

# YOU'RE NEVER TOO YOUNG TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In 2012, when 6-year-old Jana in Canada spoke with her grandpa in Rajisthan, India just prior to his cataract surgery, two things happened. First, she learned about cataracts, the "clouds" blocking his vision that only a doctor could remove, and second, she was inspired to help.

*"My dad has always taught me from a young age to give back. He's taught me many life lessons not just about other people but about his life. He knows that giving back is the biggest thing you can do. I've been told many times that what you give comes back to you and that really inspired me when I was little."*

Jana's father, Anand or "Andy" suggested that she help people who need eye care. "Even though I was really young, I took the initiative because what young kid doesn't want to help people?!" (Jana was clearly not the kind of child that needed to be taught that sharing is caring.)

Starting with a \$500 donation from her dad and a fundraising kit that included a View-master toy that showed pictures of what the world

looked like with cataracts, Jana began raising awareness and soliciting funds at school, in support of Seva Canada. *"The View-master helped make people really empathetic to those with cataracts and a lot of people fundraised and supported me back then."* Jana and Andy didn't stop there. The father-daughter team held a bake sale at her elementary school, raising another \$500. *"Together, we embarked on a journey of compassion and service, our hands dusted with flour and our hearts brimming with hope."*

When she entered grade 6, Jana was busy with exams, friends and after-school activities and set aside her fundraising efforts.

Fast-forward to 2022, 16-year-old Jana was going through her old things and reliving memories with her dad when he reminded her of fundraising for Seva Canada. A few of her friends' grandparents had cataracts at the time and, in Jana's words, *"I thought I might as well do it again!"*

*There are so many people who can't see and it breaks my heart and I really*



JANA AND HER GRANDFATHER

*just wanted to help them out. People donate food, money, clothes but why not donate sight, that's like the biggest sense you have; without sight we can't really see the world and the world isn't that great a place without it."*

*In Canada, we have free healthcare so we can get the treatment we need. In India or places in Africa, there's a lot of poverty and most people can't afford eye care. Even if you're middle class in India, there are so many people that there aren't enough doctors to help everyone. Some people have to carry water from place to place on top of taking care of their family, so it's a million times harder not having eyesight. Some people haven't even seen their own child. It's just tragic.*

*By championing the cause of those deprived of vision care, I aspire to cultivate a legacy of empathy and action, inspiring others to join*



JANA AND HER FATHER ANAND BAKING TO RAISE MONEY FOR SEVA CANADA

*hands in illuminating the world with kindness.*

*If people say 'Oh, I don't have this car or this new phone,' I'll say be blessed you have healthy eyes and can see.*

*One message I'd like to give to every young person—at least try to give \$10 or \$20, whatever you can or if you're old enough and can go out and help other people at least try. Take the initiative and make an effort. Think about not only how you're living but also how your neighbour is living. You never know how people are doing."*

Jana is on the way to reaching her fundraising goal of \$5000 to help 100 people see again with cataract surgery. We know Jana will reach not only her fundraising goal but also her career goal of becoming a doctor. Next year, Jana, who has already been accepted to her university of choice, will continue on her journey

of helping people, of doing 'Seva', selfless service.

If you want to help Jana reach her fundraising goal visit <https://bit.ly/JanaFundraising>



17-YEAR-OLD FUNDRAISER, JANA

## THE POWER OF THE SEVA CANADA COMMUNITY



**Dear friends,**

Everything at Seva Canada starts with you—our amazing donors, supporters and champions.

Without you, none of our work would be possible.

But more importantly, WITH you, life-changing miracles happen every day.

With you, lasting eye care programs are established, professional skills are advanced, and robust systems are

built—all to bring people the power of sight, now and far into the future.

I'm happy to say without reservation that your support of Seva Canada is uplifting communities through best-in-class vision programs. I firmly believe—and evidence affirms—that your support is delivering the most effective, poverty-reducing health intervention in the world.

