

# IUSO Community Outreach Report - Annual VOSH Campaign in Guanajuato, Mexico

*Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity  
Indiana University School of Optometry*

## 2986 Adults and Children Examined During 2006 Campaign

The Indiana University School of Optometry Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH) Chapter has completed another successful campaign in Guanajuato, Mexico this year.

The campaign, which took place from March 4 to March 11, provides eye care to residents of Guanajuato city and surrounding communities in the state of Guanajuato. This year, a group of 14 optometric professionals, as well as 37 students from the Indiana University School of Optometry worked together to see a total of 2986 individuals in need of eye care.

Common findings during this year's campaign included uncorrected refractive errors, advanced cataracts, uncontrolled diabetes with associated retinopathy, large refractive errors in children, and hypertension in adults. Patients were referred to onsite ophthalmology and general medical ser-

VICES as appropriate. Additionally, patients in need of further eye care were also referred to Dr. Jennifer Page, O.D. at the IU School of Optometry's Guanajuato clinic.

Patients were dispensed glasses from a stock that was brought from the Lion's Club Eyeglass and Medical Equipment Recycling, Inc. facility in Upland, Indiana. Before leaving for Guanajuato, VOSH students created a computer inventory of the glasses, which was then used to select the closest match for the patient.

For the first time, a sepa-

rate clinic was set up during the campaign to cater to the needs of children between the age of birth and 12. Drs. Melissa Rice, Janice Ngan, and Danielle Warren were responsible for transforming the idea behind this clinic into reality.



Guanajuato, Mexico

### This Year's Numbers

- 2986 total examinations
- 368 children examinations
- 1810 adult distance glasses dispensed
- 400 reading glasses dispensed
- 174 children's glasses dispensed
- 84 optometry appointments made for children
- 296 optometry appointments made for adults.

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## New Optometry Clinic to Open Soon

The Guanajuato Eye Care Center (GECC) in Guanajuato, Mexico was designed to meet the eye care needs of the indigent living in Guanajuato and its neighboring communities. The development of the clinic occurred as a result of a longstanding, successful partnership between the IUSO Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH) organization and the state of Guanajuato's Development of the Family (DIF) department. In the fall and winter of

1999, clinic space in the General Hospital of Guanajuato was remodeled, providing four examination rooms, a special testing area, a reception area, dispensing space and an office. The clinic was formally dedicated in February of 2000. Since that time, clinic operations have grown, and the demand for services has steadily increased.

In the fall of 2005 ground was broken for a new free-standing

eye clinic outside of Guanajuato. The clinic, a partnership between DIF and IUSO, will be equipped with 12 exam rooms and a surgical suite. Dr. Jennifer Page, O.D. will continue as director of the clinic, and a resident will be added to the staff. IUSO will also continue to provide student interns to help meet the needs of the local population.

It is expected that the clinic will officially open in fall of 2006.

## Student Volunteers Provide Heart and Muscle for Campaign

As always, students from the IUSO VOSH chapter are responsible for performing most of the hard work during the annual campaign. Kudos are therefore due to the following:

### Fourth Year Students

Josh Conner  
Gina Borghini  
Julie Ferguson  
Lori Henderson  
Ryan Palmer  
Eric Reinhard  
Emily Smith  
Jason Wallace

### Third Year Students

Rachel Davis  
Michelle Frye  
Jessica Goeken  
Mary Kutch  
Heidi Lichtenberg  
Amanda Long  
Jackie Marsteller  
Breezy Moyer  
Kristen Rabaut  
Maricela Salgado  
Becky Schmitt  
Meghan Teske  
Ben Usleman

### Second Year Students

Laryn Adams  
Jon Bradley

Angie Buchanan  
Diana Christensen  
Jen Heil  
Elizabeth Jones  
Hilary Morrow  
Lacy Moser  
Shanda Ross  
Tessa Schlickbernd  
Melissa Schroeder  
Ryan Wiggins

### First Year Students

Alison Burd  
Roxana De La Rosa  
Neka Hafezzadeh  
Valerie Harmon  
Stacy Stiegelbauer



2006 VOSH Volunteers

## Professional Staff Travels from All Over North America

The professional staff this year came primarily from the Indiana University School of Optometry. However, there were plenty of former VOSH students who have since graduated who traveled from all over North America to take part in this year's campaign.

