

EYE SURGERY MISSIONS: **Giving back to others by giving sight to the poor!**

It seems that we all have the inner desire to “give back” when we can. Fortunately, I’ve been blessed with a profession where we can journey to medically desolate regions, and with the right team and backing, restore sight to those who have no other options for care. It’s a fabulous experience to make such a profound difference in people’s lives!

For over 20 years, I’ve been involved in trips to a small town in Sinaloa, Mexico. Three times yearly, we fly in small private planes for most of the day, usually taking about 3 legs to the journey, to arrive at our Clinic at about 6pm. We’ll usually find about 50-100 people lined up in the dirt road outside the doors, already waiting for “Los doctores Americanos”. The set-up goes quickly, and we get started that same night, often working until midnight.

Through the following 2 days, we see patients in the Clinic while simultaneously doing surgery. Our “operating suite” has a concrete floor, bare walls (complete with raw wires and pipes sticking out here and there!) and a broken air-conditioner. We have learned to operate in an “elbows down” position, so that sweat rolls away from the surgical site!! It is not rare to have our power go out completely in the midst of an operation, and we simply finish the cataract surgery with assistants holding flashlights under the microscope. The stories can go on and on!!

Somehow, we’ll usually end up seeing 5-600 patients in the Clinic, and now can complete over 100 surgeries! The vast majority of the surgeries are cataract, but we also do pterygiums, eyelid surgeries to correct turned lids, or remove tumors. Occasionally, an anesthesiologist is present, so that we can put children asleep to repair “crossed eyes”. As you might expect, this is especially rewarding for the entire family.

Until these past few years, these trips have been completely personally funded. While we receive donated products from instrument and pharmaceutical companies, the major expense of transportation for our staff, has been covered by the doctors. Recently, we’ve received funds from local donors. This has been very welcome, and we put this to good use, to bring additional services to this most needy population.

Mostly due to these donations, we’ve been able to double what we provide, and our heart swells with gratitude to all who wish to contribute.

(Please turn over for information on how YOU can help!)

If you are interested in becoming part of this project by helping with a tax-deductible contribution, *PLEASE* let us know. We'll be happy to work with you and make it as easy as possible. Of course, we can give you a bona fide tax-deductible letter of contribution. *THANK YOU* for your generous heart!

**** Checks should be made out to:**

"Liga, International"

**** On the Memo line, write: (very important!!)**

"San Blas Eye Clinic"

Additional information:

Without organizational and financial help, these trips wouldn't be possible. We honor and credit the many involved, that "make it happen"!

The organizational group for our Mexico trips: *Our heart-felt gratitude goes to our major suppliers:*

LIGA International, Inc.

www.ligainternational.org

Alcon Surgical

Hawaiian Eye Foundation

Beaver-Visitec, Inc.

MicroSurgical Technologies

If you have any questions or interest in "making the blind see again", we would love to hear from you. Ask anyone in our office how you can participate.