



WORLD CATARACT FOUNDATION
helping the world to see

FOCUS

Spring 2005

www.worldcataract.org

The focus of the World Cataract Foundation is helping the world to see by eliminating cataract blindness especially in developing parts of the world through surgery, training and international exchange programs.

Letter from the Founder

THE STORY OF TWO STICKS

Who was this young boy, the one leading with quiet confidence, one careful step after another? Trailing behind him were his elderly blind relatives, a grandmother on the right and an uncle on the left, each was holding onto a stick under the boy's arms. Without his help and those two sticks, they would be unable to walk independently for they could not see the ground on which they stood.

The leadership example of that young Mexican lad can be eloquent testimony of how we might look anew at our mission. After our team evaluated the boy's blind relatives, they experienced successful cataract surgery within the next couple of days. Their joy and gratitude were evident, for they could see again for the first time in many years. They could walk without help. With sight restored to even one eye, they have a great chance of returning to normal activities and being productive for their family and for their community.

It is a classic norm the world over that for each blind, disabled person, two other people are required to care for him or her. That means three people are lost from being productive and contributing to society.

What is also very dramatic is that this young Mexican boy was able to walk beside or even behind these relatives on the way home because he no longer needed to lead them. They were now free to walk alone with confidence, and the boy was free to walk by himself and return to his normal childhood activities of school and play.

Not only do we free the adults with the restoration of sight, but we also free their families, especially the

children. This is all about freeing individuals. It's freeing the children.

World statistics show that about 8-14% of all the world cataract blind are in the pediatric population. I think we should focus our own thinking, and certainly emphasize to our supporters, how important it is to help this segment of the cataract blind that are children. Also, it is important to help the adults who are in their care so that these 'caregiver' children may be free again.

As you know, the World Cataract Foundation's motto is "Helping the World to See." I would suggest that we consider changing that motto to something like this: "Free the Children - Help the World to See." It still has a nice ring to it and it may be a more potent communicator to others, including our supporters, as to what our mission truly is.

Jerre Minor Freeman, M.D.



This little boy is leading his blind grandmother into the Hospital de la Amistad in hopes of having cataract surgery. She has her hand extended so that she may feel her grandson because she cannot see him. She only knows where to go by his pull on the stick. Earlier he had another stick under his left arm and was leading his blind uncle.

HELPING THE WORLD TO SEE MEXICO

OMETEPEC 2004

This past November World Cataract Foundation sponsored a medical mission team to Ometepec, Guerrero, Mexico to provide care for the blind poor of the area. Dr. Jerre Freeman has been leading medical missions to Ometepec since 1970. As in previous



November 2004 Ometepec Medical Mission Team

years, people were lined up waiting for us. Our thirty-six member team screened an estimated 1,540 people throughout the week and performed 452 surgical procedures: 159 cataracts, 153 pterygiums, 8 plastics, 21 strabismus, and 111 YAG Laser procedures. Our optical team dispensed 1,350 reading, prescription, and sunglasses. The people who receive treatment were very humble and appreciative.

Nigel Haydu, a Canadian working with the group *Caminamos Juntos Para Salud y Desarrollo*, (they are working to improve health and sanitary conditions in

Tlapmacazapa) brought ten patients to be screened. They traveled for two days by bus to reach Ometepec. Eight patients received free operations to restore their vision. The morning they left to go home, one of the men came over to team member Dr. Viet Ho, shook his hand, and said, "I'll never forget you."

It was very rewarding to be able to help others from so far away.



Photo of the waiting crowd at the hospital our first morning.



Little girl waiting to be seen.



Kim Richards leading patient to surgery.



*Back Row: Dr. Stewart Galloway and Nigel Haydu;
Front Row: patients from Tlapmacazapa*



WCF Board member Raleigh Crawford and translator Janice Driscoll scheduling patient for surgery.

