to rural communities and provide outreach activities to those living too far from a CEC. Many of these hospitals have become training institutes that support trainees from all over the world.

In Tanzania and Cambodia, Seva Canada and our partners team up with eye units inside government-run provincial hospitals where your support helps to provide the funding,



expertise and training for the staff to conduct outreach activities. These outreach activities are tailored to ensure that those who need eye care the most are found and provided with the services they need.

In the other countries in sub-Saharan Africa where we work, our partners are dedicated and passionate eye health professionals who have created or work for hospitals that support ophthalmology. We work with each of these groups to accommodate their specific situations, and provide them with the unique support they need to reach those who need it the most - whether it's a CEC in Madagascar, training women's groups in Ethiopia to identify people in their communities who need eye care, or support for pediatric surgeries in Burundi.

Seva Canada and our partners utilize best practices in eye care programming and adapt them to the local context. No matter the approach, the end goal is always the same: to provide more people with high-quality, sight-saving services from local eye health professionals.

EVIDENCE IN PRACTICE PROGRAM:

Increasing Treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy in Nepal



Seva's Evidence in Practice (EIP) program focuses on increasing the ability of eye care institutions to research and improve upon their practices to reach even more people. As a part of the EIP program, The Lumbini Eye Institute and Research Centre (LEIRC) based in Bhairahawa, Nepal, created a study to improve the number of people coming to their hospital for diabetic retinopathy treatment.

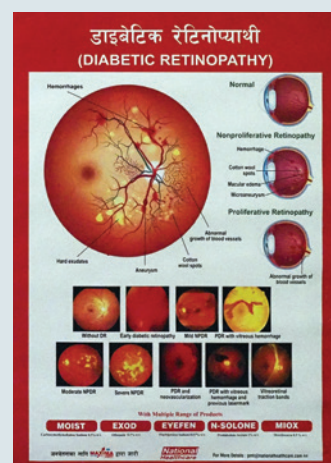
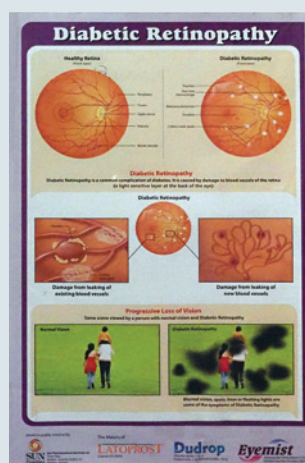
Diabetic retinopathy (DR) is quickly becoming a major cause of vision loss and blindness in low- and middle-income countries. Worldwide, about one in three people living with diabetes will develop DR, and one in ten will develop a vision-threatening version of the disease that can lead to irreversible blindness without treatment. Knowing that early detection and treatment of DR is necessary to preserve sight, LEIRC wanted to increase the number of people going to the hospital for further treatment after they were diagnosed with DR at their local Community Eye Centre (CEC).

With the help of experts provided through the EIP program, LEIRC developed and executed a rigorous study protocol to determine the best way to ensure patients got the treatment they needed.

What the Study Showed:

The results of the study showed that a package of new techniques for engaging patients with DR including counselling on the disease, follow-up calls, referral text messages, and fast-tracking of patients once they reach the hospital, increases the number of people getting treatment by almost **30%**.

The LEIRC team is very happy with the results of the study and implemented the new protocol across all their Community Eye Centres (CECs). In addition, the team reported that the process of this study also helped them better track referrals of all eye health issues from their CECs to their base hospital.



To share their findings with other hospitals and professionals who might face similar issues, LEIRC published the results of their study in a peer-reviewed journal. The article can be found here:

<https://www.seva.ca/research/research-studies/>

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT ON DR. JOE GOODMAN



Dr. Joe Goodman, Ram Dass, and Mardi Thomas-Goodman, swimming in Hawaii.

Dr. Joe Goodman, Ph.D, has been a steadfast supporter of Seva Canada since 1996, his journey with us intricately woven with personal experiences and his connection to one of our founders, spiritual leader, psychologist and writer, Ram Dass.

