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International Vision Volunteers Receives Rotary Global Grant for Eye Hospital and Clinic in Zimba, Zambia

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Patients of all ages come to IVV for eye care.

International Vision Volunteers (IVV) was founded by three Rotarian eye surgeons to bring sight and eye care to the impoverished of the world. Since 1995 IVV has been bringing teams of eye surgeons and other medical specialists to the market town of Zimba, Zambia. We're told there are about 100,000 blind people in Zambia, and more than 11,000 go blind every year. Most of these people can be cured by modern eye surgery. We would estimate that we have probably had about 80,000 clinic visits, 10,000 postop visits, 8,000 major surgeries, 2,000 minor surgeries, and 2,000 YAG lasers in Zimba.

Much has happened at the International Vision Volunteers Eye Hospital and Clinic over the last year, and all of it has been good. The teams saw 4073 outpatients, 458 postop visits, performed 396 major surgeries (377 cataracts), 97 minor surgeries, and 120 YAG lasers.

A major reason we can accommodate so many patients is because of incredible Rotary support. Last year the Rotary Club of Clayton Valley/Concord Sunrise, District 5160, California, USA was able to obtain a Rotary Global Grant for International Vision Volunteers for \$63,435. They were the largest donor, and we cannot thank them enough for all the work they put into this project. This was made possible with the leadership, dedication, and skill of Committee Chair Fred Nelson and Committee Members Anthony Aranda, Lawrence Hutchings, Christopher Ruzicka, Stephen Weir, John Wenzel, and Club President Clayton Worsdell. Support for the grant was provided by the District 5160 Rotary Clubs of Antioch, Danville-Sycamore Valley, and Pleasant Hill, plus the Rotary Club of Findlay, Ohio, USA. The International Partner was the Rotary Club of Livingstone, Zambia.



Dr. Sue Wallace removing a patch after surgery

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The IVV Operating Room in Zimba

This Global Grant has allowed us to make significant improvements and additions to the IVV facility, the equipment, and the inventory of supplies.

We put in a new borehole (well) with a storage tank, a new generator, three computers, a Wi-Fi system, an ophthalmoscope, a retinoscope, charger, two Tonopens, two sets of surgical instruments, hundreds of educational brochures, over 7,000 bottles of eye meds, three air conditioners, an oxygen tank, a new slit lamp, and a new exam chair and stand.

Of course every patient and every family who come to the IVV Eye Hospital and Clinic for services has a special story. Here's one about a father and son whose lives were dramatically improved by the team at International Vision Volunteers.

Teddy led his son into the clinic by the hand because Ishmael could not see at all. He had been blind since childhood from a traumatic injury in one eye and cataract in the other. They had traveled for 2 days from Zimbabwe (walking to the ferry crossing, crossing the Zambezi River, then taking two bus rides) to come to Zimba to see the eye surgeons at IVV.

When Ishmael first came into the clinic, he spent all his time with his head bowed, never raising it. But after his surgery, Ishmael actually looked straight at you. The remarkable thing is that just three months earlier, Teddy himself had been blind and was led in by the hand to the eye surgeons for his own cataract surgery.

And now? Now Teddy is working as a driver.



Teddy and Ishmael at IVV

In the coming months look for our redesigned website with information about the latest eye camps and events at the Eye Clinic and a link to make donations online.

For more information, please visit ivvusa.com or write to ivvusachair@gmail.com

Editors note: After many years of dedicated humanitarian service, Dr. James Tysinger is now semi-retired but is still active in IVV and in Rotary. Dr. Yenjean Hwang has been welcomed as the new Chairperson of International Vision Volunteers.



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