

VOSH International Honors

VOSH International honored Robert (Bob) Boeding, President of Minnesota VOSH, at the VOSH International Convention in San Juan, Puerto Rico on October 10, 2013. He received the **Franklin Harms Society Award** for his numerous eyeglass missions (19 since 1991) to developing countries.

VOSH participants have volunteered thousands of hours of service to the vision care of the unfortunate. To honor those who have aided those missions VOSH/International is pleased to announce the formation of the FRANKLIN HARMS SOCIETY, named after its founder, Dr. Franklin Harms, an optometrist from Kansas.

This honor recognizes those optometrist and other volunteers who have served on 10 or more domestic or foreign VOSH mission trips. Each mission involves examination of the patients and fitting them with a good – useable pair of eyeglasses. When the prescription is difficult to find then the patient often will receive drug store reading glasses.

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Philippines Typhoon

You have most likely heard about the devastation caused by a recent typhoon in the Philippines. It struck an area right where VOSH-MN has conducted two mission trips in the past.

We are certain some of our patients have lost their homes, fishing boats, and family/friends. We have a contact there that is organizing a home building project for those that have lost their homes.

For only \$500, they can build a **new basic home** for a family of six. VOSH-MN has donated to buy a home and if you would like to donate, please contact Jim Hess O.D. (imnod@aol.com).

If you would like to see the house you built, please also consider joining the upcoming mission to the Philippines in November 2014!

New to VOSH?

New to VOSH? Want to learn how you can help? Know someone that would like to join in an upcoming mission? Are you interested in using a power point presentation to speak about VOSH? Contact me!

Katie Tancabel O.D.
KatieTancabel@AnnandaleEyecClinic.com



President's Message

Dear VOSH'ers,

Living in this Deep Freeze is for the birds (penguins). Everyone wants to get away to a warmer area. I have received calls from Ecuador asking me to bring another mission there. I feel that July 9 to the 18 would be the ideal time, as this is winter there and a high temperature around 80 degrees F. Getting away from our 100 in the shade.

Let us think of a side trip to the Galapagos islands on a cruise ship adventure for R and R. Dr. Hess is requesting donations to build homes in the Philippines for \$500.00 each. So far 7 houses have been built "WHAT A GOOD IDEA".

Another idea he is working on is "Adopt a Doc" (see Page 5) to encourage young DR's to go on missions and help with their expenses. Please let me know if you want to join the team to Ecuador in July.



Bob Boeding
President

VOSH Corps

VOSH International along with Brien Holden Vision Institute Public Health Division have recently established an initiative in building optometric education worldwide.

They are asking for optometrists to serve in developing countries in emerging optometric institutions as faculty for a minimum of two years.

Selected optometrists would receive a stipend to cover expenses, housing, relocation travel, health insurance.



BrienHoldenVisionInstitute

If interested, email voshcorps@vosh.org or visit www.brienholdenvision.org for more information.

Busuanga, Philippines

November, 2014

Dr. Jim Hess has begun the planning stages for a return trip to this beautiful island setting in the Philippines. Housing is at a small resort called El Rio y Mar and the work days are split between the rural village of San Jose and the larger town of Coron City. This island has a great need for eye care and was also affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

El Rio y Mar is a very tranquil setting accessible only by boat which has great views, excellent snorkeling as well as an infinity pool, and wonderful food. This destination has become a favorite among some VOSH volunteers who have traveled to many other locations around the world. Check out their web site at elrioymar.com.

If interested in this great mission opportunity, contact Jim Hess at imnod@aol.com.



Port Antonio, Jamaica

Late February, 2015

Please contact Dr. Larry Morrison
(drlarry@morrisonyecare.com) for more information.

Watch for more information in forthcoming newsletters
regarding this wonderful trip!



First Time V.O.S.H.ers

When Jim & Margie Hess brought up the idea of going on a VOSH trip to Africa, we looked at it as a wonderful idea for a trip – an opportunity to give our time to something worthwhile and have fun at the same time. A perfect balance it seemed to us.

We didn't know exactly what to expect but we asked a lot of questions (Jim can attest to that) and did our own research. We researched the areas in Tanzania that we would be going and studied up on what being a VOSH volunteer entailed.

