

# OPTOMETRYGIVINGSIGHT

**Optometry Giving Sight is unique in that it is the only global fundraising initiative that specifically targets the prevention of blindness and impaired vision due to refractive error.**

Optometry Giving Sight aims to provide sight to the 300 million people who are blind or vision impaired simply because they do not have a pair of glasses, and to prevent others from the same fate by establishing vision care services in countries where currently none exist.

We fund sustainable development projects which support the goals of VISION 2020: The Right to Sight. We currently fund priority programs in East Africa, South Africa, Sri Lanka, East Timor and Indigenous Australia.

Established in 2003, Optometry Giving Sight is a joint initiative of the World Optometry Foundation (WOF), the International Centre for Eyecare Education (ICEE) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB).

Optometry Giving Sight is currently raising funds in Australia, the U.S., Canada and the U.K.

## Funding programs...

Optometry Giving Sight distributes funds to partners who implement projects that ensure sustainable, lasting results in three ways:

- **Vision Care** – immediate access to services through eye exams, low-cost eye glasses and low-vision devices;
- **Local Training** - training of local, eye care personnel, optometrists and trainers;
- **Infrastructure Development** – establishment and support of vision centers, eye clinics and schools of optometry.



## Raising funds...

- By inviting optometrists and practice staff to make regular monthly or annual donations;
- By inviting optometry practices to make a donation on sales of a certain product line (such as \$5 for every pair of glasses sold) or by taking part in the World Sight Day Challenge in October;
- By inviting optometrists to “Tick Yes to OGS” on their annual association dues renewal invoice (where implemented);
- Through optometry industry corporate sponsorships and donations by their employees;
- Through patients making donations when visiting their optometrists;
- Through general donations at [www.givingsight.org](http://www.givingsight.org).



*Photo courtesy of Dean Saffron*

***Optometrists are eliminating refractive error blindness and vision impairment – simply the need for an eye exam and a pair of glasses - in the developing world through their support of Optometry Giving Sight.***

*85% of every dollar raised from optometrists and their patients goes directly to support programs that help give sight to those most in need.*

*Optometry Giving Sight offers an unprecedented opportunity for members of our community, including eye care professionals, their staff, their patients and the industry, to make a coordinated and significant impact in the prevention of blindness.*

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# **WORLD SIGHT DAY CHALLENGE**



Dr Len Koltun and staff supporting Optometry Giving Sight's World Sight Day Challenge

## **The World Sight Day Challenge...**

Optometry Giving Sight's main fundraising campaign is the World Sight Day Challenge.

The World Sight Day Challenge provides an exciting opportunity for optometrists to help millions of people in need, while highlighting to the local community their commitment to help eliminate refractive error blindness around the world.

Optometrists are invited to donate their eye exam fees from World Sight Day in October and/or make a regular donation or celebrate in their practice with staff and patients. Optometrists are encouraged to donate \$25 per month and staff are invited to make a regular monthly donation of \$5.

We will supply practice materials which provide information to patients about Optometry Giving Sight and the practice's participation in the World Sight Day Challenge. Patients can be invited to make a donation of \$5 throughout the month of October.

Optometry students are also invited to participate by becoming regular donors of \$5 per month and by encouraging their classmates to do the same.

Many of our corporate sponsors will be involved with the World Sight Day Challenge 2008 and will encourage their staff to participate through office fundraising events, such as barbeques and sponsored activities.

World Sight Day was established by VISION 2020: The Right to Sight and is held on the second Thursday in October each year. Optometry Giving Sight supports the aims of VISION 2020, a global initiative that is aiming to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 2020.

**[www.givingsight.org](http://www.givingsight.org)**

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## EMMANUEL – CASE STUDY



**Name:** Emmanuel

**Location:** Malawi

**Project:** Giving Sight to Blind Children in Africa

Emmanuel is from Malawi and has been a -16.00D myope since birth.

Emmanuel was educated in a program for 'blind' children where he spent 3 years in first grade, and then 2 years each in every other grade.

That was until he was sent to an eye clinic where he received his first pair of glasses – aged 14 years old.

He then had a couple of good years where he sailed through his grades – but then he lost his glasses – and had to wait 3 years until he could be “rescued” a second time.

Thanks to some additional support from the International Centre for Eyecare Education Emmanuel is now studying to be an accountant.

According to Optometry Giving Sight's partners, there were 120 children in Malawi in the program for blind children but only 7 of the children were **permanently** blind.

There are 400,000 children just like Emmanuel throughout Africa – children who just need access to an eye examination and a pair of glasses to lead full and productive lives.



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## FLORENCE – CASE STUDY



**Name:** Florence

**Location:** Magwaveni on the outskirts of Durban, South Africa

**Project:** 'Vision for a Country: The National Refractive Error Program for South Africa'

**Date:** May 2007

**Notes:** Madeleine Whiting met Florence while in South Africa for the ICEE World Congress on Refractive Error and Service Development

### **Case Study:**

Florence is a 65-year-old mother of eight children, who had never had her eyes examined. Florence's husband had been shot dead in front of the family many years ago and two of her children had also recently died leaving her to look after five grandchildren. For this she received a government grant but it was not enough.

After locally trained optometrists provided Florence with +2.50 glasses she said, "I see well, I see very well and I am happy. It looks much brighter and much clearer. I didn't know what I was going to do because I had no money to check eyes. Thank you."

The problem for people like Florence is that while 85% of the population in South Africa relies on public health care; only 2% of optometrists work in the public sector. This means there are only around 50 optometrists to meet the needs of 38 million mainly poor people living in rural areas. Can you imagine having 760,000 patients? Most of those people have never seen an eye care professional. In fact 80% of school-going children with uncorrected refractive error do not have the glasses they need, they struggle through school and of course their future is severely restricted – simply for lack of an eye examination and a pair of glasses.

