

S.V.O.S.H.

STUDENT VOLUNTEER OPTOMETRIC SERVICES TO HUMANITY

Fall 2019—Newsletter

What is SVOSH?

SVOSH, the student branch of Michigan VOSH (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity), is a non-profit, volunteer organization operating exclusively to help provide vision care to those in areas of the world that would otherwise not receive such care.



(VOSH-MI Dominica #25, January 2019)

Last year Michigan VOSH/FCO went on several mission trips, with Michigan College of Optometry (MCO) students joining them on at least four trips. In addition to the students, the mission trips included MCO faculty optometrists, alumni, and other volunteers. Thanks to their efforts, we averaged *well over 1,000 eye exams* were performed and *approximately 1,000 glasses were dispensed* to needy individuals *on each mission!* Hundreds more were given eye medication and/or referred for other medical eye care including treatment for vision threatening diseases (glaucoma) and corrective surgeries (cataracts).

Where did we go in 2018/2019?

- ❖ 7 MCO Interns went to Dominica
- ❖ 8 MCO Interns went to Honduras
- ❖ 10 MCO Interns went to Mexico
- ❖ Others went to Kenya
- ❖ Others went to Ukraine (FCO)
(Fellowship of Christian Optometrists)

Where are we going in 2019-2020?

- ❖ Kenya
- ❖ Dominica
- ❖ Mexico
- ❖ Honduras
- ❖ Guatemala
- ❖ FCO Trips other

2019-2020 Officers

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IMAGINE NOT SEEING THIS

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Unfortunately, this is a reality for millions of people worldwide.

Our vision affects our ability to work, go to school, and function in society. These are all important parts of daily life that most of us take for granted. In the USA the number one cause of legal blindness is eye disease. In contrast, the number one cause of legal blindness in many third world nations is simply the lack of proper eyeglasses.

THERE IS A SOLUTION... THERE IS HOPE... WITH YOUR HELP!

SVOSH (Student Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity) is a charitable and educational organization that strives to provide eye care and eyewear to portions of the world that would otherwise receive no care at all. Our organization is made up of optometry students that donate their time collecting and preparing used eyeglasses to be taken on both homeland and overseas missions, where they assist with eye examinations and eyeglass distribution. We have been providing this service for over 20 years and in that time have distributed thousands of used eyeglasses and have helped thousands more accomplish what so many of us take for granted.

How can you Help?

- We always welcome donations (tax deductible) to help fund our missions
- Eyeglasses are key to the success of our missions
- We are always in need of more!!
- Spread the word! While you may not be able to assist us at this time, please let others know about us so they can help too.



If you can help in any way, please contact us (MI-VOSH/SVOSH) @ (231)-591-2193.

We will be happy to provide you with more information about our organization.

Check out our SVOSH web page (just link off the MCO web page—www.ferris.edu/mco)

Also check out the VOSH International web site @ www.VOSH.org.

Or visit www.VOSH-Michigan.org

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Together we can help the world to see.

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Ferris State University
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Big Rapids, MI 49307*

What happens to glasses sent to SVOSH?

Donated glasses are first sorted and categorized by members of the Michigan College of Optometry SVOSH. This work is part of the volunteer time required in order for the students to participate in a SVOSH mission. The sorting process involves disposing of unusable glasses, lenses, and frames (see list below). Usable glasses are further categorized as male, female, child, sun, reader and specialty glasses. Many glasses then go to various in state and out of state locations to be cleaned, sorted by prescription, and labeled as part of service club programs. Finally, mission leaders select the glasses most appropriate for their mission, and the glasses are packaged and shipped to the mission location. Each mission trip takes about 6,000 pairs of Rx glasses/readers and suns!



What do we need?

Sunglasses - Sunglasses, both Plano (no prescription) and prescription, are always needed. These are given to all patients receiving an exam. Many of our mission trips are to locations near the equator, where UV rays from the sun can cause significant damage to the eyes. For these residents, our sunglasses may be the only source of UV protection available to them.

Glasses in good condition - Men's, women's, and children's glasses are all in high demand. Broken frames and/or damaged lenses are disposed of. If in doubt - donate!

Children's frames - Glasses and frames for children are always in short supply. Because of the need, we have optical companies who will make lenses to match the frame if it does not currently have lenses.

Readers/bifocals - As readily available as readers are in the United States, they are a precious commodity in the places we visit. When local residents gradually lose their ability to focus near due to the natural aging processes, they are forced to give up reading and traditional handicrafts.

Antique or gold - We accept all antique or gold glasses regardless of the condition. These are sold for the gold content or as antiques. The money generated is used to help fund the mission trips.

Eyeglass cases - Due to shipping costs, only cases that are clean and in good condition are actually taken on mission trips.