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SPIRIT OF SERVICE

NEWSLETTER



Celebrating World Sight Day with Cultural Exchange Trips: SEVA DELEGATIONS AND AN EXPANDED TOMS PARTNERSHIP

TOMS CEO Blake Mycoskie with Dr. Chundak Tenzing, Medical Director of Seva's Innovation & Sight Program.

Eye care practitioners celebrate World Sight Day around the globe on the second Thursday of every October. In that spirit, Seva sent World Sight Day delegations to Nepal, India and Guatemala to engage directly with the communities where our partner organizations are active. You may have seen some of their reports from the field if you follow Seva's streams on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Seva staff also joined a delegation from the TOMS community on a trip to the LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) in Hyderabad, India in October. A Seva corporate

partner since 2011, TOMS is a global footwear and lifestyle brand committed to helping humanity thrive. This trip was a special opportunity for changemakers from these three partners to build personal relationships with each other.



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Celebrating World Sight Day with Cultural Exchange Trips: Seva Delegations and an Expanded TOMS Partnership

Through roundtable conversations and cultural immersion activities, participants explored the power of collective action and of shared values that transcend cultural boundaries.

LVPEI partners with Seva and TOMS to support six primary eye care vision centers (PECVCs) in India through TOMS' Sight Giving Program. Over the last two years, TOMS and Seva have supported an additional 30 centers in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. These locally-run eye care centers are dramatically expanding access to eye care for people in underserved, rural areas that often lack resources to provide everything from basic reading glasses to cataract surgery.

To see how Seva's work — including our partnership with TOMS — is transforming lives by restoring sight, watch this short video on our website: seva.org/worldsightday-video.



“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.”

—Angela Davis

Letter from the Executive Director

For four decades now, Seva has pursued the vision of a world free of avoidable blindness. We have been accelerating our impact with new approaches and can now report with confidence that our goal is, at last, in sight.

What's changed? For one, Seva is doubling down on expanding access to eye care in under-resourced regions. Seva staff recently traveled to India with our corporate partner TOMS, solidifying a plan to increase the number of primary eye care centers in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. These centers bring basic eye care to places where people have historically had to travel for hours – or days – just to get a pair of glasses or receive eye health screenings. Increasing access to basic eye care is a critical step toward eliminating avoidable blindness.

We're also dramatically increasing our investment in training, sharing experience from established eye care providers with those who are not yet working at full capacity. This year's expansion of our Eyexcel training program into Latin America is another way we are fostering the development of sustainable eye care services around the world.

Seva is committed to developing a robust ecosystem of eye care providers who learn from one another and adapt best practices to fit the needs and cultures of their local communities. Together with our partners, we are creating a world in which every person can access the eye care she needs, where a single cataract surgery restores one person's life while expanding opportunity for those around her. Through all these efforts, Seva transforms lives every day by restoring sight.

Yours in Service,

Kate



Seva supports access to eye care services in underserved communities around the world.





The first Eyexcel LA workshop was held Guatemala in July. Photo by Javier Eduardo Cozano Corado.

EYEXCEL EXPANDS EYE CARE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO LATIN AMERICA



Several eye hospitals in Latin American now have the expertise to more effectively train their eye care staff, thanks to a train-the-trainers course offered by Seva and partners this summer in Guatemala.

Allied Ophthalmic Personnel, or AOPs, include mid-level eye care workers like vision technicians, ophthalmic assistants, and counselors. AOPs play an essential role at eye hospitals that aim to provide efficient, high-quality, and financially sustainable eye care services. Recognizing the need for hospitals to train AOPs in-house, Seva, Aravind Eye Care System, and the International Council of Ophthalmology started offering Excellence in Eye Care, or Eyexcel, in India in 2008. Eyexcel is an annual five-day immersion workshop for eye hospital leaders.