Your support is a huge endorsement of our work, and how we work—through the power of our in-country partners. We strongly believe in their expertise and in the intrinsic ability of communities to most effectively meet their own needs. By closely and respectfully listening to the expertise of our in-country partners and responding to the needs of communities, Seva Canada is working to really build something: locally-embedded, respectful eye care programs that will endure.

Both our partners and the Seva Canada team work hard to be transparent, efficient and results-oriented. As a result of their efforts, I'm delighted to share that Seva Canada has been rated as a top 100 charity in Canada for the 6<sup>th</sup> year in a row and has once again earned a 5-star A-rating from Charity Intelligence, Canada's foremost charity evaluator.

We are all inspired by your support and the good you are putting into the world. Thank you for being a part of the Seva Canada community.

Sincerely,

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

**Liz Brant**  
Executive Director



# A HUMANITARIAN AWARD FOR ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE HUMANS, DR. MARTY SPENCER!

DR. MARTIN SPENCER, SEVA CANADA BOARD MEMBER, IS AWARDED THE 2024 CHANG-CRANDALL HUMANITARIAN AWARD BY ASCRS



DR. MARTY SPENCER

individuals who demonstrate exemplary dedication to humanitarian efforts with a focus on addressing cataract blindness and disability.

Dr. Spencer, through years of dedicated service, has collaborated extensively with Seva Foundation and Seva Canada, contributing significantly to humanitarian efforts in Nepal and numerous other countries worldwide. Serving on the board of both organizations, he has prioritized service quality, volume, and program sustainability, embodying the spirit of the Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award.

*"I am deeply honoured and humbled to receive the ASCRS Foundation Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award. This recognition not only symbolizes the collective efforts of those committed to eradicating cataract blindness and disability, but underscores the importance of sustained, impactful humanitarian service. I share this honour with the dedicated teams at Seva Foundation and Seva Canada, whose collaborative spirit propels our shared mission forward. Together, we will continue to make strides in restoring sight and improving countless lives around the world."*

Established in 2017, the ASCRS Foundation Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award recognizes and celebrates exceptional contributions to humanitarian work in the field of cataract blindness and disability. This annual accolade is awarded to individuals or organizations for

their charitable accomplishments. The award recipient is formally acknowledged at the ASCRS Annual Meeting, accompanied by a \$100,000 donation in their name to the charitable ophthalmic organization of their choice. Dr. Spencer has earmarked the financial prize to be split between Seva Canada and Seva Foundation efforts to strengthen eye program quality and sustainability.



DR. SPENCER WITH STAFF AND TRAINEES AT AN EYE CAMP IN NEPAL

"We are elated to recognize Dr. Martin Spencer as the 2024 recipient of the Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award. His profound commitment to alleviating cataract blindness and disability through humanitarian service is truly commendable. This award reflects not only his individual accomplishments, but also highlights the collective impact of organizations working towards a common goal," said ASCRS Foundation Chair Dr. Susan MacDonald.

The ASCRS Foundation extends its congratulations to Dr. Martin Spencer for this well-deserved honour and looks forward to officially presenting the award at the ASCRS Annual Meeting in Boston in early April.

*Continued on next page >*

## ***A Special Tribute to Dr. Marty Spencer From Seva Canada Program Director, Dr. Ken Bassett:***



MARTY TRAINING IN THORI, NEPAL

Few people are more revered by eye care providers, particularly ophthalmologists in Asia and Africa, than Dr. Marty Spencer, who has worked humbly and tirelessly to help them to provide high-quality care to the people they serve. His work epitomises international development with dignity, where Dr. Spencer's success is

measured by their success and the growth of their dignity as professionals, long after he has gone home.

In the early 1980s, when the eye care community in most high-income countries argued that the new transformative, intraocular techniques were too expensive for most people in India, Marty ignored their advice, got on a plane, loaded it with equipment and became legendary as one of the first Western ophthalmologists to go to India to train in-country ophthalmic professionals in the use of current techniques.

In the 1990s he was a key player in the creation of Aravind Eye Care System's Aurolab, which reduced the cost of intraocular lenses from over \$300 to less than \$3. He developed an innovative surgical technique (manual sutureless cataract surgery) which became a global standard technique for decades. Nearly every year, and often twice a year throughout his practice career, Marty has been invited to visit eye programs to train, from the remote regions of Tibet, to the jungles of Madagascar.

