



Eliminating Avoidable Blindness in Latin America & Haiti



Christian J. Wurst, Jr.

"Someday, no one in Latin America or the Caribbean Basin, especially a child, will suffer avoidable blindness from a lack of essential eye care."



Guatemala 2006

Often described as the "heart and soul" of **Vision for the Poor**, Chris Wurst was deeply moved by the suffering he saw during his first mission trips with **Vision for the Poor** eye care teams in the Peten Rainforest region of Guatemala. It was there he felt he could give something back to the Latin American and Caribbean Basin countries that helped his successful coffee business thrive.

In 1993, Chris and a **Vision for the Poor** medical team visited a young American missionary named Vincent Pescatore and his wife, Zulena, to examine and treat residents of the Peten rainforest region of Guatemala out of a temporary clinic in the couple's orphanage. He and the team witnessed people streaming in for care from across El Peten, a region the size of New Jersey, which then had but one paved road and 500,000 indigenous residents.

In the crowd an elderly man appeared with his two sons who had carried him countless miles in hope and desperation for two days to reach the clinic. "I could tell right away we would not be able to help him," recounted Dr. Douglas Vilella in a subsequent interview with *Faith* magazine. "He had dense cataracts and we were not prepared to offer surgery."

"I need you to build an eye clinic," said Pescatore. Chris's team responded and the mission that still drives **Vision for the Poor** "...to build sustainable eye clinics..." was born. Since then, Chris has served as the organization's first and most prolific philanthropist. His voluntary giving extends beyond financial resources to the challenging and tedious details of receiving, packing and shipping equipment and supplies from vendors and donors. For over 20 years, he has given **Vision for the Poor** use of his US-based business loading dock, personally detailing and checking every manifest list and taking responsibility for successful delivery.

Closest to his heart remain the people he has served on over 53 mission trips across seven Latin American and Caribbean Basin countries, where he acts as an optician, dispensing hundreds of eyeglasses in any given week. "Chris is a very humble man," says Dr. Mariano Yee: "A hard worker, a good friend, a brother." "Chris is the first pious person I can say I know," agrees Linda Boss. "He is full of amazing grace."

Across Latin America and the Caribbean Basin, too many men, women and children wait in darkness for the gift of sight. Please help Chris Wurst and Vision for the Poor ensure that they receive it.

1990 - Drs. Dave McPhillips and Jack Hauler form Volunteer Optometric Service to Humanity of Pennsylvania (VOSH/PA) with support from Larry and Ruth Hauler.



1991 - The first of Chris Wurst's 53 mission trips to date. With VOSH/PA in Etzatlan, Mexico he gets on-the-job eye glasses dispensing training.

1993 - Chris Wurst and the VOSH/PA team meet American missionaries Vincent and Zulena Pescatore who are building orphanages in Guatemala's Peten rainforest.



Vincent & Zulena Pescatore

1996 - Vincent Pescatore dies in a plane crash with his brother-in-law Wayne Schultheis and Scott Kamp en route to build a new Honduran orphanage. Fundraising begins to build first eye clinic. Chris Wurst personally finances a significant portion.



1995 - Vincent Pescatore invites VOSH/PA to build its first eye clinic. VOSH/PA changes mission statement to include new eye clinic development.



Giving the Gift of Sight

Most well-intentioned efforts to provide essential services for the poorest people on earth are characterized by lack of organization, no long-term planning, and unsustainable direct care missions. Eye care in neighboring Latin America and the Central Caribbean Basin was no exception until **Vision for the Poor** set course in 1995 to serve people like Guillermo Monroy Pixton (age 48) and his seven-year-old daughter, Yenni – both suffering avoidable blindness – by creating a privately funded model now recognized by the International Eye Foundation (IEF) as “a highly productive and financially sustainable eye clinic serving all levels of society...”

Experience managing our first permanent eye clinic from 1995 to 2002 led to the founding of two more clinics in Guatemala, named Visualiza. There – not far from the

two-room home with a dirt floor that he shared with his wife and six children – Guillermo first appeared, blinded by cataracts and reliant on his youngest daughter, Yenni, to lead the way. Yenni’s own sight measured 8 diopters of myopia, causing severe learning limitations at school. At Visualiza, Guillermo received sight-saving cataract surgery, restoring his vision and his vocation; Yenni got new glasses and improved grades!

Visualiza reached full financial sustainability in 2008 and was successfully replicated in two additional countries: Cap Haitian, Haiti, and Managua, Nicaragua. Together, our five treatment centers are expected to serve at least 93,000 of the poorest people on earth

every year. They are accessible to 8 million individuals like Guillermo and Yenni and employ 110 local residents.

Christian J. Wurst was our first significant philanthropist. His investments of money and time built the foundation on which Vision for the Poor now stands. From here we see on our horizon 14 more eye clinics in partnership with the IEF SightReach® Management program. These new clinics will expand sustainable operations into Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru.

