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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**SEVA FOUNDATION RECOGNIZES PAUL COURTRIGHT AND SUSAN LEWALLEN  
FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO BLINDNESS PREVENTION**

*Doctors who founded a state-of-the-art eye care facility in Tanzania  
to be honored with 2008 International Blindness Prevention Award*

BERKELEY, CA (November 5, 2008) – Today, Seva Foundation proudly honors the accomplishments of two pioneering leaders in the fight against preventable blindness around the world — Dr. Paul Courtright and Dr. Susan Lewallen.

Yesterday, the Kilimanjaro Center for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO), which Courtright and Lewallen established in 2001, opened its new three-story, 25,700 square-foot training center in Tanzania, at the base of Mt. Kilimanjaro. The center focuses on training, research and program development using local talent and skills, aimed at decreasing blindness across eastern Africa.

“In a relatively short time, KCCO has grown to be the most active center dedicated to community ophthalmology in Africa, with trainees coming from countries across the continent,” said Dr. Suzanne Gilbert, cofounder of Seva Foundation and Director of Seva’s Center for Innovation in Eye Care. “KCCO has a vision for bringing top quality, high-volume eye care services to all of eastern Africa, and Seva is proud to support this impressive initiative with funding and technical assistance. It’s a key component of Seva’s work to expand global capacity for public health eye care delivery. In fact, KCCO is a lead partner in our new Clinton Global Initiative campaign, *So One Million Eyes See Again.*”

KCCO serves 18 countries from Cairo to Cape Town, directing critically needed projects and collaborations throughout eastern Africa, a region with a population of around 210 million. Working with a consortium of partner agencies and funders, KCCO strives to discover new and innovative methods to bring top-notch eye-care treatment and preventative services to surrounding rural communities. In six years alone, KCCO has demonstrated that the number of cataract surgeries in programs serving rural communities can be increased by an impressive 300%, an achievement that underscores the success of their results-driven approach.

“At KCCO we are not training surgeons, but rather we train people on how to set up programs that support the surgeons in accomplishing their work,” said Dr. Susan Lewallen, co-founder of KCCO. “Surgeons on their own really can’t do much — they need to be supported by a team that keeps the clinic running smoothly and conducts outreach to bring patients in from the rural communities.”

The work of Courtright and Lewallen has not gone unnoticed by their peers. The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), the world’s largest association of eye care professionals, has awarded them the prestigious 2008 International Blindness Prevention Award, which will be presented on November 9<sup>th</sup> at the AAO’s annual meeting in Atlanta. The award, which was established in 1992, honors “individuals who have made significant contributions to the prevention of blindness or restoration of sight.”

“We are incredibly honored and humbled to receive this award and to be put in the company of Dr. Venkataswamy, the first recipient of the award and the founder of Aravind Eye Care System and co-founder of Seva Foundation,” said Dr. Courtright. “Dr. Venkataswamy’s life’s work epitomized the kind of dedication Susan and I strive for every day.”

Dr. Courtright, an epidemiologist, and Dr. Lewallen, an ophthalmologist, are both on the faculty in the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Courtright is also on faculty

in the Department of Health Care and Epidemiology. Dr. Courtright established and directed the British Columbia Center for Epidemiologic & International Ophthalmology, helping UBC to gain a reputation of expertise in international ophthalmology.

For more information about KCCO please visit: [www.kcco.net](http://www.kcco.net).

For more information about Seva Foundation please visit: [www.seva.org](http://www.seva.org)

**About the Seva Foundation**

Seva Foundation is most widely known for its innovative eye care programs in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world, which have helped nearly three million blind people to see again through affordable cataract surgeries. In Guatemala and Mexico, Seva works with indigenous communities to provide the tools and training needed to sustain clean water systems, health care, and educational opportunities. Here in the U.S., Seva partners with Native American communities that are committed to building healthy communities, sustaining cultural values, and protecting the environment.

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