OMETEPEC 2005

A fourteen-member medical mission team traveled to Ometepec, Mexico for our third spring mission to provide free eye surgeries to the poor. The team members were Virginia Vasquez, Mayda Galindo Gonzalez, Charleen Castrejon, Leda Phillips, RN, Alicia Bond, COT, Dr. Jerre Freeman, Dr. John Freeman, Dr. Andre Cohen, Dr. Ariel Ramirez, Dr. Juan Carlos Carrera Sanchez, Dr. Howard Beale, Leo Beale II, Luke Driscoll, and Linda Storey. Additionally, representatives from DIF and WCF friends who live in Ometepec were on hand to help during the week: Tim, Barbara and Andy Wood. Diane



*February 2005 Ometepec
Medical Mission Team*

Young a nun from a local village also came to offer her translating skills. Bus drivers and friends, Leovardo and Tito helped throughout the week. This team screened 490 people and performed 208 surgeries. These included 83 cataracts, 100 pterygiums and 25 miscellaneous plastics and other surgeries.

and performed 208

METHYLCELLULOSE PROJECT

In January WCF hosted a Mexican pharmacist, Ana Luisa Corres Santana, who came to Memphis to learn to make methylcellulose. WCF friend Dr. Bill Johns provided the facilities and training at People's Custom Pharmacy. Methylcellulose is a type of viscoelastic that is necessary for every cataract surgery. Ana spent several days with pharmacy technician, Evelyn Dever learning the process. This will decrease the cost of cataract surgery by about \$25 – 30 for each surgery for Mexico's poor. Ana took advantage of her stay in Memphis to do some shopping, tour the Civil Rights museum and Graceland, and attend a Chinese New Year Celebration.



From left: Q.F.B. Ana Luisa Corres Santana from Acapulco and Evelyn Dever, C.Ph.T. from People's Custom RX in Memphis, Tennessee

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

On January 14, 2005 Dr. John Van Dyck traveled down the Sepik River to Hauna Village in Papua New Guinea to operate on the blind poor. This was WCF's fifth year to sponsor an ophthalmologist to join Dr. Louis Carter's annual medical mission to Papua New Guinea. Dr. Van Dyck performed 35 sight-saving surgeries on people who would have never had an opportunity to see an ophthalmologist.



Dr. John Van Dyck surrounded by patients in Huana, Papua New Guinea, January 2005

CHINA

Dr. Wang Shuhua and Dr. Yao Ning from Beijing's Tongren Hospital have been invited to participate in the World Cataract Foundation Medical Personnel Exchange Program this year. Both have been highly recommend by former Medical Personnel Exchange participants Dr. Ding Lin and Dr. Shi Yu-ying.

EGYPT

World Cataract Foundation sent 100 intraocular lenses recently to Tanta University Hospital in Tanta, Egypt. Longtime WCF friend Dr. Mounir Khalifa spent two years with us in the early 1980's learning modern cataract surgery. He returned to Memphis last summer and asked if WCF could send lenses to be used on those needing cataract surgery but unable to pay for it. After receiving the lenses, Dr. Khalifa sent photos of the patients and said they were very happy to be able to see again.

THE WORLD AT HOME

BILINGUAL HEALTH FAIR

The WCF is helping the world to see, not only in Mexico, Papua New Guinea, and China but at home, in the world in microcosm. We were present at a Health Fair on November 6, 2004 at the Catholic Church of the Resurrection in southeast Memphis. Ophthalmologist Dr. James Freeman, from Memphis Eye and Cataract Associates, assisted by Andrea Slager, used sophisticated instruments to screen more than fifty patients from over fifteen Latin American and Asian countries who now live in Memphis and can't afford professional eye care. World Cataract Foundation Board members Julia Willhite and Janice Vanderhaar organized the four-hour session, with the help of Executive Director Lori Hudson. We look forward to returning next year.



Dr. James Freeman conversing with health fair participants.

NEW STAFF MEMBER

Julie Wuerfel joined the WCF staff this spring as Program Director. Julie has had 15 years experience of program, event, tour planning, and public relations. Most recently she served as Director of Youth Music Ministry at Bartlett United Methodist Church. Julie holds a B.S. degree from Georgia Tech. Welcome, Julie.

*FOCUS is edited by former WCF Board Member
Dr. Gerard Vanderhaar and produced by
Lori Hudson, Executive Director*

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

When Marta Cruz Puente's son David first complained about his eye, she thought he just needed glasses. He was a strapping young man of 16 and the thought of cataracts was the farthest thing from his family's mind. Weeks later, when David was diagnosed with it, it still seemed unreal.