Included in this group are:

Pam Gondry, Opt. Tech. (IUSO)  
Doug Horner, O.D., Ph.D. (IUSO)

Stephanie Klemencic, O.D. (IUSO, current disease resident)  
Victor Malinovsky, O.D. (IUSO)  
Janice Ngan, O.D. (Private practice, Seattle, Washington)  
Jennifer Page, O.D. (IUSO, Guanajuato Clinic)  
Jeff Perotti, O.D., M.S. (IUSO)  
Melissa Rice, O.D. (Mayo Clinic, Minnesota)  
Ed Schneider, O.D. (Private

practice, Indiana)  
Valerie Sharpe, O.D. (Indian Health Service, New Mexico)  
Dean Van Nasdale, O.D. (IUSO, current Ph.D. student)  
Neel Vyas, O.D. (Private practice, Toronto, Canada)  
Danielle Warren, O.D. (IUSO, current Ph.D. student)  
Graeme Wilson, O.D., Ph.D. (IUSO)



## 2006 First Time for Special Children's Campaign

This year marked the advent of a special pediatric campaign within the auspices of the yearly Guanajuato campaign.

Three optometrists (Drs. Janice Ngan, Melissa Rice, and Danielle Warren) and three fourth year students (Julie Ferguson, Lori Henderson, and Jason Wallace) led the first-time pediatric campaign. The idea for this special campaign started with a conversation between Dr. Rice and Drs. Jennifer Page and

Douglas Horner last year at the annual ARVO meeting. Initial plans called for a separate endeavor; however, it was eventually decided to merge it with the annual VOSH mission, which worked out wonderfully.

During the course of the week, 368 children were examined. All children had their visual acuity, motility, alignment, refractive error, and ocular health examined. Patients were dilated as necessary for cyclople-

gic refractions and fundus examination. 174 spectacles were dispensed and 74 return appointments were scheduled with the IU Guanajuato Clinic for conjunctivitis, vision therapy, or amblyopia follow-ups.

It was an extremely busy and enjoyable week, one which provided valuable care to the children we saw. We hope to continue to include the pediatric mission as an annual part of the larger VOSH campaign.



Participants in the new children's campaign

## Dr. Graeme Wilson Explores Discomfort in Pterygium Patients

Patients in Guanajuato have a high prevalence of pterygium due to an altitude of around 6000 feet, the beautiful blue sky, and an outdoor lifestyle. The resultant exposure to ultraviolet radiation results in changes to the ocular surface that are commonly accompanied by discomfort. To examine this we developed a Spanish version of an English questionnaire designed by Dr. Carolyn Begley to evaluate symptoms in dry eye patients. Questions were asked about sensations of discomfort, such as dryness, sandiness, hotness and itchiness, and about envi-

ronmental sources of irritation such as smoke, cigarette smoke, dust, wind, and sun.

Pterygium is a useful model because it is easier to stage disease progression than it is in dry eye. The pterygium stages ranged from localized minor disturbances of the nasal conjunctiva to compound pterygium where growth occurs from both sides of the cornea. The results from VOSH 2005 showed that women report more discomfort than men. Because we think this is an important result we ran the experiment again during VOSH 2006, but this time with a woman asking the questions.

The results were very similar.

In reviewing the eye literature we were unable to find reports comparing discomfort in men and women. Yet, for many surface disorders, pain is the symptom that drives patients to seek professional help. Our finding was independent of the gender of the questioner. Several factors could be operating here, but it is clear that the gender of the patient is a major factor in determining ocular surface discomfort. This finding can probably be generalized to other ocular surface discomfort.



Dr. Graeme Wilson

## Dr. Dean Van Nasdale Uses SLO to Image Diabetic Retinal Changes

Dean VanNasdale, O.D., a former resident in the IUSO Contact Lens program who is currently working on his Ph.D. at the school, made his first trip to Guanajuato this March.