I think the area we were most apprehensive about was what we referred to as "the glasses part" and the main reason, in our minds, for going there. We just weren't sure we knew enough to be helpful. Of course we read (several times) "A Short Course to Optical Genius" but felt short of being geniuses by the time we arrived.

But then the first person came in with his prescription. (We were stationed in the picking area.) The volunteers went into action and within minutes he was fitted with a pair of glasses and had the brightest and biggest smile we had ever seen.

We knew then why we were there and that we didn't have to be experts, we just had to be willing to do our best.

The team we worked with on this trip was amazing. We were surprised to learn that so many of them were veterans. Some had been on so many VOSH trips, they were experts!

So even for us newbies, we always had the experts to guide us and they did it with such kindness and generosity, we never felt like we couldn't do something. One of the greatest experiences of this trip was meeting and getting to know all of the volunteers. What a diverse, interesting, caring group of people. Friendships were made that will last a lifetime.

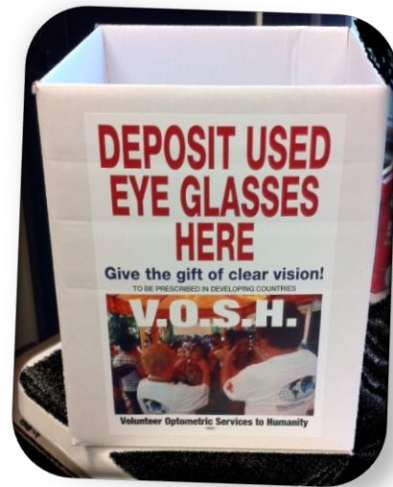
Because Jeff and I both have food backgrounds, we were particularly interested in the local cuisine. Two highlights that stand out were both at the Thank You Luncheon put on by the Lutheran Church, who sponsored us.

Two of the menu items stood out – the banana stew made with bananas and goat stomach and the whole roast goat (see picture). As Jeff put it "one was delicious and one we could barely stomach...we will let you guess which one!

We were told that we fit close to 2700 with glasses in the four days we were there. We may have worked hard those four days, but I can't imagine a better way to spend a vacation. Oh yeah, we went on a safari too.



Whole roast goat



Please Help!

Work Sessions

We are always in need of volunteers to join us at our VOSH work sessions! All of the preparation for mission trips occur at these sessions.

They are held the first and third Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:30pm at the office of Dr. Jim Hess (Crystal Vision Clinic: 5200 Douglas Drive Crystal, MN 55429). Use the back entrance and head down the steps!

Come help us sort and pack eyeglasses for upcoming missions! Volunteers can come and help any time between those hours or stop by to pick up glasses to neutralize on your own.

We NEED Glasses!

We are low on inventory and are in great need of more glasses! Need another box to collect glasses? Contact Kirk at holeintheday@hotmail.com



Adopt A Doc

We know there are many ODs out there who would like to go on a mission but have a boatload of school debt and feel they can't spare the funds to do it.

We also know many ODs appreciate the spirit of what VOSH can accomplish and may be financially able to participate but have family or physical concerns that hold them back.

Some may feel that VOSH missions are a great idea but just not something they personally want to do.

Connect

Here is a new way to connect those who want to get involved with those who can help make it happen: make a donation that will specifically help a fellow OD by helping to sponsor someone on a mission.

Contributions can be for any amount - \$50, \$200, \$1000 or whatever you feel like donating.

Those funds will be set aside to help ODs who feel they can't financially commit to a mission.

What a great way to make a valuable contribution to the work of VOSH without leaving home!

Simply include "Adopt a Doc" on the memo line of your check, mail to VOSH headquarters (5200 Douglas Dr., Crystal, MN 55429) and those funds would specifically help someone who would like to get involved but hasn't been able to do so.

VOSH/Minnesota already has scholarships of \$500 available for Minnesota ODs going on their first VOSH/Minnesota mission.

The Adopt a Doc program can be used for any Minnesota optometrist wanting to participate in a VOSH/Minnesota mission who feels they need financial assistance.

We hope this will help some who are undecided to be able to take that leap - without new OD involvement, the work of VOSH/Minnesota will come to an end. There's nothing quite like a VOSH mission for putting your skills to use for those in need. Thank you!

VOSH International Honors (cont.)