But India is a long way from the Western Hemisphere. So, to further build the capacity of eye hospitals in Latin America, Seva is expanding Eyexcel trainings westward. Starting three years ago, colleagues from two hospitals in Guatemala and Peru travelled to the annual Eyexcel courses in India. Both of these hospitals, Visualiza in Guatemala and Divino Niño Jesus (DNJ) in Peru, are Global Sight Initiative (GSI) mentor institutions.

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Eyexcel Expands Eye Care Training Opportunities to Latin America

In December of last year, Seva and Aravind held a planning workshop in Guatemala City with Visualiza and DNJ leaders to develop the curriculum for Eyexcel LA (Latin America), followed by dozens of hours of online coaching and other preparation. This three-year effort resulted in a major milestone: The first Eyexcel LA workshop was offered this summer, at Visualiza. The course was conducted entirely in Spanish and was customized to be culturally appropriate. Next year's workshop is already being planned, to be held at DNJ in Lima, Peru.

Attending Eyexcel LA were 23 participants from GSI partner hospitals in Guatemala, Peru, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Mexico. Seva and partners have offered 13 Eyexcel workshops to date, including 11 annual workshops in India, the new Eyexcel LA course, and another new course offered in Nepal. Over the past decade, these workshops have reached more than 400 participants from 143 eye hospitals in 30 countries.

Eyexcel LA is successfully pairing the years of experience developed in India with the culturally-specific needs of Latin American eye health practitioners. Participating eye hospitals are now better equipped to systematically train their AOPs, building their capacity to reach many more patients and provide higher-quality eye care.



Eye hospital leaders from eight countries attended the July Eyexcel LA workshop. Photo by Javier Eduardo Cozano Corado.

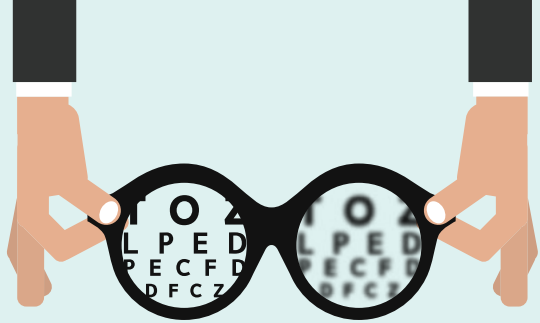
“Over the past decade, these workshops have reached more than 400 participants from 143 eye hospitals in 30 countries.”



Feast your eyes on Seva's 2019 calendar

Seva's 2019 calendar is now available for purchase at seva.org/calendar.

As usual, the calendar features vibrant photos that demonstrate the many meaningful ways restoring sight transforms lives in the communities where Seva is active around the world. Photographer Rebecca Gaal graciously donated her talents to provide the beautiful images that make this year's calendar one of a kind.



FOCUS ON YOUR VISION

Starting to think about holiday giving?

Keep an eye out for this year's Gifts of Sight catalog in early November, in your mailbox and online at seva.org/gifts.

The catalog offers meaningful gifts, starting at as little as \$15, to honor a friend or loved one while giving the gift of eyesight to those in need.



Macular Degeneration and Poor Sleep: Could Your Smartphone Be to Blame?

People keep finding more and more uses for their smartphones, from browsing online to watching movies. But an increasing body of evidence, including a recent study by the University of Toledo, shows that the blue light emitted by our smartphones may pose health risks.

A person's risk of developing macular degeneration, an eye disease that weakens the macula, or the center of the area of the eye that controls vision acuity, may increase with exposure to blue light. This type of light can irreversibly damage photoreceptive cells in the retina, making it difficult to focus your vision. Macular degeneration can affect your ability to read, use a computer, drive, and even recognize faces.

Blue wavelengths can boost your attention and mood during the day. However, these same wavelengths have been shown to wreak havoc on a person's internal circadian rhythms and suppress the production of melatonin, a hormone that helps you fall asleep at night.