Joe's introduction to Seva Canada came at a pivotal moment in his life. It was a serendipitous evening in Toronto when a friend called to inform him that Ram Dass would be speaking at a nearby church. Joe found himself at the event, navigating through the crowd. As fate would have it, he bumped into Ram Dass himself. Their brief exchange left an indelible mark on Joe: *"It's so nice to see you again,"* Ram Dass said. When Joe replied, *"Actually, we've never met,"* Ram Dass responded, *"That's what you think."*

This encounter coincided with a challenging period in Joe's life. His father was battling macular degeneration, a condition that robbed him of his vision and, ultimately, his vitality. Joe witnessed his father's transformation from a vibrant, active man to someone heavily reliant on others for simple tasks. Witnessing this personal struggle with

vision loss resonated deeply, fueling Joe's passion for Seva's mission to prevent blindness and restore sight.

Beyond his connection to Seva, Joe dedicated his life to helping others professionally as a psychologist. Now retired, he was the managing partner along with his wife Mardi of a Psychotherapy Centre for 43 years that at times had up to 20 other professionals: Psychologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, social workers, and body workers. Through their practice and clinic, they helped many individuals on their personal journeys, providing care and support.

His work and his family's experience, along with his admiration for Ram Dass's vision for change, have endured through his decades-long commitment to Seva. He values Seva not just for its mission but for the genuine care and authenticity exhibited by the Seva Canada community. Joe appreciates how our programs have stayed true to the organization's founding values but have also grown and evolved over the years. He's really inspired by Seva's support for local partners through training and believes this approach is not only efficient and effective but also limitless in its potential impact.

Years later, Joe had another memorable encounter with Ram Dass in Hawaii, spending an afternoon swimming and discussing spiritual insights. This cherished moment, captured in the photo above of Joe, his wife Mardi, and Ram Dass, not only shows a special connection with Ram Dass, but also the enduring connection between Joe and Seva's values and mission.

We are so grateful to Joe for sharing his connection to our organization, as well as his continued support as a monthly donor. Thank you, Joe, for inspiring us with your compassion and embodying the spirit of Seva!

HOW YOU'VE HELPED

Thank You for Supporting the Talkot Community Eye Centre
and Care for Nepalis in Remote and Rural Areas!



Your donations were also enough to provide:

- 30 eye screenings to find people in need of care
- 200 pairs of glasses to improve vision
- Medicine to 100 people, to prevent blindness before it happens
- Eye screening training for 50 eye care advocates

Your support has made this critical eye care facility possible. Many people's lives will be transformed today and in the future because of you.

Thank you for helping bring clearer vision and brighter futures to those in need in Nepal.

We are excited to share some great news!

Thanks to your generous donations this past spring, and the support of our lead donor, Rocque Goh, we met our goal and will soon open the Talkot Community Eye Centre (CEC) in Far West Nepal. It's a crucial resource for those who previously didn't have access to eye care. Located in Bahjang district, which shares a border with the Tibetan Areas of China, the Talkot CEC will be inaugurated on September 17, 2024.

This new CEC provides much-needed eye care six days a week to people in the area, offering exams, treatments, and referrals to Geta Eye Hospital. In addition to creating the Talkot CEC, your gifts have also supported the ongoing operations of Gulmi & Dhading CECs for an entire year.



Double Your Impact for Back-to-School!

You can help 2x as many kids see with new glasses.



Imagine sitting in a classroom, struggling to read the words on the blackboard or on the pages of your textbook. Now imagine you can.

Imagine not being able to see your friends' faces at recess or the soccer ball everyone is playing with. Now imagine you can.

An unassuming pair of prescription glasses holds the power to create a profound and immediate impact on a child's life. Glasses can reduce a child's odds of failing a class by 44%.

Just \$25 provides 5 children in need with a new pair of prescription glasses. **And right now, your gift will be matched by our long-time supporter, Alexandra Gray, up to a maximum of \$10,000 until September 30, 2024.**

- \$25 **doubles** to \$50 and provides prescription glasses to **10 kids**
- \$50 **doubles** to \$100 and provides prescription glasses to **20 kids**
- \$75 **doubles** to \$150 and provides prescription glasses to **30 kids**
- \$100 **doubles** to \$200 and provides prescription glasses to **40 kids**

You can help 2x as many children imagine a future full of potential with the power of sight by visiting seva.ca/donate/glasses or by filling in the enclosed form.

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

"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 P.

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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CONTACT

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

Tel: 604-713-6622
Toll-free: 1-877-460-6622

Email: admin@seva.ca
Website: seva.ca

Registered Charity:
#13072 4941 RR0001



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