Bob has organized 8 of the 19 missions he has participated in since 1991. The countries he has served with mission trips are: Guatemala, St Vincent, Guyana, South America, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Haiti, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru.

In addition to participating in missions and coordinating missions Bob spends more than a dozen hours a month preparing eyeglasses for mission trips. He also travels to do presentations to church groups and service clubs in Minnesota and other states. He talks about past mission trips sharing the success of the humanitarian effort of VOSH International and VOSH Minnesota.

He also has given the official VOSH Minnesota report at the four most recent VOSH International Annual Meetings.

In preparation for these missions the glasses are neutralized (prescription found) and placed in the inventory. New and used glasses are received from local Lions service Clubs, optical shops churches and other groups. A number of organizations help with preparation of the glasses for the mission trips. A Senior Citizen Housing Development in Paynesville, MN has a program for residents where they neutralize the glasses and there is also a program at the prison in Rochester, MN. Much of the preparation in the Twin Cities area is done at the Crystal Vision Center in Crystal. The current inventory of 50,000 pair of glasses are stored at the Crystal Vision Center location. Glasses for each mission are selected from that inventory. Each mission requires 4,000 pair of glasses to serve approximately 2,000 patients.

When mission trips are organized, the coordinator begins the process of linking to a local organization. The teams are often hosted by a local Service Club, church or other non-profit entity in the community where the mission will be held. The coordinator encourages volunteers to join the team, arranges for transportation for team members and transportation of glasses and local accommodations for team members. The volunteer coordinator who receives no financial remuneration often volunteers up to 500 hours of personal time in the year preceding the mission. All volunteer not only serve without pay but also pay all their expenses to serve on the mission trip.

Other VOSH /Minnesota members who have received this award are Dr Jim Hess, Margie Hess and Kirk Thomas. Dr Hess has been on 40 missions since his first mission in optometry school.



Multidisciplinary Medical Mission Opportunities

CHIMBOTE, PERU

Feb. 22, - Mar. 2, 2014

LAMA (Los Amigos Medical Aid) is in need of two optometrists to join their team of approximately 40 medical professionals and support staff on their 2014 medical mission to serve the poor of Chimbote, Peru.

This will be LAMA's sixth medical mission to Chimbote. LAMA is associated with "Friends of Chimbote" a 501c-3 non-profit organization based in Fargo, ND.

The optometrists see 350 to 500 patients over 5 days depending on whether they have one or two ODs.

There is an area designated for eye exams – instruments are there and they bring an autorefractor.

Chimbote is located on the Northern coast of Peru. Many of the team members take the opportunity to visit Machu Picchu, Lake Titica or the Amazon while in Peru.

They have a connection with a travel agency that can help organize side trips.

Approximate cost for the trip would be \$300.00 plus airfare to Peru. This includes application fee, lodging, transportation to Chimbote and beach party.

Housing at the mission is modern, clean, inexpensive, and safe. The volunteers need to be in Lima by Feb. 22. A bus is chartered for the 7 hour drive along the Pacific between Lima and Chimbote, and you will return to Lima on March 2.

For more information please contact:

Dorothy Brama RN, LAMA Director,
tonydoty1@msn.com
612-239-3640

or
Doug Thompson,
dougthompson65@charter.net
612-384-5124

NEPAL: Fall 2014

Rachel Frazin is a nurse practitioner leading a medical mission to Nepal in the fall of 2014. She is aware of two ODs who are interested, but not certain if they will be able to participate so may need additional candidates. If more people volunteer than she can take, she will keep names for a future mission, so please reply to her if interested. The following is her description of this mission:

I am leading a medical mission as a family nurse practitioner to a very remote part of Nepal (Tsum Valley) near the Tibetan Chinese border. We will be mainly family medicine providers; however, I would love to bring 2-3 optometrists as there is a great need and the elders of this part of the Himalaya asked specifically for eye specialists.

The trip is late Sept through mid-October of 2014. The dates are fluid as I would like to see what specific dates work best for people who want to come. .

People who enjoy mountain hiking are the ideal candidates as there is an opportunity to trek the Himalaya - in an area considered the most beautiful even by Nepal standards. The villages where we will work are a one week walk from the nearest transportation. Participants can opt to walk with the aid of porters who carry the packs approx. 6 hours a day, or helicopter there in 45 min.