The Vision for the Poor eye clinic in the Peten region of Guatemala has reduced the prevalence of cataract blindness from 9.5% of the over 50 age group in 1997 to less than 1% in 2010 by performing more than 13,000 cataract surgeries.

Combined with clinics already in operation, we will be accessible to 40 million men, women and children in the developing world. We need your help to put these new self-sustaining eye clinics in place.

Why Latin America and the Caribbean Basin?

Unlike most of the developed world, these countries offer few social service eye care options for extremely large populations who live in unimaginable, abject poverty. In addition, 75 percent of the

world’s blindness is avoidable and 90 percent of visually impaired people live in developing countries. Further, 90 percent of all blindness in the world is caused by treatable conditions left unexamined: cataracts, glaucoma, uncorrected refractive error and diabetic eye disease. Finally, **Vision for the Poor** success in reaching and maintaining financial sustainability across all of our eye clinics offers an opportunity for other

medical disciplines to follow suit, with positive implications for the future of health care in the developing world.

Why Vision for the Poor?

You may feel uncertain about whether eye clinic expansion of this magnitude will require greater non-profit bureaucracy, leading to higher management costs that may diminish the impact of your gift. In other words, you want assurance that your gifts really do provide direct relief to individuals and families in need. Many benefactors have done their research and given generously because:

- All of our board directors volunteer their time and make annual financial contributions. **Vision for the Poor’s** administrative expenses are consistently less than 6% per year.



Yenni and Guillermo

I love this charity with all of my heart. They see a need for eye care in Latin America, address it, and go straight to the people that need them the most. No bureaucracy. Plus they empower the locals to step up and take part in helping themselves and their community.

Cathy Brown
Mendoza, Argentina

1997 - First eye clinic established in an old Peten region home with two Guatemalan ophthalmologists, two nurses, and one assistant. Chris Wurst ships first container to equip this clinic. First surgeries performed by Drs. Antonio Hernandez and Mariano Yee.



1999 - First corneal transplants performed.



Yesinia – first pediatric congenital cataract surgery patient

2001 - International Eye Foundation (IEF) and MacArthur Fellow David Green partner with VOSH/PA and Guatemalan doctors to build second eye clinic in Guatemala City. IEF and David Green implement sustainable social enterprise model.

2002 - Dr. Hernando open third in Jutiapa Guatemala

Clinic named Vincent Pescatore Eye Clinic in honor of Vincent.



1998 - Outreach to more remote regions made possible by donation of first vehicle by Geraldine Hawkins. Lions and Rotary Foundations support growth of project with grants.

2000 - General Anesthesia donated by Dick Sanford, making pediatric surgery possible. Danellie Foundation funds first pediatric surgeries.

First **Climb for Sight** fundraiser to Mt. Kilimanjaro organized by Charles “Lucky” Patton.



CHRISTIAN J. WURST LEGACY SOCIETY

What We Are Asking

Help Chris Build A Legacy Through Annual and Planned Gifts

Annual gifts

Emergency funding for free eye surgery and glasses for all indigent children until we build an endowment large enough to cover these costs outright

- Meet other emergency costs like repairing and replacing eye care equipment at existing clinic sites.
- Fund the development of new eye clinics until estate gifts are available.

Planned gifts

Fund our Children's Eye Care Endowment

- Build or renovate more sustainable eye care clinics.
- Keep in mind that both your annual and planned gifts go much further in a developing country economy. The cost for one child's eye surgery is \$200. The cost to build, staff and open one fully operational, sustainable eye clinic in Latin America or the Caribbean Basin is \$400,000. Funding all 14 of our planned clinic sites will amount to \$5.6 million, a reasonable and achievable goal.

Join Chris!

Support Vision for the Poor:

- Recognized by the International Eye Foundation and the World Health Organization as a model provider.
- Offering services accessible to eight million people in three developing countries with a feasible plan to expand that reach to 40 million people in 10 developing countries.
- A track record of success since 1990.

If there was ever a time and place to make a meaningful financial contribution – through a personal legacy that will live on in perpetuity – it is with *Vision for the Poor* and the time to act is now!

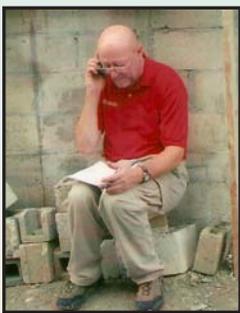


- **Vision for the Poor** leverages their resources with strategic partnerships with the IEF, the World Health Organization, Christian Blind Mission, Aravind Eye Hospital, Food for the Poor, Charity Vision and other significant partners to empower local eye doctors and build essential eye clinic infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean Basin.
- We establish a non-profit entity in each country that assumes ownership of each eye clinic we build. This assures that 100% of donations go directly to the project.
- All clinic operating expenses are covered through the administration of a sliding-fee scale payment system whereby adult patients served pay for their care in accordance with their ability to do so. The patients who have no means of payment receive free care.
- Each clinic employs local professionals, supporting the local economy and increasing accountability to patients.