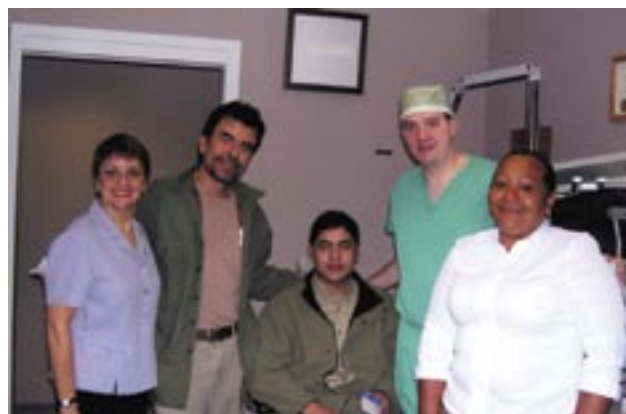
Cataracts are more a problem of the elderly – or so we think. But in many underdeveloped countries, congenital cataracts are not rare. What is rare are treatment options that are local, inexpensive and capable.

Marta and her husband, Luis, prayed for a solution. The Puente family had recently moved to Memphis from Veracruz, Mexico. They turned to the Church Health Center for help. A referral to Memphis Eye and Cataract Associates (MECA) quickly followed.

Not only was their son going to get treatment, but he would get it from a renowned institution with exceptional doctors and staff. The couple did not fully grasp all the medical aspects, but they did know that this was the right thing to do and placed the hopes and dreams for their son in the hands of MECA surgeon, Dr. John Freeman, son of WCF Founder Dr. Jerre Freeman.

Their prayers were answered. Every day after the surgery David's vision improved, and the family's gratitude to Dr. John and the MECA staff increased after every visit. Without their skillful help, this young man's future and prospects would have been severely limited. Now, the Puente family says, "The sky's the limit."

Julia Willhite



From left: WCF Board member, Julia Willhite, Luis Puente, David Puente, Dr. John Freeman, Marta Cruz

NO MATS, NO PILLOWS, NO COMPLAINTS

Board member, Julia Willhite participated in the WCF mission to Ometepec for the first time in November 2004. Here is her personal account.

The first thing you notice are the people. Hundreds of them line the courtyard of the hospital, waiting in the stifling tropical heat. The government has issued 1500 numbered chances and it seems that all of them are there that day.

Some have traveled for days on foot. Others have sold their livestock or valued belongings to finance the trip. Most of them have waited a year to make the trip and are all there for the same thing – the gift of sight.

The people are poor, humble, simple folk; old and young and all ages in between. They are infinitely patient, seemingly unfazed by the hours it takes to get examined, diagnosed and possibly helped. Men with dusty feet and crumpled straw hats; women wearing the traditional lace ribboned dress; barefoot children with shy smiles; a 10-year old with his blind grandparents.



Thirty-six volunteers have come together to take one step closer to the seemingly impossible – a cataract free state in Guerrero, Mexico. Most are ophthalmic surgeons, nurses, opticians, assistants and interns. Some, like me, are translators or government workers. All have given up time with their families and businesses and

personally funded the trip to touch hundreds of lives.

Every morning, dozens of patients crowd the hospital veranda, waiting to be examined, evaluated, hoping for the miracle. The doctors walk among them, looking and diagnosing on the spot. In some cases their cataracts and strabismus (crossed eyes) are advanced – some to the point of no return. But

many can be helped.

Most of those who need surgery do not get general anesthesia; their local anesthetic is given in the hospital hallway as they wait to be called. The few that do get it walk themselves into the OR holding their IV, clutching the pieces of paper that give a diagnosis. Because they have to be examined post surgery, those that have come a long way sleep overnight on the floor of the same porch where they were evaluated.

No mats, no pillows, no complaints.

There is no air conditioning in the operating room or anyplace else for that matter and no one frets - not the gowned patients, nor the surgical staff with sweat-soaked scrubs. We pause only for lunch and return to face the afternoon list. Every day we have to turn away people who beg to be seen but cannot be scheduled. Their sadness and desperation break our hearts every time we do so.

We'll remember all of them but there are some that stand out for me: The young mother who is able to see her child for the first time after surgery. The teenager who has quit going to school because his eyes were disfigured, but now can go. The beautiful young woman who says she is "broken" and no one will marry her unless we help her. The elderly couple that walked for days to be there. The sweet 4-year old with the beaming smile and severely crossed eyes.

In return, we get gifts of gratitude. Not just words and handshakes and hugs but also coconuts, baked bread, beautifully embroidered clothing in the region's traditional style, handmade jewelry, and decorative pens. Almost always the recipient was humbled by the gestures of gratitude. I know I was.

A week later we had run out of time and supplies and we packed up knowing that even though we couldn't help everyone, we had made a significant impact. The experience had been life-changing and emotionally draining for both patient and healer, but the value of our work was immeasurable.

