

IN Sights

A Newsletter For Friends of World Blindness Outreach, Inc.



2019 Edition

Dear Friends & Supporters,

What's your favorite vacation spot – that place to just get away and re-energize? It's likely a place you visit often and have many fond memories of your time there with family and friends. Some may like their spot enough to invest in a second home – maybe at the beach or in the mountains. Others may choose a beautiful resort in Jamaica or the Bahamas, or possibly the Dominican Republic? The Dominican has become one of those favorite destinations for many, with expansive resorts, lavish golf clubs and beautiful beaches.

For me, and countless WBO volunteers, the Dominican has clearly become our favorite destination (Ecuador is a very close second). However, it has nothing to do with lovely beaches and resorts. It has everything to do with the wonderful people there and lots of incredible memories, the result of some incredible teamwork!

This past January, we observed some very important WBO milestones. We marked our 25-year commitment to many Dominican friends and the very essence of our mission – and another 20 years in Ecuador!

The clinical impact of our work and the personal relationships we have built, get stronger and better each year. Your continued support enables us to coordinate these incredible missions, to train medical students and to engage hundreds of volunteers from all walks of life, for 25 consecutive years! But more importantly, we have improved or cured the vision and health of several thousand individuals. In a word - priceless!

Like many developing nations, Dominicans and Ecuadorians lack clinical resources that we often take for granted. The need is tremendous and seems endless, but the support and cooperation we get from locals is amazing. It's a big part of the reason that we go every year and will continue to do so, as long as the good Lord gives us the means and the ability.

It all started when my daughter, Linda, did some volunteer service with the Peace Corps in a little village in the Dominican called La Pascuala. While visiting her there, it became clear that we could make a big impact fairly quickly. Every mission poses challenges, but the most important component of a successful mission is a good 'ground game'. Linda's connection clearly opened that door and provided some of the connections we needed to be successful.

Our Rotary friends in DR and a group called Vista Para Todos in Ecuador are two of the very best examples of why we have such impact and sustainability. They are an extension of WBO's good will and dedication, but they also have local knowledge that we lack. They help us in so many ways and they are invaluable to our success.

They are the reason we continue to return, year after year - they make us so much more effective in our work and we are indebted to them for life. They are more than friends. They have become part of our WBO family and they are some of the best brothers and sisters we could ever ask for!

This newsletter features stories about our 25th consecutive trip to DR and our 20th trip to Ecuador – quite a testament to our sustainability and the impact each of you contribute to making a difference in so many lives – in so many ways!



One of the many highlights of our momentous past year was working with Dr. Diana Vittini, who volunteered as an interpreter for us more than 10 years ago. Today she manages an eye clinic in Nagua! To express WBO's appreciation for her dedication, Dr. Alley presented a book to Dr. Vittini that was co-authored by Dr. Joseph Sassani, another colleague and professor of ophthalmology at Hershey Medical Center.

Albert A. Alley, M.D.

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Founder & President, WBO

Bringing Light Into Darkness For Over 25 Years

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Looking Back: Another Incredible Year In Review...

Ecuadorian Mission - XX September 30-October 6, 2018

As usual, when we arrived in Ecuador, Diego Benitez and many other friends from Vista Para Todos had things well-organized. He was joined by Dr. Ruben Landazuri and Dr. Eduardo Romo Miller, both of whom have joined us on many previous missions. They are among some of the very best anyone could ever have on any surgical team. On this mission, we were able to perform over 200 cataracts and Dr. Nancy Morrison was able to correct over 20 kids who suffered from strabismus.

All of this work, in less than one week – something we could not accomplish without many people coordinating, organizing and performing some incredible work. Thanks to everyone involved and those of you behind the scenes. Although it's an incredible accomplishment, it's what we have learned to expect as the result of a great team, working together, to make a difference for those less fortunate. On the final night of our stay, WBO volunteers were recognized and honored at a special dinner organized by Vista Para Todos and many local dignitaries. Maybe we should try for another 20 years!

Ecuador Mission Team

Albert A. Alley, M.D.
Nancy Morrison, M.D.
Eduardo Romo de Vivar Miller, M.D.
Cindy Poucel, R.N.
Eileen Geiss, R.N.
Rishi, Singhal, M.D.
William Cluley
Deirdre Carmichael
Walter Able
Avery Morrison

More New Memories With Friends & Family!

These photos represent just a few of the memories we create and the impact that we make together - on each WBO Mission. Your continued support of our work is appreciated and clearly affects the lives of countless individuals.

