



# spirit of service

A PUBLICATION OF SEVA®

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## Effective Altruism The Life You Can Save

### Photographers

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

**Seva is proud to share that our blindness prevention and sight-saving programs were recently featured in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* by philosopher Dr. Peter Singer and his organization The Life You Can Save.**

Dr. Singer, one of the world's most respected academics, writes about Seva in the context of a top ten list he has created to recommend and promote what he has evaluated as the most effective charities.

He compares saving someone's eyesight to many of the other causes that solicit your support, and concludes that supporting Seva is one of the most effective ways your donation can have a life changing impact.

Singer recommends Seva based on the basic tenet of using your donation where it will do the most good, this is what he calls Effective Altruism.

He argues if everyone who can afford to contribute to reducing extreme poverty gave a modest

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## Effective Altruism

portion of their income to effective development charities, extreme poverty would be eliminated.

“Take a moment to imagine what it would be like to live on less than \$2 per day. What would change? What would you lose? Almost a third of humanity’s 7 billion people face this reality daily” notes The Life You Can Save’s Executive Director, Dr. Charlie Bresler.

Bresler explains, “the situation can be improved if we act immediately and compassionately. We can effect change by bridging the economic divide to help the global poor lift themselves out of the vicious cycle of poverty.

This type of giving prioritizes relieving the most suffering per dollar, regardless of the recipient’s race, nationality or creed.

Our recommended charities have passed rigorous evaluations for efficacy, and we believe they currently provide the most life-changing impact per dollar.”

Many new Seva supporters have learned about our work thanks to Dr. Peter Singer’s articles and The Life You Can Save’s top ten list of charities to support. We are grateful to all of those who have pledged to join the effective altruism movement.

To learn more about effective altruism, visit [www.seva.org/effective\\_altruism](http://www.seva.org/effective_altruism)



### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Dr. Judith Newman

Dear Seva Donors:

I work overseas every other month as a pediatric ophthalmologist.

Thanks to your generosity as supporters of Seva, eye doctors in developing countries have made tremendous progress in addressing cataract blindness in adults. They have good equipment, good skills and excellent outcomes.

The problem is that the kids are usually not a part of these miraculous outcomes.

I’ve worked in 20 developing countries and I’ve rarely encountered a locally trained eye doctor who had been trained in pediatric

cataract, pediatric glaucoma, strabismus or other childhood eye diseases.

The skills and surgeries for treating pediatric eye diseases are different than those needed for adults and require different instruments. Once trained as an eye doctor, they often don’t have the financial resources or time to continue studying for pediatric care.

That is why it is so important to me to travel every other month to offer training and bring the special equipment needed to treat children in the field.

Most of these diseases if not treated in the first year or two of life, leave the child blind in that eye, even if treated later in childhood.

On every trip, parents and children with these eye diseases travel long distances and wait in line for hours for me to evaluate them.

I treat as many as I can but it is always just a drop in the bucket unless I can train a dedicated local eye doctor who has a heart for the poor and is keen on learning the necessary skills to treat kids.

It usually takes many visits to train a local doctor in pediatric ophthalmology. The clinical evaluation also requires different items than what is available in their clinics.

I feel fortunate that I have the ability to travel and train eye doctors to treat the children. I want to thank you for supporting Seva and hope that you will continue to support this important work.

Sincerely,

Judith Newman, MD  
Seva Volunteer / Pediatric Ophthalmologist



**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



## Two Featured Gifts of Sight:

**KINDNESS FOR CHILDREN**  
\$100 (or any amount)

The well-being of the world’s children is a responsibility we all share.

With your special gift, you support Seva’s work to prevent and treat blindness for children around the world. From simple screening and eyeglasses to complicated surgeries, your act of compassion helps create the world that children deserve.

[www.seva.org/giftsofsight](http://www.seva.org/giftsofsight)

**GIVE SIGHT TO A CHILD**  
\$100

Restoring sight to a child is a gift that lasts a lifetime.

Provide a child with specialized pediatric surgery and follow-up care. An entire family benefits when a child regains vision. Now able to attend school, a child’s life is changed forever.



**TOMS**

## One for One®

As Seva kicks off its third year as TOMS' lead Sight Giving Partner, we wanted to take a minute to look back over our successful partnership.

Three years ago, TOMS' founder Blake Mykoskie made a big announcement about the future of his company.

Already extremely popular for their shoes and One for One® giving model, TOMS was about to launch an exciting new product and new way to give.

At the announcement event in Santa Monica, Blake revealed that TOMS would now be producing eyewear, and in partnership with Seva, each pair purchased would support a person in need to receive sight saving surgery, eyeglasses or medical treatment – One for One®.

