



WINTER 2019 NEWSLETTER



2019 BOARD MATCHING GIFT OPPORTUNITY

This holiday season, consider giving the gift of sight — and double your impact!

Our CBI Board will match every donation up to \$35,000, now through Dec. 31, 2019.

For every \$100 donation that is matched:

8 adults will receive sight-saving cataract surgery, or

400 children will be screened for glasses and eye disease, or

40 children will receive a pair of glasses.

For so little, you can make a world of difference.

Please visit www.combatblindness.org/donate today.

Dear CBI family and friends,

Let me begin by expressing my deep gratitude for your commitment to helping us alleviate preventable blindness throughout the world.

Thanks to your dedicated support, we achieved our World Sight Day goal of \$100,000, resulting in a total of over \$200,000 in matched funds.

We are continuing to make great strides in giving the gift of sight to those in need. When our journey began 35 years ago, we supported about 300 cataract surgeries a year. Today, that number is nearly 20,000 per year.

Annually, we're screening close to 80,000 school children through our International Pediatric Program. And in just five years, we have built capacity in our partner countries by providing scholarships to over 400 young women to become ophthalmic technicians and nurses.

Thirty-five years ago, I would have never imagined these numbers were possible.

Looking forward, I hope that you will continue to support CBI, and consider taking advantage of an exciting new opportunity to make a difference. Inspired by your generosity, each of our Board members contributed to a \$35,000 year-end matching gift. By donating to this matching gift, you'll help twice as many people conquer blindness, become more productive, and thrive.

Together, we have the power to change lives.

I wish you all peace, happiness and good health in the new year.

Thank you for your kind support,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suresh".

Suresh Chandra, MD



35 YEARS OF VISION: STRIVING FOR INNOVATIVE SUSTAINABILITY

*Aurolab's
production
of high-quality
intraocular lenses
for a few dollars
was a game changer,
allowing CBI to
support more
cataract surgeries
at a lower cost.*

Throughout this year, **Combat Blindness International (CBI)** has been celebrating 35 years of progress in reducing avoidable blindness around the world.

Thanks to strong allies like you, we've made tremendous strides since 1984, having supported over 2.25 million eye screenings and more than 370,000 sight-saving cataract surgeries. That's something to be proud of!

Working with partners in India, Myanmar, Lebanon, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Mali, Namibia, Botswana, Paraguay, Brazil and the United States, CBI is on the forefront of creating sustainable solutions in eye care.

In this second installment of our two-part article, we're pleased to share a closer look at CBI's major achievements in building infrastructure and supporting ophthalmic technical training.

BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE

In the early days of CBI, cataract surgeries were performed by removing the clouded lens of the eye and giving patients glasses with very thick lenses so they could see. Unfortunately, providing these "coke bottle" glasses was not a sustainable solution, as many would lose or break their glasses and then they were blind again. We knew this was not the best option.

In the United States, we remove the cataract and place a plastic lens, called an intraocular lens, inside the eye, so a patient does not need glasses. The problem was that the cost of the intraocular lens was several hundred dollars, and it was unaffordable for patients in low-income countries.

That is why we took steps to find a more affordable solution by partnering with local eye hospitals.

In 1992, CBI collaborated with two other organizations to establish Aurolab, an intraocular lens manufacturing facility at Aravind Eye Hospital in Madurai, India. Aurolab was able to produce high-



*Aurolab has changed the face of
eye care around the world.*

quality intraocular lenses at a cost of just \$2 to \$3. This was a game changer. Now, we were able to provide the same cataract surgery as here in the United States at a cost of just \$25 in all our projects around the world.

In 1997 we took our efforts to the next level by supporting the addition of a suture factory at Aurolab, further expanding the availability of affordable medical supplies. Over the years, we also have provided much-needed funding for other ophthalmological



Standing in front of Aurolab are Managing Director Emeritus P. Balakrishnan, Rick Langer, CBI Board Member, and Suresh Chandra, CBI Founder & Chairman.



R.D. Sriram, Aurolab's Managing Director, discusses expansion plans.

supplies and equipment, including vans to transport patients, glasses, and surgical equipment.

The next major phase of our infrastructure development strategy involved supporting the creation of surgical centers in rural areas. We inaugurated our very first Community Surgical Center in Rampur, India, in 2009. As a result, we've been able to meet the needs of people where they are at the local level, and treat cataracts, glaucoma and other eye pathologies before they escalate to larger problems.



