

## INSIDE

|   |   |
|---|---|
| A Brighter Future: Francisca del Carmín-Escaléran .....                   | 3 |
| Lumbini Eye Institute's Surgical Team is 70% Female! .....                | 4 |
| Meet Claire McCabe—Constituent Development Coordinator at Seva .....      | 5 |
| Donor Highlight: Corey Smith .....  | 6 |
| Seva's Dr. Suzanne Gilbert Recognized with Dr. G. Venkataswamy Award..... | 7 |



# SPIRIT OF SERVICE

NEWSLETTER

## SEEING IS BELIEVING

### Seva Awarded Grants for Work in India and Cambodia Through Standard Chartered Bank's Seeing is Believing Initiative



Above: A woman has her sight restored through cataract surgery thanks to support from Seva donors.

Approximately 285 million people around the world today are blind or suffer from visual impairment; most live in developing countries. Yet, in eight out of ten cases, their blindness and low-vision can be prevented or treated with proven, cost effective interventions.

To reach the many people in need of eye care, Seva has been awarded two grants from Standard Chartered Bank's Seeing is Believing initiative.

While celebrating the Bank's 150-year anniversary in 2003, Standard Chartered employees were asked to decide on a charity initiative for the Bank to support. After recognizing the lack of quality eye health care in the developing world, Standard

Chartered employees overwhelmingly voted to raise funds to support blindness prevention programs. Seeing is Believing was born.

Through these grants, Seeing is Believing supports key Seva initiatives to improve access to eye care in two countries: Cambodia and India.

In Cambodia, Seva and our partners are increasing the number of sight-saving cataract surgeries that take place across five districts with a total population of 3.6 million people. This work will also grow the community eye health outreach programs that provide examinations and glasses to people in need. The grant will support nine eye camps in rural areas that will provide screenings, surgeries and medical treatment to nearly 100,000 people. In addition, work done through this grant will focus on increasing access to eye care for women and girls who account for two-thirds of people who are needlessly blind worldwide.



Above: A woman has a vision test to determine her visual acuity.

Right: A woman has her eyes examined.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

### SEEING IS BELIEVING

In India, Seva is scaling comprehensive quality eye care services with a focus on capacity building, expanding work already underway through Seva's Global Sight Initiative. Currently, India has the highest population of people who are blind in the world—a staggering 12 million people. Over 60% are blind from cataract. Seva and six Global Sight Initiative mentor hospitals will work with 50 mentee

These 50 partner hospitals have the potential to serve almost 100 million people.

hospitals in 15 states across India to increase the number of sight-restoring surgeries provided by 50% over the next four years. This visionary goal will be achieved by working closely with partner hospitals to increase the quality and efficiency of eye care services, train key staff, strategically purchase new equipment and emphasize collecting and understanding hospital data to make better decisions. Most of the partner hospitals are positioned to serve low-resource communities that have a profound need for eye care services. These 50 partner hospitals have the potential to serve almost 100 million people.

The impact of Seva's grants through Seeing is Believing will forever change the landscape of eye care in these two countries.

We applaud the employees of Standard Chartered Bank for their very real commitment to ending global blindness through the Seeing is Believing



initiative. Together we are addressing the needless suffering caused by blindness and visual impairment right now, while developing long-term, permanent solutions to a major public health problem.

To learn more about Seva's sight programs, please visit [www.seva.org/sight](http://www.seva.org/sight)



## A BRIGHTER FUTURE: FRANCÍSCA DEL CARMÍN-ESCALÉRAN

**By the time Francisca celebrated her sixteenth birthday, her world had become blurry and difficult to navigate.**

"Little by little, I realized that my vision was going, until I could no longer see," she says, remembering the year she dropped out of high school because she was no longer able to read the board.

As her eyesight worsened, Francisca's self-confidence diminished. "My mother would ask me to go to the market, but for years I was too afraid to go outside by myself. I thought that something bad would happen to me."

