

Share the Gift of Vision

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www.eevisioncare.com

We usually take our eyes for granted. However, when we consider our blessings, most of us would place vision toward the top of the list. Perhaps you know someone who needs assistance?

Listed are a few of the many worthwhile organizations which deliver the precious gift of vision to others locally and worldwide. (Please do your own research before donating to any charity.)

In America, most of us stash our old glasses away, sensing they have some intrinsic value but not knowing where to donate. Eagle Eye Vision Care in Woodinville is among the eye offices which accept pre-owned glasses for third world countries. In these countries glasses are shared amongst as many as a dozen people, each "owning" the glasses for a week at a time. Prescriptions do not have to be exact to be highly valued. Recipients' visual needs are often less demanding than ours but imagine the pleasure of seeing your child's face, a distant mountain, or a prayer book for the first time.

Locally, the Seattle Lighthouse (www.seattlelighthouse.org) is a private, not-for-profit agency providing employment, support, and training opportunities for people who are blind, Deaf-Blind, and blind with other disabilities. The Lighthouse has provided employment and support to blind people in our community since 1918.

VOSH, Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (www.vosh.org), sends volunteer optometrists to perform eye examinations and hand out glasses to rural America and third world countries. Doctors pay for the trip themselves as well as donating many hours to sort glasses and procure supplies. Nicaragua has been of special interest as it is one of the most underserved areas in Latin America.

Many organizations exist for delivering surgical eye care throughout remote areas of the world. ORBIS, (www.orbis.org) otherwise known as the Flying Eye Hospital, transports eye surgeons and nurses to Bangladesh, Ethiopia, China, and India. Priority is given to children and those blind in both eyes. Education is an important facet with local doctors learning techniques and performing the follow-up care.

Guide-Dogs for the Blind (www.guidedogs.com) trains companion animals to serve the blind. The school has increased companionship and independence for more than 2,000 blind men and women. Both dogs and potential owners receive evaluation and training at a lovely facility. The services are offered free of charge, and, thanks to supporters, without government financial aid.

While no one wants to think about death, the passing of one person can mean a new life for another. Donate Life America (www.donatelife.net), assists in mobilizing the transplant community to educate the American public about organ, eye, and tissue donation and motivate them to register as donors. DLA is comprised of national organizations and 50 state teams across the United States. There is no artificial substitute for the human cornea. Corneal transplants have a success rate of approximately 95%.

Vision is such a blessing. Please consider offering the gift of vision to someone else.