Aurolab's intraocular lenses and other products meet global quality standards.

In 2016, we began construction on a hospital in Odisha, India, as part of our partnership with the L.V. Prasad Eye Institute. The Bijayananda Patnaik Eye Hospital was completed in 2018 and serves a population of up to 2 million in the surrounding area. All of our infrastructure projects have helped to improve the quality and access to eye care for those especially in underserved, remote areas.

DELIVERING TECHNICAL TRAINING

The shortage of trained eye-care professionals is one of the major obstacles facing eye-care programs and global health worldwide, but nowhere more so than in the developing world.

These mid-level professionals are able to perform some of the same functions of traditional ophthalmologists, allowing them to fulfill a variety of vital roles, including ophthalmic nursing assistants, vision technicians, medical records and registration specialists, and patient counselors — in just two years of training. Certified Ophthalmic Paramedics reduce the strain on the ophthalmologists, so they can focus on sight-restoring procedures and surgeries.

Thus far, the program has trained more than 400 women to support the efforts of Indian ophthalmologists and eye centers.

In addition to supporting mid-level ophthalmic professionals, CBI works with our partners around the world to provide training for ophthalmologists. Through short-term fellowships and hands-on clinical and surgical training, we are building the skills and knowledge of the next generation of ophthalmologists so they may better care for their communities.



The Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic (COP) program supports the training of ophthalmic nursing assistants, vision technicians and more.

Since 2015, CBI has worked with Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital in New Delhi, India, to train and empower young women to become Certified Ophthalmic Paramedics.

These mid-level professionals are able to perform some of the same functions of traditional ophthalmologists, in just two years of training.



The COP program equips young women with the skills to become economically independent and pursue their dreams.

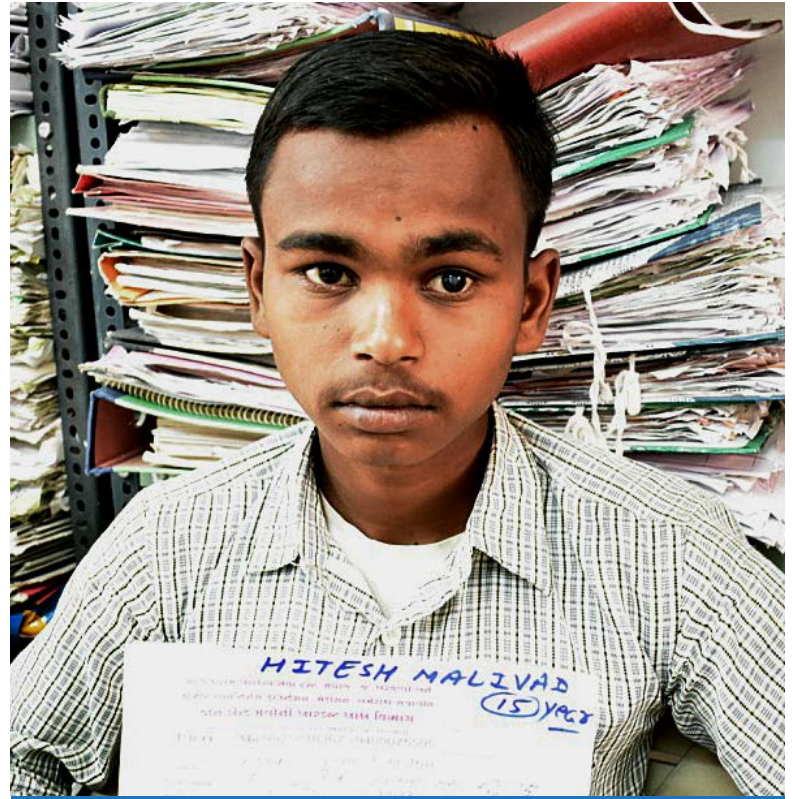
THE JOURNEY AHEAD

The need to alleviate avoidable blindness continues to be a global challenge. CBI will continue to expand our existing Cataracts and Pediatric Programs, and will help wherever there is need around the world. In addition, CBI wants to grow the Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic program to increase the number of young women we can educate and empower. Looking forward, South America, Africa and the Middle East are among the areas where we hope to expand our efforts in the future.

It's difficult to sum up 35 years of our work. Much has changed, but one thing has stayed the same, and that is our firm belief in the impact of restoring a person's sight. With your continued support, we can work together to change people's lives and make a difference.