Francisca lives in rural San Benito, Guatemala. Like many remote areas of Guatemala, San Benito has few resources and those who live there have difficulty accessing affordable eye care services. Visualiza, a long time partner of Seva is working to make eye care more accessible.

With only 2% of the country's ophthalmologists, Visualiza performs over 20% of Guatemala's total cataract surgeries—many of which are provided at low cost or for free, making services affordable for Guatemala's marginalized communities. Seva partners with Visualiza to provide outreach services to communities in need, including vision screening camps and transportation to Visualiza's outreach hospital for follow-up treatment or surgery.

Francisca's high school teacher kept in touch and convinced her to visit one of Visualiza's outreach screening camps to have her eyesight checked. There, she learned that she had a cataract and would require surgery to see clearly again.

With the encouragement of her mother and the outreach workers, Francisca overcame her fear of surgery. Seva donors covered the cost of travel to Visualiza's clinic for her and all of the other patients from the outreach camp who needed follow-up care.

"After the surgery, I could see very well—I could even see things that were far away!"

Now twenty-two years old, her self-confidence has improved dramatically in the months since her surgery. She is no longer afraid to leave the house and run errands by herself. This is a great relief to her mother, who says, "Life was so difficult without my daughter's help!"

"After the surgery, I could see very well—I could even see things that were far away!"

Francisca's future looks much brighter now that she can see clearly. "Now that my vision is corrected, I plan on returning to school to finish my studies."



Top: Francisca with her mother

Above, right: Francisca



The surgeon looks through her microscope. A small incision made, a cloudy lens carefully removed, a new lens inserted. It all happens in less than 15-minutes. The patient walks out. Another patient is guided in.



Top: A surgeon at Lumbini with her assistant remove a blinding cataract from a patient's eye.

Above: Lumbini Medical Director, Dr. Salma.

Throughout the day, the surgical team at Nepal's Lumbini Eye Institute will perform more than 100 cataract surgeries that will restore sight and transform lives.

In addition to the life-changing impact the surgeons have on each person they serve, this particular Seva-supported surgical team represents another major success—70% of the surgeons at Lumbini are women.

In Nepal, like much of the world, the surgical profession has traditionally been male dominated. Women face cultural and financial obstacles that make the road to becoming a surgeon much harder than for their male colleagues.

In order to overcome these barriers, Seva has actively identified and recruited promising female medical students and has supported their residency training in ophthalmology. "Seva knows that in order to create real change, we need women serving in leadership roles at eye care institutions throughout the developing world," explains Dr. Suzanne Gilbert, Senior Director of Seva's Innovation & Sight Program. She adds, "Lumbini is a perfect example. This institution was once run exclusively by men, but thanks to Seva's strategic support, Lumbini's leadership and surgical team today are mostly women." Lumbini also serves as a mentor institution and role model to other clinics and hospitals in Nepal.

When women serve as leaders on hospital surgical and executive teams, this sends a strong message that helps to open doors and break down barriers for the many women who will follow in their footsteps.



### CIRCLE OF SHARING SEVA'S MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM

Circle of Sharing is the way Seva donors give regularly each month.

Make compassionate service a way of life — and know that your monthly gift helps provide sight to someone every month, all year long.

[www.seva.org/circle\\_of\\_sharing](http://www.seva.org/circle_of_sharing)

OR CALL

1-877-764-7382

## MEET CLAIRE McCABE Constituent Development Coordinator at Seva



Hello!

Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Claire McCabe, and I've had the privilege of working at Seva for the past year and a half on the wonderful fundraising team. This season, I'm thrilled to be managing our Gifts of Sight program! For the uninitiated, Gifts of Sight is Seva's alternative gift giving program.

What are alternative gifts? Instead of giving material items for the holidays, you can honor

loved ones by giving gifts that really matter—like sponsoring sight-restoring surgery for a person who is blind, or providing eye care for women and girls (who are often overlooked for receiving services compared to men and boys in regions with limited resources).