The University of Toledo study didn't look directly at the effects of blue light from screens on human eyes, and the body of evidence around the topic is not conclusive. Nevertheless, limiting your exposure to blue light may be in your best interest.

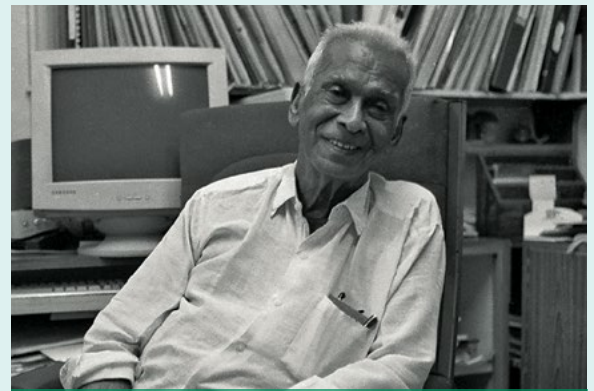
To reduce your risk of macular degeneration and poor sleep, you can start by limiting your smartphone use before bed. Consider using the night-time filters that are available on Android and Apple phones, which reduce the amount of blue light released. It's also a good idea to talk to your eye care practitioner about how you can reduce your risk of developing macular degeneration.



CREEPY CONTACT LENSES: Don't Use Illegal Colored Contacts This Halloween

Whether donning blood-red eyes to complete your Halloween look or wanting to see what life's like with hazel eyes, you may have been tempted to buy a pair of colored contact lenses. These non-corrective lenses, popular with teenagers and Halloween party-goers, can be sold illegally online or through novelty shops. If purchased without a prescription and a proper fitting, costume contact lenses can cause corneal scratches, eye infections, or even irreversible vision loss.

To protect your eyes, always obtain a proper prescription for any contact lenses you purchase. Buy lenses from reputable, FDA-approved vendors, and be sure to follow your eye doctor's instructions on proper care of your contact lenses, for Halloween and beyond.



CELEBRATING THE MEMORY OF Dr. V

OCTOBER 1, 2018 marked what would have been Dr. Govindappa Venkataswamy's 100th birthday. Known as Dr. V, this widely-revered man founded and grew India's Aravind Eye Care System from an 11-bed facility in 1976 to what is today one of the largest networks of eye care facilities in the world.

Dr. V was also one of Seva's co-founders. His direct experience with delivering high-volume, high-quality eye care was a major inspiration that shaped Seva's capacity-building, culturally-sensitive approach to expanding access to eye care around the world.

It's hard to overestimate the profound impact that Dr. V's work had on the international approach to treating cataract and other forms of avoidable blindness and vision impairment. His influence was so significant that he was featured in a Google Doodle in India on the anniversary of his birthday.



You can read Google's write-up of Dr. V here: <https://www.google.com/doodles/dr-govindappa-venkataswamys-100th-birthday>.



SPIRIT OF SERVICE

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NEWSLETTER



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About Seva

Seva is a global nonprofit eye care organization that transforms lives by restoring sight and preventing blindness.

We train local eye care providers and develop self-sustaining eye programs around the world. Seva has helped over 4 million people who were blind to regain their sight in more than 20 countries.

36 million people in the world are blind. 75% of them could see again with your help.

Your \$50 donation restores sight with a 15-minute cataract surgery that changes someone's life forever.

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DR. MUHAMMAD YUNUS

Nobel Prize Winner
Seva Partner
Founding Chairman of
Grameen Health Services

"I admire Seva's spirit of innovation. Seva is constantly looking for new ideas that can benefit the world, especially the poor, and they aren't afraid to try something that no one has ever tried before."

PHOTOGRAPHERS AND FILMMAKERS

Our heartfelt thanks go to all our photographers and filmmakers for generously donating their work.

Javier Eduardo Cozano Corado, Rebecca Gaal, Karl Grobl, Julie Nestingen, and Joe Raffanti.



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