Perhaps the most important impact, beyond the gift of sight for our patients, is that we are able to involve others in our work. Pictured at right is Dr. Iftikhar Chaudhry, who is always with us in the Dominican.

In the other photos, you can see that many young people are also involved. Dr. Vittini, who was pictured on the cover, may be our best example, but we engage many young people in our work, so that they can experience the same joy of service to others.

They will be our living legacy and our best hope for the future - thanks to many WBO supporters who understand the need and already know the joy of our collective impact through service to others.



Dominican Republic Vision Mission - XXV January 13-20, 2019

Like several other previous Dominican missions, we were once again blessed with the energy and enthusiasm of youth. In addition to Resident Michael Langué, MD, from Penn State Hershey's Ophthalmology program, we had nine students from Lebanon High School and their chaperones with us. They participated in lectures to understand procedures and played key roles in most aspects of pre-op and sterilization – and observed in the OR.

We hope this experience lights a fire, like it has for Diana Vittini. We met Diana 10 years ago, when she joined us to serve as a student interpreter. Her experience helped to fuel her goal to pursue ophthalmology and she now works by our side in the OR and coordinates an ophthalmology program in Nagua. It was equally rewarding to work with my daughter, Cynthia, an ophthalmologist herself who joined our surgical team to perform 15 pediatric strabismus procedures. We are also grateful to Dr. Iftikhar Chaudhry who joined us again this year to perform corneal transplants.

Because of our 25th anniversary mission, we were guests at several very nice dinner celebrations, where team members and WBO received many certificates and framed citations recognizing our continued commitment to the many less fortunate who live in the Dominican Republic. We met the Mayor and City Council and most importantly, we made plans for a return trip to Salcedo in 2020.

Another special aspect of the trip was Jere Gish and his colleague, Harold Trulear from WGAL News 8. Jere, who is a host of their morning news show, and his videographer, Harold, filmed and aired a special one-hour feature summarizing the work and impact of our mission. We were honored to have Jere and WGAL play such an important role in sharing our story of bringing light into the darkness.

Our student volunteers also spent a day at a local orphanage, delivering gifts and spending time with the children there. But perhaps the most memorable part of this mission was my daughter Linda's return, with the WBO team, to La Pascuala, her Peace Corps home from 25 years ago. In addition to the team completing a facelift of the Linda Alley Medical Clinic, she was able to reunite with some old and dear friends there – especially Lupita Calcano, who was her home away from home, many years ago.

Dominican Republic Mission Team

Albert A. Alley, M.D.
Cynthia L. Alley, M.D.
Iftikhar Chaudhry, M.D.
Layla Kamoun, M.D.
Michael Langué, M.D. (Resident)
Cindy Poucel, R.N.
Ellen Dreibelbis, R.N.
John Sheetz, R.N.
Denise Hileman – (Surg. Tech)
Robert Ramirez-Rodriguez
(A-Scan Tech)
William Cluley
Kenny Montijo
Brooks Trefsgar
Linda Alley
Oneida Deluca
Alice E. Doxsee

Students

Peyton Arnold-Paine
Thamery Cabrera
Alea Herndon
Solía Horn
Sabhorak Horn
Collin Mentzer
Ghada Mostafa
Owen Sheetz
Johannah Stahl

Chaperones

Paul Seyfert
Glenda Peiffer
Courtney Peiffer

WGAL Staff

Jere Gish
Harold Trulear

In 1999, WBO created the Life Enhancement Awards to assist individuals living in South Central PA who are visually impaired. These awards are intended to provide equipment or aid to enhance/improve the quality of life for individuals with a vision impairment. Over the past 20 years, WBO has provided computers, software, video magnifiers, home modifications and educational toys to deserving recipients. Each of these items or services helped these individuals gain more independence and made a substantial difference in the quality of their lives.

Life

Enhancement

Awards

This year we have identified 10 worthy award recipients to receive iPads, portable video magnifiers, and an outdoor home modification consisting of railings and steps. We are grateful for the continued support of our friends and sponsors who help us help those in need, right here in our back yard!

World Blindness Outreach, Inc.
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Lebanon, PA 17042

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2019 WBO Golf Tournament

Reminder! **Monday, August 26**
Lebanon Country Club
Please Make Plans To Join Us!

The Tournament Committee has begun the planning process for what we hope will be another successful and fun-filled event this year. Please mark your calendar for Monday, August 26. We hope you can be part of this important event to support WBO. Contact us to register and participate!

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