What's the next step? Take a look at the Gifts of Sight catalog (it's available in print and online at [www.seva.org/gifts](http://www.seva.org/gifts)) and select gifts to honor your friends, family, and business associates. For each gift, Seva will send a beautiful card to honor the special people in your life. Each card contains a description of what the gift will achieve and space for your personal message from you. We can also send eCards on your behalf.

Call us at the office at 800-223-7382, or do the entire process online—it's quick and easy! And don't forget to follow @sevafoundation and #GiftsofSight on our social channels!

From my experience working in past Gifts of Sight seasons, people have given meaningful gifts to their entire offices, honored a friend who passed away, or even taken care of their entire holiday shopping at [www.seva.org/gifts](http://www.seva.org/gifts)! This is a fantastic opportunity to change several people's lives forever—both the recipient of the alternative gift and the person who regains their vision.

Have a wonderful fall and let's connect over the holidays or anytime this upcoming year!

Claire

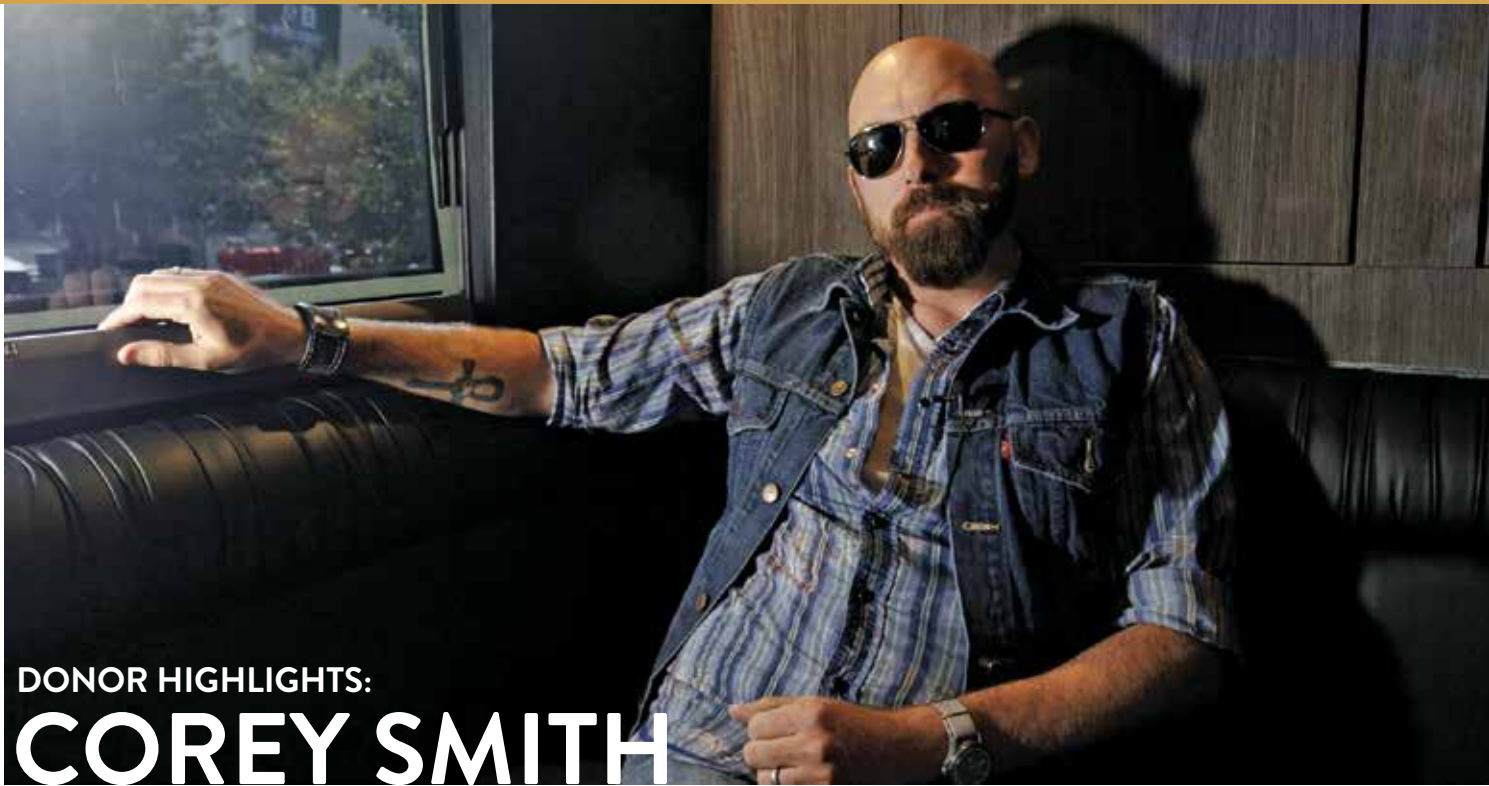


YOU CAN  
MAKE  
MIRACLES  
HAPPEN!

Choose a meaningful gift that restores sight and transforms lives and we'll send a beautiful card to your friend or loved one.



[seva.org/gifts](http://seva.org/gifts) or  
(800) 223-7382



**DONOR HIGHLIGHTS:**  
**COREY SMITH**

Above: Seva donor Corey Smith on his tour bus.

My name is Corey Smith. I'm a singer-songwriter from Jefferson, Georgia, and eye care is very important to me.

I've got a prosthetic eye, and I also have a retinal condition that runs in my family, so I've had retinal surgeries, I've had laser surgeries, my mom had detached retinas in both of her eyes, so did my aunt, so it's something that is pretty common in my family.

My accountant, Robert, told me about Seva, he'd come into contact with Seva at Grateful Dead concerts years ago.

When I first started looking into Seva, I was immediately drawn in by the notion of the Gifts of Sight cards. For Christmas that year I gave a lot of people in my family these cards. My grandmother, for example: she has anything she could need. There's no thing I could have given her that would have been really meaningful. So I decided to give her one of the Gifts of Sight cards and I was like, "Merry Christmas, I know you've got everything you need, I made this