Prior to his arrival in Guanajuato, a TopSS scanning laser ophthalmoscope (SLO) was shipped across the border to the Guanajuato clinic. While there, he used the SLO to ob-

tain images of pathological retinal features in 60 diabetic patients.

His involvement in the campaign is part of a research project with Dr. Ann Elsner of the Indiana University School of Optometry whose focus is using imaging technology to detect and quantify early pathological diabetic changes, with implications for potential future tele-

medicine projects.

This is also an excellent opportunity to ensure that those in Guanajuato receive the best medical care possible. The SLO was left behind at the IUSO Guanajuato clinic, and is being used to help identify, diagnose and guide the treatment of retinal pathologies.



Drs. Dean Van Nasdale (left), Neel Vyas, Stephanie Klemencic, Valerie Sharpe, Michelle Frye and Vic Malinovsky

## DIF Graciously Thanks IUSO VOSH with Celebratory Banquet

As has become the custom under the current leadership of DIF, IUSO participants were honored with a celebratory banquet after the five days of the campaign. The leadership of DIF including Sra. Faffie Siekman de Romero (Presidenta de DIF Estatal), Jose Cruces Carrillo (Director General de DIF Estatal) and Dr. Tomas Valenzuela Hernandez (Director de Asistencia a Personas con

Discapacidad) recognized all the campaign participants with dinner, certificates of appreciation and gifts of local hand-made pottery. Sr. Cruces suggested that since 2002 over 10,000 people have been helped through the campaign portion of IUSO's activities. The event was particularly poignant because, with a six year one term tenure for the governor of the state of Guanajuato, a new

state government will be taking over in the fall and it is likely that some of our friends in the top leadership of DIF maybe moving on.

Entertainment for the evening was provided by Estudiantina de Guanajuato, a fifteen piece band specializing in traditional local music.



*Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity  
Indiana University School of Optometry*

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*The Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity chapter of Indiana University School of Optometry (IUSO-VOSH) was established in 1980 .*

*The organization serves the community of Bloomington and surrounding areas as well as any other underserved areas of the world in need of quality optometric services. The organization visits local nursing homes one to two times per semester to adjust, repair and clean glasses for the residents. We also attend community health fairs to provide education on the benefits of yearly eye exams and the diseases and problems that can be detected by doing so. As a group, IUSO-VOSH chapter walks yearly in America's Walk for Diabetes in Bloomington and has been the leading fundraiser and largest team for the past few years in raising funds for the fight for a cure for diabetes.*

*IUSO-VOSH's largest humanitarian effort is a annual mission trip to Guanajuato, Mexico in March. IUSO-VOSH fundraises throughout the school year in order to raise fund for approximately 30 students to travel to Mexico with 10 optometrists. IUSO-VOSH works with the Department of Infants & Families in Guanajuato to execute a weeklong campaign where approximately 2,500 people receive free eye exams and donated glasses.*

Current VOSH Officers	
President	Angie Buchanan
Vice President	Jennifer Heil
Treasurer	Ryan Wiggins
Secretary	Nadine Shelton

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## How Can You Help?

As construction of a new, free-standing clinic nears completion, we ask you to give money. Lots of it. Put it in a crate, and we'll have it shipped (illegally!) across the border. Thank you!

Of course, the previous paragraph is a joke. On a more serious note, construction of the new Guanajuato Eye Care Center is already underway but we are still in need of donations for clinical equipment, lens stocks, and a GECC dedicated resident.

The 2007 VOSH campaign will take place from March 3 to March 10. Donations are also needed to acquire greatly discounted sunglasses and prescription eyeglasses from the Muncie Lion's Club Recycling

Center. These glasses are offered free-of-charge to those patients in Guanajuato who could not normally afford them.

If you would like to discuss ways you can support our outreach efforts in Guanajuato, Mexico, please contact Helene Laufasa using the information below:

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**Construction of the new clinic is on track for a fall 2006 dedication**