Our COP program addresses the shortage of technicians while empowering young women.



HITESHBHAI'S STORY

Ever since he was 5, Hiteshbhai Malivad struggled with vision problems. By the time he was a teenager, Hiteshbhai's poor eyesight made it difficult for him to learn in school and handle daily tasks. Thankfully, our partners at the Shri Jalaram Arogya Seva Trust Hospital in Meghraj, Gujarat, India, diagnosed the problem: prescription drug allergies had led to cataracts in both eyes. After receiving surgeries in July 2018 and March 2019, Hiteshbhai's eyesight has improved, paving the way for a brighter future full of possibilities.

Cases like Hiteshbhai's vividly illustrate the importance of CBI's support for Shri Jalaram, where we've funded more than 14,000 cataract surgeries since 2008.

**CELEBRATING
CBI'S SUCCESS
ON WORLD
SIGHT DAY**



Panelists discussed the past, present and future of CBI's mission to reduce blindness around the globe.

"Your generosity helps create a more equitable world by reaching those who need it most, from India, to Botswana, to Brazil and right here in Wisconsin."

**Peter Holm
CBI BOARD MEMBER**

Combat Blindness International's World Sight Day gala at Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison, Wis. was a tremendous success! More than 200 supporters, donors and friends turned out for the Oct. 10 event, an annual day of awareness that focuses global attention on blindness and vision impairment. For those in attendance, it was a time to connect, socialize and celebrate CBI's 35 years of success in reducing blindness throughout the world.

Our founder, Suresh R. Chandra, MD, shared his heartfelt reflections and deep gratitude for CBI's dedicated supporters, especially Diane Ballweg and The Hurckman Family Foundation, in partnership with Hurckman Mechanical Industries, for providing a generous \$100,000 matching opportunity in honor of World Sight Day. We remain deeply grateful for everyone's contributions that helped us reach our goal, resulting in a total of over \$200,000 in matched funds.

One of the main highlights was a panel discussion focusing on CBI's collaborative support for our partners in bringing vision to the underserved. Three of our partners traveled all the way from India to participate: Umang Mathur, MD, Executive Director of Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital in New Delhi; R.D. Sriram, Managing Director of Aurolab in Madurai; and K.V. Ravishankar, MD, Managing Director of Usha Kiran Eye Hospital in Mysore. Other panelists were Dr. Chandra, and founding CBI Board Member Richard Langer, JD, Partner at Michael Best & Friedrich LLP.

The evening's festivities closed with an inspiring address by CBI Board Member Peter Holm, MD.

Thanks to all who made our World Sight Day so memorable and impactful!

CATHERINE TAYLOR RECEIVES RADHA KRISHNA AWARD

At this year's World Sight Day Gala, we recognized one of our longtime supporters and dear friends, Catherine Taylor of the Jack DeLoss Taylor Charitable Trust. Our founder, Suresh Chandra, MD, presented Catherine with the prestigious Radha Krishna Award, named after one of the first patients to be treated by Combat Blindness International.

Catherine's profound contributions have had an indelible impact on our work, including the screening of over 200,000 children in India, and generous support for the construction of our latest surgical center in Keonjhar, India.

Congratulations, Catherine, and thank you!



Catherine Taylor (center) was presented with the Radha Krishna Award by Reena Chandra Rajpal, Board President & Executive Director, and Suresh Chandra, CBI Founder & Chairman.

ACTING LOCALLY TO SERVE THOSE IN NEED

On Oct. 5, we put our mission into action at the Right to Sight World Sight Day Clinic at the UW-Madison Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences' (DOVS) University Station Clinic. This partnership, led by Dr. Anna Momont, provided 50 underinsured patients with free eye care. Many thanks to the UW DOVS faculty and staff who volunteered their time.



CBI deeply values its partnership with the UW-Madison Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences.

BE A CBI SOCIAL MEDIA AMBASSADOR

- Like and share our posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter & Instagram.
- Post photos and talk about why you support CBI.
- Please tag us!
Use the tags below and select us.

Thank you for sharing our story with your friends on social media!



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your email address.



Combat Blindness International
is dedicated to eliminating
preventable blindness worldwide
by providing sustainable, equitable
solutions for sight through
partnership and innovation.

SAY 'YES' TO CORPORATE MATCHING!

If your employer has a matching gift program,
you can double your contributions to Combat
Blindness International. **Contact your Human
Resources Department to learn more about
corporate matching.**