*"Merry Christmas, I know you've got everything you need, I made this donation and now someone may have the gift to see again."*

donation and now someone may have the gift to see again." And she cried, and same with my other grandmother, and my dad, and my stepmom, and several other people in the family.

So at that point I really began a relationship with Seva that's continued all the way to now. I've been able to fund two eye camps, and it's been really special to be able to see the statistics and see the impact. The number of people who were evaluated, the number of people who were treated, and I can't imagine a better way to use the blessings I've been given to do good around the world.

One of the most striking things about Seva is the idea that you can bring sight to someone — what a gift, I mean it's a biblical thing. I grew up in a Baptist church and studied Jesus my whole life and the idea that you can make the blind to see; it's a miraculous thing.

In the United States, and the developed world, people getting glasses and being able to see the world more clearly, or having a simple cataract surgery, we take it for granted. But in places without the ability to do that, it's something that's truly miraculous, to be able to give someone the gift of sight.

When you think that for fifteen minutes, and fifty dollars, someone can be able to see, someone who hasn't seen their husband or kids or their grandkids, or even their own hands — and for such a small gift, they can leave there seeing. I think it's something that is an unquestionable, an undeniable impact on that person's life. I'm just really happy to be involved with an organization that's working to do that every single day.

Check out Seva's new video featuring Corey Smith at [www.seva.org/corey](http://www.seva.org/corey)

**SEVA'S  
DR. SUZANNE GILBERT  
RECOGNIZED WITH  
DR. G. VENKATASWAMY  
AWARD**



**WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE** that Dr. Suzanne Gilbert, Senior Director of Seva's Innovation & Sight Program, has been honored by our longtime partner the Aravind Eye Care System with the Dr. G. Venkataswamy Endowment Award. The award recognizes the contribution Suzanne has made toward the prevention of global blindness.