We will be working in two villages for a total of 10 days. One village is at 10,000 feet and the other at 5,000 feet. Altitude sickness can be an issue at 10,000 feet; however, it's unlikely in healthy individuals who walk in, due to the gradual change in elevation. We can purchase Diamox in Nepal for prevention for those who fly there.

Ideally participants will want to take 3.5 weeks off if they want to do some trekking. If flying by copter, could do it in 18 days including flight time from the Twin Cities. Having the time for immersion is ideal and for that, 4 weeks is optimal. The people are amazing - living Buddhism in a daily way - they are from Tibet and have settled there over the past century to escape the religious suppression of the Communist Chinese govt. in Tibet.

The cost of the trip will be somewhere between \$3500 and \$4000, which is truly an educated guess - depending on length of stay, whether a helicopter is used for ferrying providers and materials, cost of medications that we bring, etc.

Here is a link that shows some pictures a friend of mine took in the area called Manaslu, named after the mountain nearby - 8th highest in the world. It was just opened up to the West in the past 10 years. Wikipedia has info also.

If interested, reply to Rachel Frazin at singinfrazin@gmail.com.

Previous Missions

Marangu, Tanzania

October 11-22nd, 2013

34 volunteers from 8 different states left Oct. 11 for Marangu, Tanzania. We were hosted by the Ngaruma Lutheran Church of Marangu and we worked at the Marangu Lutheran Hospital. Marangu is on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro at 5,000 feet, so it was a very comfortable working area and had great views of the mountain.

The hospital gave us a wonderful area in which to work and the church provided great interpreters, great food, and great hospitality. We worked for four days and had planned to see 500 patients per day, but ended up seeing 2700 total patients!

We even got done working early on a few days which practically never happens! The patients were great to work with, very quiet and grateful, and also very poor and in great need of our services.

We referred 78 patients for cataract surgery, and are in the process now of raising funds to pay for the surgery. At \$20 an eye, a few dollars goes a long way! After our work we went on a four day safari into several of the game parks of Tanzania and saw breathtaking sights.



A lion in Tanzania

We were fortunate to see all of the big game animals, including lions, leopards, rhino, hippos, zebra and many, many others.

Our thanks go out to so many for making this trip possible, but a big thank you goes to Steve and Laurie Gilseth of St. Charles who made the ground arrangements.

Steve spent several years living in Marangu as the son of Lutheran missionaries. Thank you guys a bunch!

Following the recent mission to Marangu, Tanzania, the mission volunteers donated enough additional funds to finance cataract surgery for 105 eyes!

On VOSH missions, we often see people being led in by family members because their cataracts are so advanced that they are functionally blind. This will literally return sight to 105 people of Tanzania. Thank you!!



Jim Hess O.D.

"Bring the World into Focus!"

VOSH is an organization dedicated to serving the vision needs of people in areas where eye care is either unavailable or unaffordable. VOSH is funded solely on volunteer time and donations.

VOSH-Minnesota organizes one or more mission trips per year to various countries around the world. Optometrists are always in great need, however, anyone is a great addition to any mission trip.

Each VOSH trip is a great way to experience another culture and is such a rewarding and fulfilling experience! A \$500.00 scholarship is available for optometrists that participate in their first mission with VOSH-MN.

This scholarship can be applied toward airfare and hotel expenses. Also, the Minnesota Board of Optometry allow seven CE credits for a VOSH mission!

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www.facebook.com/MNVOSH





VOSH-MN

5200 Douglas Drive

Crystal, MN 55429

www.voshminnesota.org

Glasses Donations at MOA Annual Meeting

REMINDER! Bring your donated glasses to the MOA Annual Meeting!

VOSH-MN will have a booth set up at the upcoming MOA Annual Meeting on Saturday Feb. 8th. Stop and see us! We will have information regarding the upcoming missions and will be available to answer any questions you may have!

Please bring your supply of donated glasses to our booth! We will also have extra collection boxes as well to give to you!



Did
You
Know



90% of people who are blind live in low-income countries.

Of those, 80% of the blindness is avoidable (treatable or preventable)
Blindness prevention and restoration of sight are among the most cost-effective interventions in health care!

VOSH does make a difference! Join us on the next mission to help those in need!