



World Sight Day Challenge 2018
Help a child to see!

(Calgary Alberta – August 2018):

An astounding 1.22 billion people around the world are blind or vision-impaired because they do not have access to an eye exam and the glasses they need¹.

Equally shocking is that sixty percent of children in the developing world who go blind, die within the first year². The World Sight Day Challenge is a response to these alarming statistics. Coordinated by Optometry Giving Sight, the annual fundraising campaign brings the global optometry community together to raise money and awareness to help provide eye care to those in need. The Challenge is focused on World Sight Day, Thursday October 11th, and runs throughout October.

“As it is estimated that as much as 80% of what a child learns is processed through the visual system³, an eye examination and glasses can mean the difference between a life of poverty and a life of opportunity,” said Dr. Juan Carlos Aragon, Global Chair of Optometry Giving Sight. “A child’s ability to play and learn and to contribute at home and school is largely dependent on good vision.”

After losing her glasses, 14-year-old Cambodian girl Sokhanya cried for days. She knew exactly what it meant to lose them. Now her parents had to walk her to school as she might slip and fall on the uneven road and her beloved art and language classes were now impossible.



A free eye screening service came to her school. After receiving an eye exam and a new pair of glasses, she was again able to walk alone to school, learn, and enjoy the company of her friends. Sokhanya is smiling again and her dream now is to become a nurse to help others.

The World Sight Day Challenge will help fund projects that will transform the lives of children like Sokhanya. Importantly, funds raised will help an additional one million people receive eye care in 2018. For the past 12 years, thousands of optometrists, their staff, patients, students and families have taken the World Sight Day Challenge and made a difference by making a tax-deductible donation and/or by raising funds in their practice, school or company.



Dr. Kate MacNeill and her team from Edinburgh Optometry in Guelph ON have participated in the Challenge for the past 7 years.

“I have witnessed first-hand the incredible impact on communities when providing eye care in under-served areas or when mentoring the graduates of a newly established optometry school. The World Sight Day Challenge unites our doctors and staff in the common goal of raising funds for Optometry Giving Sight. Our patients and broader community have embraced this cause. They have been very generous in supporting our vision of reaching and providing appropriate services in regions where there is need,” said Dr. MacNeill.

Optometry Giving Sight encourages everyone to support the World Sight Day Challenge and help transform the lives of millions of people in need like Sokhanya.

To donate or pledge participation, supporters can visit: <https://www.givingsight.org/giving/world-sight-day-challenge.html>

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Notes to Editor:

World Sight Day is an annual day of awareness held on the second Thursday of October to focus global attention on blindness and vision impairment. It is coordinated by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and is supported by eye health organizations around the world – including Optometry Giving Sight – and is included on the official World Health Organization (WHO) calendar. Optometry Giving Sight is a global fundraising initiative that specifically targets the prevention of blindness and impaired vision due to uncorrected refractive error (URE) – simply the need for an eye examination and glasses.

Optometry Giving Sight was established in 2003 by the Brien Holden Vision Institute, the World Council of Optometry, and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness as a means of mobilizing support from the global eye care profession and the industry to help people who are needlessly blind or vision-impaired. Optometry Giving Sight is a registered charity in Canada, the USA, Australia and Italy. The organization also works in partnership with Vision Aid Overseas.

In addition to projects that train people in developing countries to become degree and diploma qualified optometrists, Optometry Giving Sight funds projects that increase access to vision care for children.

Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation is the implementing partner supported by Optometry Giving Sight.

How donations can help in developing countries:

- \$1,000 – Help provide glasses for 200 children
- \$2,000 – Clinical equipment kit to provide outreach services
- \$3,000 – Upskill clinical staff to provide eye examinations for children
- \$4,000 – Train 100 teachers to conduct child eye health screenings
- \$5,000 – Sponsor a school eye health screening for 2,000 children
- \$10,000 – Purchase equipment to set up a clinical eye health examination room

1 Flaxman et al. Global causes of blindness and distance vision impairment 1990–2020: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Global Health*. Published online October 11, 2017 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(17\)30393-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(17)30393-5)

2 & 3 World Health Organization (2000) Preventing blindness in children. Report of a WHO / IAPB scientific meeting. Geneva: WHO. (WHO/PBL/00.77).