Blake explains, "One thing that I realized over the past couple of years is this One for One model is very powerful. It allows someone to buy something that they are already going to buy, or they want, or they need, and to help someone at the same time.

When I thought about launching another product with the TOMS model, vision seemed the most obvious choice.

I think what is important to understand, is just how powerful it is to help give sight to someone in need. With TOMS Eyewear, we are able to give someone the opportunity to wear a pair of shades, knowing that there is a much greater purpose."

TOMS' Eyewear Design Director, Darrin Dela Cruz, adds, "there is an extra ingredient, or an extra material that goes into a TOMS product, and that's the story. I often think about the person on the other side, how difficult even the little things might be for them. How long they've been living with visual impairment, how it's probably affected their loved ones."

Blake notes "there are about 280 million people in the world who are either blind or visually impaired, and 80% of that is reversible or treatable."

He goes on to explain, "There are three ways that your purchase will help someone. Medical treatment is number one, so let's take someone who is a farmer who gets a piece of rice or something lodged in their eye, and it is causing an infection, and if they don't get it treated quickly and get the right antibiotics they'll lose their sight.

Prescription eyeglasses are number two. For kids in school that can't see the blackboard, or for someone who is losing their sight and needs eyeglasses to continue doing their work.

And then the third is eye surgery, when someone develops something like a cataract and they can't see at all, they are completely blind, and so your purchase can help toward doing the eye surgery. That to me is the closest thing to a miracle

I've ever seen. Literally, people come in, can't see, a 15-minute surgery, patch comes off, and they can see, it's just awesome. There is no feeling in the world that compares to that."

Seva's Executive Director, Jack Blanks, applauds Blake and his company's One for One® model, noting "TOMS' partnership with Seva demonstrates perfectly how a company putting human needs and values before profit, can ally itself with a non-profit organization to provide life changing services and still be a hugely successful enterprise."

To date, the TOMS Sight Giving Program has provided eyeglasses, medical treatments, and surgeries to over 250,000 people who would not otherwise be able to afford eye care. Of this, over 100,000 people have received sight saving surgeries, mostly to remove blinding cataracts, the leading cause of blindness.

To learn more about this incredible partnership, visit [www.seva.org/TOMS](http://www.seva.org/TOMS)



### A TOMS STORY: 7 year-old Sabino

In rural Paraguay, a young orphan named Sabino had his life changed thanks to TOMS support of Seva's outreach programs.

Sabino was born blind in an area, like many parts of the developing world, where there is no access to eye care.

His parents both passed away, leaving him and his brothers to fend for themselves.

The boys lived in a small shack made of scrap metal and tarps.

Because he was blind, Sabino was unable to attend school. He explains, this brought so much sadness to him because going to school was his greatest desire.

Every day, TOMS supports the outreach programs of Seva's local partners around the globe. In Paraguay, our partner Fundación Visión found young Sabino as part of one of these outreach activities.

Vision screeners identified Sabino as having been born with cataracts, a condition that can be reversed. Arrangements were made for him to have surgery, subsidized by funds generated by the sales of TOMS Eyewear.

Sabino began attending school in March, 2014. He has already learned to read and write, and is excited to share that his favorite new activity is to play soccer.

Sabino's oldest brother, now freed from the burden of having to care for him, was able to find work and is saving up money so that he and his brothers can make a better life for themselves.

Sabino explains "I am full of joy to be able to attend school, I am happy because now I can see trees, I can see animals, and I know my friends, not only by voice, but by their face."

His older brother asked us to share how very grateful he is to TOMS, Seva and to Fundación Visión for saving Sabino's vision. "Sabino's whole life was changed! He hopes for a better future. Thanks to all of you!"

# American Indian Sight Initiative

Training the Next Generation of American Indian Eye Health Professionals



For over 30 years, Seva and our donors have been committed to improving the health and wellbeing of American Indian communities throughout the United States.

This past year, Seva launched the American Indian Sight Initiative, which works to improve eye health through locally-based partnerships.

American Indians suffer disproportionately higher rates of preventable and treatable eye conditions that negatively impact their lives. This is primarily due to a lack of access to affordable, quality eye care.

Barriers to care among American Indians include: poverty, geographic isolation, and the lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate eye care providers.

Compounding the socioeconomic factors, American Indians are more likely to have poor eyesight from biological factors, such as a higher rate of refractive error and astigmatism, both easily corrected with eyeglasses.

American Indians also have high rates of diabetic retinopathy, an eye disease that leads to blindness if left untreated.

The lack of resources, few trained eye care professionals, and language barriers are all factors in why only a minority of tribal health programs have an eye care provider onsite.

Seva works to solve this problem by investing in training the next generation of American Indian eye care professionals.