The following Q&A with Suzanne provides an opportunity to learn more about the important work to which she has dedicated so much of her life.

**You are a founding staff member of Seva and have been with the organization for 38 years. How did you become involved with eye care and what has it been like to watch the organization grow over the years?**

I have been a friend of Seva co-founders Girija and Larry Brilliant since before they made the first phone calls in 1978 that sprouted Seva. They had recently returned from the smallpox eradication program in India. My husband and I had just returned from a year in Nepal where I was on a Fulbright grant (my third visit to Nepal by that time). Hearing that the Brilliants were getting a group together to consider ways to reduce blindness in Nepal, I swung into action to help plan what became Seva's founding meeting.

Having spent some time in India and Nepal, I had a jaundiced view of the international development efforts of the day. I found that too many projects were controlled by foreigners who had little knowledge of the underlying issues affecting communities and how to get things done. It was the norm that too little planning, too much money and too little time went into "foreign aid." There were some exceptions, of course, but the dominant methods of international development really turned me off. Although I had spent years

studying cultural anthropology and linguistics of South Asia, I had shifted my work as a social epidemiologist to health disparities in the US.

It was during the founding of Seva that I got renewed hope in the prospect of working with an organization that would truly do good in the world through programs in other countries. Seva's respect for all cultures, high regard for the essential knowledge and solutions of community members, and commitment to reducing the "us-them" paradigm of international development all were very appealing to me. The eclectic blend of Seva founders, their dedication and skill, and their immense capacity to do good attracted me and I became an active volunteer from day one.

**Tell us about your relationship with Dr. Venkataswamy and why receiving this award is particularly meaningful.**

I met Dr. V when he came to the US for the Seva founding meeting in 1978. After the meeting, he visited me at my office at the University of Michigan Medical School where I was conducting my doctoral research. He was actively interested in the work I was doing and spent a lot of time learning about it. After about an hour, he asked me to leave my research and help him understand why poor blind people were not

coming in large numbers for free cataract surgery at his new hospital in Madurai, India. I went home that evening and after discussion with my husband and a few friends, decided to totally re-focus my work on the prevention of blindness. Given other urgent program needs at that time, I worked on the issue of blinding trachoma as part of Seva's Nepal Blindness Survey. Dr. V's and Aravind's assistance with the Survey was immense, particularly considering that 1980-81 was a period of struggle and rapid growth for Aravind Eye Hospital, which he had started in his house and was moving into its first real building.

Throughout the years from 1978 to his passing in 2006, Dr. V and I had a close working relationship. He was both teacher and friend, more of a guide, really. His example and his influence touched me and hundreds of other people through his active engagement and caring. Today, through the network of Aravind hospitals, training programs, and research activities, literally thousands of eye health professionals are inspired by him.

**What is your role today at Seva and within the greater global eye care community?**

As Senior Director of Innovation & Sight Programs, I lead Seva's efforts to bring good science, creativity and

compassion to the objective to restore sight and prevent blindness in communities worldwide. Seva's programs now extend to more than 20 countries, including the U.S. Each is stewarded by skilled Seva staff along with seasoned regional partners who bring deep awareness about local needs, and strong skills and dedication to serve everyone in the community.

From its early years, Seva has been a player at the global level through the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and the World Health Organization (WHO). I have represented Seva in eye care consortia within the US and worldwide. I am currently IAPB Chair for the North America Region and serve on the Global Outreach and Education Committee of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. I also am fortunate to participate with groups of changemakers who work beyond eye care. For example: Skoll World Forum for Social Entrepreneurship.