So we returned to the States and our much-missed air conditioning, hot showers, families and jobs but I knew I would never be the same again. Now I am more grateful, more patient, more sympathetic and more accepting. It was a challenge for me not just linguistically but physically and emotionally, but I wouldn't change it for anything.

No mats, no pillows, no complaints. I'm going to remember that.

Julia Willhite

SIGHT NIGHT



Our First Annual Sight Night, January 22, 2005 was an evening to remember. Many thanks to our guest musical artists THRIO GRT, Holly Shelton, Gary Johns, and Jack Cooper on the saxophone. They were fabulous! Much appreciation to our sponsors for the evening: Grand Visionaries- McVean Trading and Investments, and Memphis Eye and Cataract Associates; Gold Visionaries- Financial Planning Group of Memphis, and Roebuck Auctions; Silver Visionary- People's Custom RX; Bronze Visionaries- Cannon and Company CPA's, and William T. Harrell, Realtor.

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MEET THE BOARD



Albert W. Morris, M.D.

Dr. Albert Morris, a Memphis radiologist, was recently elected as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Medical Association. The NMA is the collective voice of the more than 25,000 African American physicians in the United States and around the world. He previously served as President of the Bluff City Medical Society, the local NMA affiliate. During his tenure as President, Bluff City Medical Society was selected as the National Medical Association's "Chapter of the Year" award for outstanding programming, community involvement, and physician recruitment. In 2000, Dr. Morris organized and chaired the Task Force on Environmental Health and Bioterrorism of the NMA, developing protocols for physicians and patients in the advent of a bioterrorism attack. He has been a member of the World Cataract Foundation Board since 1998.

THANKS

The World Cataract Foundation Board of Directors extend our gratitude and appreciation to outgoing Board President, Walker Wellford, III. During his two-year tenure as President Walker guided the WCF to a new level in fulfilling our mission of helping the world to see.

We welcome new President Pat Beech who has served on the Board in various capacities, most recently as Program Committee Chair. Our prayers and support are with you, Pat.

World Cataract Foundation Contributors - April 2004 - April 2005

*Thank you for your belief in our efforts to eliminate cataract blindness worldwide
through your generous contributions.*

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We appreciate your continuous support

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

The World Cataract Foundation is happy to accept any gift, large, or small. If you would like your contribution to be in honor of a friend or as a memorial, please include their names and addresses with your donation. Each person you honor will receive a note acknowledging your gift.

The WCF now offers a convenient way to make donations. We have partnered with Enterprise National Bank to accept contributions through automatic deductions. If you are interested in becoming a regular contributor to WCF's mission of helping the blind poor regain their sight, the process is simple. First, call or write us to receive a form. Complete the form and mail it back. Automatic electronic withdrawals will be made from your checking or savings account according to your specifications about how often and when.

Together we can make a difference in helping cure cataract blindness worldwide.

MISSION TRIP NEEDS

The World Cataract Foundation will accept donations of new or slightly used equipment.

Microscope (teaching microscope)	\$27,000.00
Teaching System for Microscope	\$ 3,542.00
Video System	\$ 2,160.00
A-Scan	\$ 8,050.00
Direct Ophthalmoscope	\$ 380.00
Indirect Ophthalmoscope	\$ 1,200.00
Autoclave and Cassettes	\$ 6,000.00
Instruments	\$12,000.00
Laser	\$28,000.00
Intraocular Lenses (\$15.00 each)	\$any amount
Grant for miscellaneous medical supplies that need to be purchased for medical mission trip.	\$500-5,000.00

The equipment must be in optimal condition to provide the best possible care for the people that we serve. If you are interested in helping the world to see by providing funds for these equipment needs, please contact Lori Hudson, Executive Director at 901-379-0405.

As a nonprofit, charitable 501 (c) (3) organization the WCF is supported solely by those who believe in restoring sight to the cataract blind. Gifts to the WCF are tax deductible. Please send your gift to World Cataract Foundation, 6463 Poplar, #101, Memphis, TN 38119 or call 901-379-0405 for more information.



WORLD CATARACT FOUNDATION

helping the world to see

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YOU CAN GIVE THE GIFT OF SIGHT

We are trying to make a difference in the lives of others by restoring their vision—would you like to help? Here are some ways to support the efforts of WCF:

Monetary gifts will support:

- Medical Personnel Exchange Project
- Mission Trip Supplies and Equipment
- WCF Operating Budget
- Endowment funds
- Donation of real property
- In kind gifts
- Wills and insurance policies