

Good News

SONOMA ASHRAM

Spring 2023

Quarterly news about our charitable initiatives in Varanasi, India

Thanks to the generosity of our friends around the world, we have been providing eye care, prescription glasses and surgical correction to underserved communities.

Vision Varanasi: Giving the Gift of Sight

Our cherished benefactor, the late English Dr. Ivor Wolfe, founded Vision Varanasi 16 years ago. He began seeing patients in a one-room clinic at our Bal Ashram safe home. Every year, he stayed several months to perform checkups and distribute glasses. Inspired by the teachings of the Ashram to do good in the world, he raised funds to construct a modest surgical hospital next to Bal Ashram that opened in 2015.



The poor often resign themselves to living with vision impairment and eye disease. Vision Varanasi medical teams examine and treat people at our hospital for free or on a sliding scale. Regular clinics open to the public teach preventive eye care to avoid injury and disease.

Compromised vision can cripple a child's education. Vision Varanasi conducts onsite eye exams at area schools and finds that almost 25% of children examined need and are given glasses.

We can provide 10 pairs of prescription glasses for only \$40.

Nearly 50% of childhood blindness is preventable. Cataract is the leading treatable cause of blindness in children. Half of all cataracts are due to lack of proper nutrition and available eye care.

Donors fund cataract surgery, which costs \$85 at our hospital.



Restored sight is a miracle and lifts the burden of care from the family.



Mobile Eye Care and Health Clinic

Rural Varanasi is full of dust, pollutants and humidity. Working the fields under these and other unhygienic conditions can damage eyes. Most villagers have never seen a doctor nor had a health screening.

Every week, our mobile team—equipped with an ambulance full of medical supplies and glasses—travels to a village within a 60-mile radius of our Varanasi eye hospital. At times, we also visit urban slums.



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नोट: प्रत्येक माह के हफ्ते हफ्ते



Each year, we go to more than 75 villages, check the eyesight of close to 11,000 people, provide 4,000 prescription glasses and bring 400 patients to our hospital for surgery.

The team sets up camp and screens patients. We provide onsite treatment for injuries, diabetic eye disease, infections and other conditions, as well as distribute glasses. For other procedures such as cataract surgery that must be performed at our hospital, our doctors identify candidates and schedule appointments.

Each camp costs \$100.



“I grew up at Bal Ashram and began helping in the eye clinic when I was very young. Early on, I realized how important clear vision is for someone’s life. The joy in people’s faces when they put on glasses for the first time inspired me to become an optometrist.”

Shiva Shivam, Optometry and Field Operations Manager

Your generosity makes a difference.

To donate, please mail a check to Sonoma Ashram, PO Box 950,
Sonoma, CA 95476 or visit www.sonomaashram.org/donations

For more information, call 707-996-8915 or email info@sonomaashram.org

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