Marty's work has been transformative to eye care programs and through them transformative to so many people who are now able to see. He is the embodiment of "Seva" or selfless service and an inspiration to us all.

## **WITNESSING COMPASSION IN ACTION**

WRITTEN BY DR. JOHN JUDSON,  
VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHER



KATIE AND JOHN IN CAMBODIA

Getting to see the Seva Canada and Seva Cambodia teams in action was nothing short of a remarkable experience.

During the visit I was able to witness first-hand the life-changing effects of both cataract surgery and the refractive fittings of glasses for those whose vision

This past January, I was privileged to volunteer and accompany my daughter, Katie Judson, Seva Canada's program co-director, and two of her colleagues, Ken Bassett M.D. and Ashley Holm, to document the work that Seva Canada is doing in Cambodia.

issues had diminished their ability to go about daily activities. The people served ran the gamut from those in their eighties to those who were eight, from widows trying to care for their family to schoolchildren struggling to learn, and from farmers who could no longer work in the fields to a Buddhist monk who could no longer read from his holy texts. As I witnessed Seva in action, my heart was gladdened by the kindness, caring, and compassion the physicians, technicians, field workers and Seva staff showed to every patient.

The recipients' smiles, words of thanks, and joy at once again being able to see clearly reminded me of why my wife and I support Seva Canada on a monthly basis. If you are not doing so already, I hope you will join us in giving the gift of sight and renewed life to children and adults around the world.



# CELEBRATING THE POWER OF OUR PARTNERS

## SEVA CANADA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We hosted our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 17, 2023, celebrating the *Power of Our Partners*. In-person and online guests were warmly welcome by our Board Co-Chairs Jill Guthrie and Marty Spencer, followed by the approval of the 2022 AGM minutes.

Next, Angela Santori of RHN Chartered Professional Accountants presented the auditor's report for Seva Canada's fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, which ended with net assets of \$1.39M. RHN was reappointed as Seva's auditor for another year.

Our final order of business was the election of board members. We said goodbye to Maggie Edwards, and welcomed aboard new board members Harinder Dhillon (Certified Accountant) and Annapurna Chavali (Masters in Healthcare Administration).



PETER PRESENTING AT THE AGM

Once the business portion of our AGM wrapped up, Liz Brant, Executive Director, took the stage and shared how much joy the work we do brings to those we serve. She introduced our special guest, Peter Kileo from the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO),



KATIE (SEVA CANADA), PETER (KCCO), ROBERT (KCCO) AND SANIL (LAICO)

who shared patient stories, and highlighted both the need to expand the work Seva Canada donors support, and the value of female outreach workers and how vital their work is to the success of our programs.

The evening wrapped with a panel discussion with Sanil Joseph (Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology), Robert Geneau (KCCO), Peter Kileo (KCCO), and Katie Judson (Seva Canada). To send us off, Sanil concluded with a delightful sing-along of "Jamaican Farewell".



## YOUR LEGACY IS THEIR FUTURE

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 Liz at 604-713-6622 or email [lizbrant@seva.ca](mailto:lizbrant@seva.ca)**

# EVIDENCE INFORMED PRACTICE PROGRAM



Seva Canada supports eye health institutions to develop programs that work. We've invested heavily in building program partner capacity to collect high-quality clinical and administrative data. Proper analysis of this data provides more efficient and equitable services to the community we serve. Despite these efforts, basic monitoring and evaluation capacity development has been slow in most settings. In an effort to improve monitoring, evaluation and operational research capacity at program partner eye hospitals, Seva has launched the Evidence Informed Practice (EIP) program.

This is all in effort to make your support go further, and bring better vision care, to more people, who really need it.

Started in late 2019, and developed in conjunction with Seva Foundation and the Indian Institute of Public Health—Hyderabad, the EIP program teaches research skills and helps to develop a supportive research environment through leadership investment, data collection and integrity, and research skills development. The program includes seminars, training workshops and mentorship by experts in hospital administration and research methods from the Indian Institute for Public Health.

