

# NEWSLETTER

October 12, 2023

## World Sight Day & the Power of Vision



Dear HSTS supporter,

We hope this newsletter finds you in good health as well as delighting in some much needed cooler weather. As the crisp autumn air begins to unfold, we turn our attention to something precious that often goes unnoticed: our eyesight. This October, the Houston Shoulder to Shoulder Foundation is excited to celebrate World Sight Day, an annual event dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of vision and eliminating avoidable blindness worldwide.

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World Sight Day: October 12, 2023

World Sight Day, celebrated every second Thursday of October, provides a platform for us to reflect on the significance of our eyesight. This year's theme, "Vision First," reminds us that vision is a fundamental human right, and it's our responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to quality eye care.

Last month, a local optician offered vision screenings and distributed eyeglasses to the local residents at the Shoulders to Shoulders Clinic. Access to vision care is a rarity in Santa Ana. The most recent vision outreach event, which took place in 2016, was conducted by a small team of optometry students and their mentor, Dr. Rebekah Montes, from the University of Houston College of Optometry. It's not uncommon to encounter eye conditions like myopia (nearsightedness), presbyopia (age-related near vision loss), cataracts (clouding of the natural lens), and pterygium (conjunctival growth), among others.

The Shoulder to Shoulder Clinic aims to establish a regular schedule of eye care services, with rotations occurring every three months. The results of a recent survey conducted during the last medical brigade revealed that the majority of respondents expressed a strong desire for improved access and resources for eye care in the area. The nearest eye clinic is situated two hours away in the neighboring town of Colomoncagua. Just think about the inconvenience of having to travel such a distance for a simple eye examination.



An optician from the local area conducts an eye exam on a patient with display cases showcasing a variety of glasses available for patients to choose from.

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In honor of World Sight Day we ask that you make a donation towards preserving and protecting the eyesight of our brothers and sisters in Santa Ana.

For those of you just tuning in, The Houston Shoulder to Shoulder Foundation is a non-profit organization which manages and leads the operations of a medical clinic located in the remote jungles of Santa Ana, Honduras. The clinic's services benefit more than 30,000 residents from 65 nearby communities in the region near the Honduras and El Salvador border. Some people can travel up to 4 hours to reach the clinic where they receive essential medical treatment without a significant financial burden. On average, we organize 2-3 medical brigade trips to Santa Ana annually to provide vital healthcare services to the community. These missions also serve as valuable training opportunities for medical and other healthcare professional students who accompany us, working under the supervision of attending experts.

### **Staff Testimonial**

*“During my 15 years as a volunteer and employee, I have seen the development of the clinic, in the physical facilities, and the equipment as well as in the services. From going from just a doctor giving consultation to having dentistry, laboratory services and now having the first steps to optometry. The important thing is that we are bringing quality services to those most in need.”* - Linda Diaz, Pharmacy Manager, Santa Ana, Colomoncagua



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Thank you for being a part of our community. Together, we can make a world of difference, one pair of eyes at a time.

Wishing you a month filled with clarity and compassion.

In Christ,

Jeff McNear, President of Houston Shoulder to Shoulder

HSTS Newsletter Team

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