



COMBAT BLINDNESS FOUNDATION

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Madison organization to celebrate World Sight Day

(Madison, Wisconsin) -- Hundreds of people will gather at the Monona Terrace in Madison on the evening of October 19 to support an aspiring international organization and its most inspiring local event: the Combat Blindness Foundation's recognition of World Sight Day.

World Sight Day has been observed globally each October by many organizations who are involved in preventing visual impairment or restoring sight. It is the most significant advocacy event for "Vision 2020: The Right to Sight," a worldwide blindness prevention initiative created jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB).

Madison's celebration of World Sight Day will run from 6 to 8 p.m., and include a silent auction of items from around the world, dinner, CBF project reports, international entertainment and an address by Dr. Geoff Tabin. A world-renowned ophthalmologist and mountain climber, Dr. Tabin serves sight-impaired people living in the remote and ultraviolet light-intense mountainous regions of Nepal.

In 2010, CBF helped restore the sight of 16,512 patients of all ages by providing free cataract surgeries. Overall, it's helped 152,000 individuals who couldn't see or were on the fast track to blindness. It's distributed critical nutritional supplements to children suffering from Vitamin A deficiency overseas, and partnered with UW Health to fund eye care at free community eye care clinics in Madison.

On October 19, CBF will share stories of its work, stories like that of a 37-year-old Indian man by the name of Mr. Nanabhai. Blind with cataracts in both eyes, he was no longer able to support his family in his rural Indian village. With his family by his side, he walked ten miles to a CBF-sponsored eye camp, where physicians inserted intraocular lenses into his eyes. His vision was fully restored.

Like many others around the world, Mr. Nanabhai's early-onset cataract blindness was the result of lack of access to proper eye care. The remarkable thing, however, is that CBF provided his surgery for just \$20! Today, millions of people worldwide just like Mr. Nanabhai await this cost-effective intervention. For that reason, Dr. Suresh Chandra, the founder and chairman of CBF, wants to increase CBF's influence over the next five years and support 30,000 annual cataract surgeries by 2015.

"Many organizations around the world are working hard on behalf of millions of blind people," Chandra concludes. "We want to channel even more resources through our unique partnerships -- existing and new -- to reach areas no one else is reaching. This is what we will celebrate on October 19."

The Combat Blindness Foundation is dedicated to preventing avoidable blindness worldwide and believes it is the responsibility of the fortunate to help the less fortunate in accomplishing that goal.