The EIP program recognizes the central role of hospital leadership in developing eye care programs, establishing high-quality administrative and financial data systems, and using collected data to optimize program performance. In addition, multiple staff within the hospital are trained in research methods and biostatistics, as well as in designing, conducting, analysing and publishing their studies.

To date, four hospitals have published research from their initial studies conducted through the EIP program in peer-reviewed journals. The future of this program will focus on generating administrative data to initiate rapid cycle improvements, and will include new partnerships with expert groups in South Asia and other regions to work side-by-side with eye hospital staff.



## MAXIMIZE YOUR IMPACT WITH A GIFT OF SECURITIES

**DONATE SECURITIES TO SEVA CANADA AND REAP SIGNIFICANT TAX BENEFITS!**

Under Canadian tax law, when you sell your appreciated securities you pay capital gains tax on an amount equal to one-half of their increase in value. But, if you donate your securities to a registered charity, you don't

pay any capital gains tax at all! In addition, you will receive a tax receipt for the full market value of the securities. Best of all, you will be restoring sight and preventing blindness for children, women and men in low- and middle-income countries.

For more information, contact Ashley at 1-877-460-6622  
or email [fundraising@seva.ca](mailto:fundraising@seva.ca)



# READING WITH HIS OWN EYES

WRITTEN BY ASHLEY HOLM, SEVA CANADA DONOR RELATIONS & OPERATIONS MANAGER



DOUNG LOUM READING THE TIPITAKA AFTER HIS CATARACT SURGERY

I had the privilege of going to Cambodia for the first time in January, it was truly a gift to see the impact you, our generous donors, are making every day in the lives of so many Cambodians. On this trip I met Doung Loum, an 82-year-old senior monk from Banteay Meanchey.

He shared with me that he began having issues with his vision 10 years ago, when he started struggling to read from *The Tipitaka*, the sacred text of Theravada Buddhism. As his eyesight diminished he had to rely

on the younger monks to guide him around the Wat (a Buddhist monastery) and prepare food for him. As his vision continued to worsen he began to lose hope in ever reading *The Tipitaka* with his own eyes again.

Last year, Doung Loum was encouraged to visit the community eye screening at the Wat where a Seva field worker was providing eye exams. The field worker referred him to the Eye Unit at the hospital in Banteay Meanchey, where he was diagnosed with bilateral cataract. That day he received his first life-changing surgery.

When I met him, he had come back to the hospital to receive surgery for his second eye, and he could hardly

contain his joy in getting his eyesight fully restored. As his eye patch was removed he exclaimed ***"It is like the angel has come to save me and now I can see again!"*** He was so overjoyed he invited us to the Wat to hear him read aloud from *The Tipitaka*. I can still hear the joy in his voice as he read to us.



DOUNG LOUM AFTER HIS PATCH WAS REMOVED

## KCCO HONoured AS AN EYE HEALTH CHAMPION

WRITTEN BY ROBERT GENEAU,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KCCO



KILIMANJARO CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY OPHTHALMOLOGY TEAM

During the celebrations of World Sight Day 2023, the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO), Seva's partner in Africa, received a prestigious award from the Tanzanian Ministry of Health in recognition of its role as a champion for eye health in the country. KCCO supports comprehensive eye health and trachoma elimination programs in 11 of the 31 regions in the country. In 2023, 139,320 people, mostly from rural areas, had their eyes examined and those with an eye condition were offered treatment, either at a subsidized price or free of charge for people too poor to pay. Through the support of KCCO and its long-time partners like Seva Canada, 7129 cataract surgeries (53% of all surgeries benefitted women) were performed in 2023.

# ART FOR SIGHT

What do you get when you bring together two committed Seva Canada supporters, one incredible artist, a beautiful beachside home and an inspired community? An art show fundraiser for Seva Canada that raised enough to restore the sight of 40 people!