One of these success stories is a young woman named Dellynn Chinana who interns at the Santo Domingo Pueblo Health Clinic. Dellynn's goal is to be the first in her community who is able to provide eye care services in her native language.

Dellynn's Vision Technology Instructor, Sheri Red Shirt, explains, "Dellynn is very much into community outreach. Being able to speak her language and share about eye health within her community is going to be a great addition to the Jemez Pueblo people."



## MEET: Dellynn Chinana

My name is Dellynn Chinana. I'm a graduate of the Seva-supported vision technology program at the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute.

Towa is my language, fluently spoken at home on the Jemez pueblo in New Mexico.

None of the people that work in the ophthalmic field speak Towa.

It is the reason I want to go back. I can speak fluently and help out my people with their vision.

I am currently an intern at the Santo Domingo Pueblo. They offered an intern position which I accepted without even hesitating because nowadays, people are looking for experienced techs in any kind of workplace. It is a great place to work and there are a lot of great patients.

Some of the things I do as an intern are I prescreen patients before the doctor sees them. I also use the auto refractor that Seva Foundation sent us and help patients pick frames which best suits their lifestyle.

Santo Domingo has never had a dispensing side of optometry. Therefore, it is very exciting to see patients excited about ordering glasses and contacts.

They are so happy to have this dispensing area because it is much closer to home rather than to be driving 30-40 minutes out of town to get some for retail price and some cannot afford that. Here we charge them wholesale price so it is much less expensive and they don't have to go into town and spend about \$200 roundtrip.

The expressions on their faces are priceless. It makes you feel really good about yourself because you're doing something good for them.

For the intern job itself I like working with Dr. Marvel and Amanda because we all work as a team to get through the day. We are

always on our toes because we like doing what we do for patients and making them happy, satisfying them and meeting their needs.

My internship is helping me to be an optometric tech. I am happy to be here and able to have this opportunity. It means a lot to my family as well because I am supporting them financially, especially my son since I am a single parent. Although I am not in Jemez Health Clinic yet, I am preparing myself for there.

I am still planning on going back to my people. I will return back and apply my skills that I have learned here and use them there.

I am looking forward to it and hopefully will be there for years for my son and my own people.

## SEVA SPECIAL EVENTS

### 2014 — A VERY SPECIAL YEAR FOR EVENTS!



GRAMMY award winning artist Jason Mraz and his incredibly talented all female band Raining Jane, dazzled the Seva stage in May in honor of Seva co-founder Dr. Larry Brilliant's 70th Birthday at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco.

The event began with a roast and tribute to Dr. Brilliant, hosted by his close friends Marc Benioff, Jeff Skoll, Jim Berk, Daniel Goleman, Wavy Gravy and Jahanara Romney. This was followed by a mind-blowing set by Pakistani rock artist Salman Ahmad accompanied by Shabda Khan on percussion.

Jason Mraz then took the stage and impressed everyone with his sweet, personable and high energy performance which included his hits "I'm Yours" and "Give Me Love" as well as some covers "Don't Worry About a Thing" & "Happy Birthday".

In keeping with tradition, Seva board member Bob Weir graced the stage as a surprise guest and performed 'Ripple' with Jason & Band, which was the frosting on the cake for Dr. Brilliant, who has known Bob for more than 35 years.

The event was a huge success, bringing in contributions of more than \$350,000 and a lot of good energy!

In June, the Chris Robinson Brotherhood swung by the Mystic Theatre in Petaluma and performed another rockin' show for Seva, including some new material from their *Phosphorescent Harvest* album. The show was opened up with a sweet acoustic set by Corinne West accompanied by Barry Sless on guitar. Then Jeff Pehrson (of Furthur) debuted his new rock band The Fall Risk to the Sonoma County crowd who responded with great enthusiasm. It was a great way to spend a Monday night and raised much FUNdS and awareness of Seva's work—curing blindness around the world.

**Join Seva on December 12th for our Holiday Party at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco!**  
Details will be posted to [www.seva.org](http://www.seva.org).



## JUST IN! 2015 SEVA CALENDARS

Featuring beautiful images by world-renowned photographer Jon Kaplan. All proceeds support Seva's programs around the globe.

Order yours today at  
[www.seva.org/calendar](http://www.seva.org/calendar)

2014 VOLUME II

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## About Seva

Seva is a Sanskrit word meaning service to others.

Since 1978, Seva has been working to prevent blindness and restore sight worldwide.

Seva is a leading innovator the delivery of cost effective, culturally-informed eye care services for many of the world's most vulnerable – including women, children, and indigenous peoples.

We work to build the capacity of underserved communities to provide comprehensive high-quality eye care that is accessible by all.

Seva's programs are made possible by the generosity of donors and volunteers inspired by the spirit of service.

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Please pass this newsletter along to a friend!

"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