The 'Vision for a Country: The National Refractive Error Program for South Africa' project is one of Optometry Giving Sight's priority programs. Donations from optometrists and their patients will be used to help fund the development of 24 new clinics throughout the country. It is estimated that nearly 100,000 additional people will have access to services once these sites are fully operational. Longer term, the program will achieve sustainability through training of primary eye care personnel, the establishment of outreach clinics and eye care delivery systems, and the distribution and sale of affordable spectacles.



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## JOHN MGALAMADZI – CASE STUDY



**Name:** John Mgalamadzi

**Age:** 15 years old

**Location:** Malawi

**Project:** Giving Sight to Blind Children in Africa

John Mgalamadzi was 15 years old and attended the Bangwe Primary school in Limbe, a town near the Malawian capital, Blantyre, when we met him.

John is part of an integrated schools program for children who are vision impaired. However, the problems that John experience are simply the result of not having glasses, or, uncorrected refractive error.

John's performance at school was below average and he had repeated a year. He was reliant on the help of his teachers to read and to explain what was on the chalkboard, he said: "I was very interested in school but when I had my eye problem, it was difficult even for me to improve. It is difficult for me to see on the chalkboard when the teacher is writing".

John's mother Lucy said: "At first we did not realise he had a problem with his eyes but when he reached the age of ten we asked him to buy some things. I remember it clearly, the way he looked at the change he brought back it made me realise that my child has problems with his eyes."

The 'Giving Sight to Blind Children' program provided John with an eye examination and a pair of glasses. "My life has changed because in class I have improved because I see enough. I'm very happy because so many things which I can't see, I will now see."

John wants to be an engineer when he finishes school. In the same year he received glasses, he improved so greatly that he was able to begin attending the Bangwe Secondary School.

Studies show that in Malawi, of the 4 million children of school-going age, there are 6,000 children who are blind; 13,000 children who have low vision and 30,000 children who have refractive errors.

Only 10 % of these vision impaired children are at school.

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## THOKOZANI – CASE STUDY



**Name:** Thokozani  
**Age:** 13 years old  
**Location:** Malawi  
**Project:** Giving Sight to Blind Children in Africa

Thokozani was 13 years old when we met him. He attended the Lunzu Primary School where his academic performance was below average.

“I have problems at school with vision when I sit far away from the

chalkboard, and the problems I have at home are when someone is sitting far away.”

Thokozani's teacher said, “They get problems to see clearly on the chalkboard and the same applies when they are using text books. Whenever they are writing notes from the chalkboard they always write slowly because of their problems to see clearly on the chalkboard. So they are the last pupils in the class to finish writing their notes. And this makes the classroom situation very difficult.”

Thokozani is part of an integrated schools program for children who are vision impaired. However, the problems that Thokozani experienced were the result of not having glasses, or, uncorrected refractive error.

The “Giving Sight to Blind Children” program provided Thokozani with an eye examination and a pair of glasses. “I would like to thank those who gave me these glasses and this should not end with me but it should continue with others who are going to benefit from this program because without you it would not have been possible to get help.”

Thokozani plans to be an electrician. After receiving glasses, he improved at school and now attends the Ntenjera Secondary School, where he is a keen member of the football team.

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Only 10% of these vision impaired children are at school.

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## TITUS MASIKA LUSIMBO – CASE STUDY



**Name:** Titus Masika Lusimbo

**Location:** Malawi

**Project:** Giving Sight to Blind Children in East Africa

Hassan Minto from Sight Savers International giving Titus an eye examination.

Photo courtesy of Sightsavers International.

Titus Masika Lusimbo is 10 years old and is +7.00 D in his right eye and +6.00 D in his left eye. Having lost both parents, Titus lives in a grass-thatched house with his ailing stepmother and siblings who survive on the limited produce they grow and sell. A year ago Titus dropped out of school.

Thanks to one of Optometry Giving Sight's priority projects, "Giving Sight to Blind Children", Titus is now the proud owner of a pair of glasses. The local program facilitators are also working with his school to get him back into the classroom, sitting close to the chalkboard, and developing a special education program for him. A pair of glasses and an education will change Titus' life.

Studies show that in Malawi, of the 4 million children of school-going age, there are 6,000 children who are blind; 13,000 children who have low vision and 30,000 children who have refractive errors.

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## VANITHA – CASE STUDY



**Name:** Vanitha  
**Location:** Sri Lanka  
**Project:** Vision Care Service Development

This is Vanitha, a 15-year old girl in Sri Lanka.

Nina Tehhan, a volunteer optometrist, examined Vanitha as part of the Optometry

Giving Sight funded Vision Care Service Development project.

One of the challenges confronting Nina was communication with her patient as there were not enough translators at this clinic for each optometrist.

As Nina went through the eye examination she kept putting stronger and stronger lenses in the trial frame and not getting a positive response from Vanitha. Nina guessed she must have been doing something wrong. Only when she saw tears streaming down Vanitha's face at -9.00 did she realize she was on the right track.

It turns out, Vanitha was a -10.00 myope and could only see about 10 centimetres (or about 4 inches) in front of her face. At 15 years old, and this was the first eye examination she had ever had in her life.

Over recent months the fighting in Sri Lanka has become progressively worse which has prevented teams of optometrists travelling to train local eye care professionals. Yet the work is still continuing thanks to the local eye care professionals who have already been trained. Since 2004 more than 33,000 Sri Lankans have had their eyes tested and 28,000 have received eye care and glasses – thanks to funds raised by Optometry Giving Sight and others.