RANJAN WITH GLORIA AND HUGH SUTCLIFFE

Hugh and Gloria Sutcliffe are long-time, devoted Seva supporters, and have even travelled to visit Seva's programs. *"Having had the opportunity to see what Seva does firsthand—If you're with someone who has been blind for a long time, and then they have a \$50 operation and they can see again, it's a miracle—an absolute miracle,"* says Hugh.

Gloria added: *"People have stopped living, cooking, leaving their homes, or caring for their grandkids. They've been hidden away. Seva Canada helps them regain life, not just sight. It's really touching to see this all happen, and to see their family's eyes light up too. It's pretty special."*

Hugh and Gloria have always been inspired by the creative ways that volunteers raise awareness and funds for Seva Canada. As they started their retirement and moved to a new home on the beach in Parksville, BC, they thought about how much they'd like to spread the word about Seva Canada, while also getting to know their new neighbours.

Everything came together perfectly when their friend, renowned artist Ranjan Sen, mentioned he hadn't had the chance to have an art show in some time because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ranjan and his wife Rachel

love bringing people together to enjoy Ranjan's unique watercolour and oil paintings; Hugh and Gloria's new home would be the perfect venue.

Ranjan—whose connection to Seva Canada goes all the way back to the 1980s—decided to donate a beautiful watercolour as a door prize to encourage people to come, learn about Seva Canada, and enjoy an inspiring afternoon. *"I couldn't be a painter without having eyesight and vision! It's of primary importance"* said Ranjan. *"In the 80s (artists) John Woodcock and Toni Onley talked to me about Seva and how I should be an active participant. I hope my painting inspires people to donate."*



RANJAN WITH HIS BEAUTIFUL PAINTING THAT HE DONATED TO THE EVENT

**And it did! The event was a big success, raising over \$2000 in donations, which is enough to restore the sight of 40 people. Thank you Hugh, Gloria, Ranjan and Rachel!**



# HOW YOU HAVE HELPED

## THIS PAST HOLIDAY SEASON, YOU HELPED CHILDREN SEE THEIR POTENTIAL!



JOANAH WITH HIS FAMILY IN SAMBAVA, MADAGASCAR

All children—regardless of where they were born—are full of potential. For those with vision loss, donors like you helped remove a major barrier to fulfilling their dreams last holiday season. **Our holiday matching campaign raised a combined \$233,537 to help kids see their potential with the gift of sight.** With healthy vision, children can get an education, become independent, and reach for the stars.

Your support over the holidays is enough to:

- **Cure 676 children's blindness with cataract surgery**, allowing them to realize their potential
- **Provide 5,000 pairs of glasses for children**, bringing their world into focus
- **Run 500 school screenings** to identify kids with vision loss
- **Restore 1,000 adults' sight** through crucial cataract surgeries
- **Provide 85 community eye screenings** in remote areas to find and treat community members with eye disease
- **Train outreach workers and ophthalmic nurses**, empowering them to locate and provide care for those in need