As a philanthropist, I work hard to make sure that what I give is applied properly, is managed wisely and is sustainable. Vision for the Poor is a lean, focused, well-connected, accountable operation that offers an excellent return on investment. I only wish I could have funded more than one clinic!

*Nino Vaghi
Kensington, MD*



2005 - Computerized optical laboratories donated by Minard/Gallup Family. New low-cost glasses now made in one hour, eliminating need for recycled glasses.

2006 - Lavelle Fund for the Blind grant provides first school-based vision screening ever in Guatemala. In first year, 35,000 children are screened by Visualiza clinic team. VOSH takes first trips to Haiti. Develop relationship with Dr. Guerline Roney. New clinic in Haiti planned.

Support to
andez to
eye clinic
region of

2003 - Guatemala City clinic receives NGO status. Project now called Visualiza founded by Nico Yee, Kimberly Wiedman-Yee and Mariano Yee. Peten eye clinic construction begins. Chris Wurst manages project funding.

2004 - New Pescatore eye clinic completed in the Peten.



New glasses!



2007 - Visualiza clinic achieves sustainability for operating costs using the IEF social enterprise model. Staff grows to 70 employees, including 4 ophthalmologists and 2 optometrists.



Visualiza

The Clinics are Self-Sustaining: Why Do We Need Your Financial Support?

While clinic operational costs are covered on a sliding-fee-scale for service basis, the start-up financial capital needed to build or renovate new clinic sites that will replicate these services throughout Latin America and the Caribbean Basin must be raised. In addition, while we ask adults to pay for eye services on this sliding-fee scale according to their income, we insist that all indigent children receive eye care for free via funding provided by an endowment established to ensure that this promise is kept at every current and future clinic site.

New Clinics Funding

- \$400,000 The cost to build, staff and open one fully operational, sustainable eye clinic in Latin America or the Caribbean Basin, treating an average of 20,000 people every year.
- 14 Clinics Number of planned sites in partnership with the International Eye Foundation that will expand the **Vision for the Poor** sustainable eye clinic model across 10 Latin American and Caribbean Basin countries, increasing the number of individuals with access to these services from 8 million currently to 40 million in total.

\$5.6 million Private Funding Required

Clinic naming opportunities are available for gifts of \$250,000.

Other naming opportunities:

- \$100,000 to name an operating room where 5,000 sight-saving surgeries are performed every year
- \$ 50,000 to name an exam and treatment room serving 20,000 people every year
- \$ 50,000 to name the laser room to treat 2,000 people each year
- \$ 50,000 to name an optical lab, providing free and low-cost eyeglasses to 5,000 people annually
- \$ 25,000 to name clinic waiting room and administration areas

Children's Eye Care Endowment Funding

- \$150,000 750 sight-saving surgeries for materially poor children every year at \$200 each
- \$100,000 5,000 eye glasses for materially poor children every year at \$20 each
- \$250,000 Annual cost of care for materially poor children

\$5 million Private endowment funding principal needed to generate \$250,000 annually

Endowment naming opportunities are available for gifts of \$500,000 or more.



2009 - *Visualiza* clinic begins funding the education of 4 optometry students to promote optometry in Guatemala and plan for future staffing needs. Retina services added at *Visualiza*.

2012 - New eye clinic facilities are renovated in Cap Haitien, Haiti and Managua, Nicaragua. Combined **Vision for the Poor** clinics treat 53,000 patients per year.



2008 - VOSH/PA changes name to **Vision for the Poor** to reflect new mission of solely the development of new eye clinics. Chris Wurst assumes role of Treasurer while maintaining roles of shipping and receiving of all equipment, board director, and liaison to Haiti new clinic development.

Endowment established to assure funding of children in need of free eye glasses and surgery through the *Ventilatas de Luz (Little Windows of Light)* campaign.

2010 - New eye clinic planned for Managua, Nicaragua with IEF. Dr. Francisco Delgado is medical director. A Nicaraguan foundation is established.



To Discuss a Giving Opportunity:

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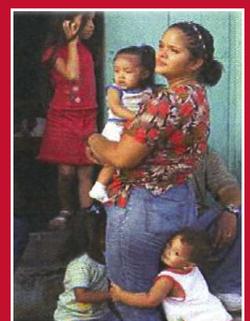
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Vision for the Poor is recognized by the IRS as a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization. The official registration and financial information of Vision for the Poor may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Visit www.visionforthe poor.org for state-specific charitable solicitation disclosures.



Checks payable/ Gifts assignable to:

Vision for the Poor
300 State Street
Erie, PA 16507

2013 & Beyond - New eye clinics in Haiti and Nicaragua open to provide access to eye care services to over two million people. Plans in place to expand access to eye care to 40 million of the poorest people in the Western Hemisphere.