**What specifically is it about the importance of increasing access to eye care that has kept you so dedicated all these years?**

After I witnessed the transformation of a person who was blind from cataract and received sight after a 15-minute operation, I was hooked! Millions of people needed only that 15 minutes with a skilled surgical team, who with just \$50 in resources, could complete the surgery successfully. My focus rapidly turned to how Seva could make the surgery universally accessible, affordable and sustainable. What has kept me focused all these years has been the need to morph solutions that work in one part of the world

to fit in others and to develop the management and human resource systems that can be sustained in communities around the world.

**What is your vision for the future of eye care?**

Eye care is in the early stage of a major transformation that will reach more people, with better care, when and where they need it. A huge contribution to this transformation is the shrinking of the world through internet connectivity, mobile phones, and gradually improving transportation infrastructure. An accompanying contribution is the greater experience and knowledge base in developing countries to inform and direct the formation of services. I already see healthcare improvements in some isolated communities around the world that years ago I would have said would be impossible. The greatest requirement for expanding capacity to reach those in need is the active engagement of local people to make it happen.

**What else would you like our readers to know?**

Aravind Eye Care System and Seva share Dr. V's DNA. This carries with it a deep responsibility to honor his tenacity and effectiveness and his compassion for others. Seva's work, including the recent development of the Global Sight Initiative, which aims to provide sight-restoring cataract surgery for one million additional people annually, is a direct expression of his commitment to transform lives through eye care.

Above, left: Dr. Suzanne Gilbert  
Above, right: Dr. Suzanne Gilbert  
Dr. Suzanne Gilbert and Dr. G. Venkataswamy



# SPIRIT OF SERVICE

2016 VOLUME 2

NEWSLETTER



Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Seva Foundation

## About Seva

Seva is a global nonprofit eye care organization that transforms lives by restoring sight and preventing blindness.

We train local eye care providers and develop self-sustaining eye clinics around the world. Seva has helped nearly 4 million people who were blind to regain their sight in more than 20 countries.

39 million people in the world are blind. 80% of them could see again with your help.

Your \$50 donation restores sight with a 15-minute cataract surgery that changes someone's life forever.

## Board of Directors

### CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Lisa M. Laird, CFA

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jack Blanks

### VICE CHAIR

Deborah Galardi

### TREASURER

John Plowright, CFA

### SECRETARY

Vaughan Acton

### HONORARY LIFETIME BOARD

Ram Dass

Gullapalli N Rao, MD, FACS

Jahanara B. Romney

Bob Weir

Jerry Jones

T. Stephen Jones, MD

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gary P. Barth, MD

Kevin Clougherty, MHA, FACHE

Wavy Gravy

Gary W. Hahn

Jon Kaplan

Kerry Kaplan

Tomás A. Magaña, MD, MA

Nancy Mortifee

Doraiswamy Nagarajan, MA, MSc

Sanjay Rajan

Neal H. Shorstein, MD

Marty Spencer, MD, FRCSC

R.D. Thulasiraj, BSC, MBA

### AMBASSADORS

Jackson Browne

David Crosby

Graham Nash

### DESIGN

Stoller Design Group

**Please pass this newsletter along to a friend!**

*Seva Foundation is a nonsectarian, nonprofit 501(c)3 charitable organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.*



Printed on recycled paper with soy based ink



“Seva has given so much help to so many thousands of people for so many years — such a wonderful example of love in action.”

**BONNIE RAITT**

Singer/Songwriter

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

**Our heartfelt thanks go to all our photographers for generously donating their work.**

Irene Taylor Brodsky, Ellen Crystal, Julie Nestingen, Joe Raffanti and Donna Stoneham.



[facebook.com/seva.foundation](https://facebook.com/seva.foundation)



[@Seva\\_Foundation](https://twitter.com/Seva_Foundation)



[Youtube.com/SevaFoundation](https://Youtube.com/SevaFoundation)



[@sevafoundation](https://@sevafoundation)