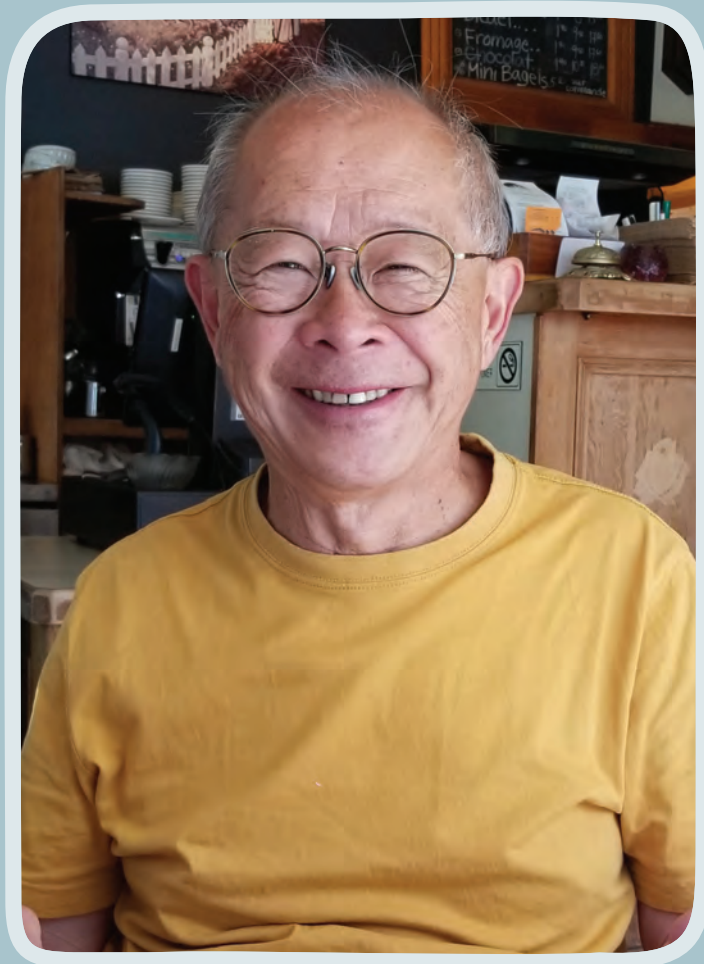
JAONAH

*"We have hope for his future,"* shared 15-year-old Jaonah's mother with joyful relief after his sight-restoring cataract surgery. *"I want to be mayor of our town and help our community,"* said Joannah, his eyes sparkling with confidence and determination.

**Thank you for helping kids around the world see their future!**

# DONATE & JOIN ROCQUE IN UPLIFTING

## BUILD A COMMUNITY EYE CENTRE AND PROVIDE CARE TO



ROCQUE GOH, LEAD DONOR

**Long-time Seva Canada donor, Rocque Goh is inviting you to join him in providing essential eye care services to Nepalis living in remote, rural and underserved areas of the country.**

Together, we're fundraising to provide care to Nepalis in underserved areas of the country, including establishing a permanent Community Eye Centre (CEC) in Talkot region of far-west Nepal.



Staffed by an Ophthalmic Assistant, a CEC is similar to an optometrist's office in Canada where patients can receive treatment for 90% of eye conditions, get medicine, glasses, and referrals to the eye hospital for further care including surgeries.

Rocque agreed to be the lead donor, providing \$10,000 of the initial funding but we still need \$25,000 to support training, equipment, outreach, and care including eye exams, glasses and medicine for people who can access the Talkot CEC and for Nepalis in other underserved areas.

***Please mail in the enclosed form or visit***



# NEPALIS WITH THE POWER OF SIGHT

NEPALIS IN RURAL AREAS WITH LEAD DONOR ROCQUE GOH



*Here are some inspiring words from Rocque to encourage you to join him in his quest to bring eye care to every Nepali, regardless of where they live.*

## UPLIFTING ALL AROUND US

We have a wondrous world and are blessed to have standards of living that are generally good.

We have many things.

Whatever things we have, they create the greatest blessings if they *uplift the lives* of all who come into contact with them.

Money is a good example. It is nice to have, but nicer if we ensure that it *uplifts* everyone it touches.

This is why we share/give/donate, to *uplift* the lives of others.

## GIVING

There are numerous ways to give.

We pick one, we give and then it is best we let go of the giving.

Let the giving *uplift* the lives of others in its own ways, freely.

## CHOOSING EYE CARE

Eye care is a powerful way of giving.

Our eyesight enables us to see this wondrous world and enjoy its beauty with others.

A person who is blind benefits, and so does their caregiver—more than one person is given the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.

## WHY SEVA CANADA

In Seva, people come first.

The delivery of eye care is paramount.

The whole chain of actions—fundraising, program planning, program execution—ensures that the eye care is delivered in a manner that is caring, efficient and sustainable.

*The bonus?* Along the way, your gifts to Seva Canada *uplift* the lives of every single person who is touched by your generosity.



**[seva.ca/Sight-for-Nepalis](http://seva.ca/Sight-for-Nepalis) 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- 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](http://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

## HONORARY PATRONS

The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy

The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson

The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC  
Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia

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