



RAYJONSHARECARE

AUGUST (2018 #04)

Eyeglass Clinics – A Team with Vision

It's time for another spotlight on the Eyeglass Program, a group that quietly goes about its business thanks to people who generously support this effort with their financial donations, through the sharing of volunteers' time and expertise and specialized equipment, and of course through the thoughtful recycling of prescription glasses (and sunglasses – eye damage due to sun exposure is very common).

During a typical year there are two Eyeglass trips: one to Haiti and one elsewhere, usually a country in Central America. The most recent trip this past Spring was to La Garenne, just outside the city of St. Marc, in Haiti. Beginning with the 1993 trip to Ixmiquilpan, Mexico there have now been 19,851 prescription glasses dispensed to grateful recipients. Sometimes a pair of glasses isn't immediately available as described below by Bob Topliffe, a longtime member of the team.

When the eyeglass team holds a clinic, we do not always have a pair of eyeglasses to match every patient's prescription requirements from the supply of eyeglasses that we take with us. In those situations, the Fitters measure the patient's pupil distance and determine a suitable frame size. We take a supply of empty frames without lenses and match a frame to the patient's size requirements.



The Fitters then complete a form for made-up glasses. The form will have the patient's name and contact information, as well as the prescription for the lenses, frame size and pupil distance. The lens-less frame is rolled up inside the form and bound with an elastic band. One of the computer operators keeps a computer record of each pair of made-up eyeglasses for each patient. Later, when we return to Canada we will look through our database that lists all the glasses we have stored in inventory to see if we can find a

suitable pair of glasses for them. If glasses aren't available from our inventory, we will have a pair made-up and sent to the patient.

For example, at the 2017 eyeglass clinic at San Jose de Ocoa, in the Dominican Republic, we had 35 patients that required made-up glasses. Through our relationship with the Opticianry program at Georgian College, in Barrie, the students in the program make some of the single vision lenses at no cost. The students then fit the lenses into the frames we supply. This becomes a hands-on skills development activity for the students.

For the more complicated prescriptions and bifocal lens requirements, we use an optical lab in Barrie to make and fit the lenses. They generously make and fit the lenses at a deeply discounted price.

Carla Macchione is a long-standing member of the Rayjon eyeglass team and she manages the computer inventory for all of the donated glasses. Carla lives in Orillia and she drove to Barrie to pick up the glasses when they were ready. Bob Topliffe arranged to pick up the glasses from Carla, and then sent them to San Jose de Ocoa, via Canada Post. Within two weeks, Sister Teofila, our host for the San Jose de Ocoa clinic, confirmed that she received the glasses and had begun contacting the patients, so they could come to get their glasses. Included with the patient's eyeglasses is a case and a cleaning cloth.

Through generous donations made by supporters of the Rayjon Eyeglass Program we have funds set aside to cover the cost of getting the eyeglasses made-up and shipped to the Dominican Republic. The fund is also used to purchase and repair optical equipment for the clinics.

The Eyeglass team's next trip is to Guatemala, in November.

Microcredit Program

In the future we plan to devote some space to highlighting the stories of various participants in the microcredit program. Our aim is to provide program supporters with a profile of the beneficiary, her family background, her business objective and the nature of the loan, and to understand over the longer term how the loan has helped her. In 2018-2019 we are pleased to announce additional training for microcredit beneficiaries that will assist them with identifying their goals and planning for success in their businesses.



Pictured on the left is Leonise, who has been able to start up a small business with the help of a microcredit loan.

Your donation will help provide additional training and resources, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in rural Haiti.

Awareness, Lead & Advocate

The Georgian college trips this past spring were incredibly successful. One of the leaders of the nursing program awareness trips, Sue Vodarek, produced a very informative, thoughtful, and well-written article that has been featured on the Rayjon website and on facebook. (<https://rayjon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Dominican-Experience-2018-Sue-Vodarek-DR-Consuelo.pdf>).

Her paper is entitled, "Linking Nursing Education with Social Inequity Awareness" and it highlights an important aspect of the whole "Awareness, Lead, Advocate" mantra that is central to Rayjon's philosophy for supporting communities in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.



Georgian student, Kristine, taking a health history



Waiting for healthcare outside the clinic

During their week, the nursing students, working alongside their trip leaders and in partnership with community health leaders, learned to more fully integrate theory with nursing practice. The article captures highlights of the health team's organization and

preparation effort, and it describes the type of environment and conditions that their mobile health clinic set out to serve.

Read about how the students broaden their learning experience and enrich their perspective on cultural and community awareness away from their own backyard, and push the boundaries of their comfort zones as they witness first hand how social inequity: lack of nutrition, clean water, clean air, shelter, education, healthcare, and employment can affect both physical health and mental well being. It is a powerful experience where everyone becomes both a giver and a receiver.

The Georgian College nursing trips have operated since 2002 in collaboration with Rayjon ShareCare and Rayjon's partnership with Haitian and Dominican medical, educational and awareness programs.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Italian Wine Tasting

Proceeds from this tasty event will help support Adult Literacy and Empowerment in collaboration with Rayjon's partners in Haiti.

When: Saturday, September 8, 2018; 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Where: "Cucina Rustica", 3270 Lakeshore Road, Camlachie (@ O'Brien Rd.)

Enjoy an evening highlighted by specially selected wines from 4 regions in Italy, each served with seasonal food pairings – along with wine consultant Jason Brittan.

Limited tickets available - \$100 pp (includes \$40 tax receipt); contact Joan Nienhuis (c)519-312-3893/(h)519-542-3893 or Giresi's Pizza Factory, 146 East St, Sarnia after 4:00 p.m.

A ride home is available upon request.

24th Annual Rayjon Fall Fair

Join us again on Saturday, September 15th from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Mercy Parish Hall (390 Christina St N at London Rd.) for our popular annual fundraiser. We have all your favourites: Frozen Soups, Chili & Quiches, Bake Table, Preserves, Jewelry, Treasure Table, Toys, Books, Gift Baskets, Haitian Vanilla, Haitian Art (Atizani), Tea Room and BBQ.

All proceeds support Rayjon's projects in Haiti & the Dominican Republic.

Fantastic Fabric Sale

On Saturday, September 22, 2018, Rayjon will be hosting a fabric sale of cottons & flannelettes, threads & notions, a few carry-ons for machines, and quilting bags.

Location: Sacred Heart Church Hall (1465 Lecaron Ave.), from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Greatly reduced prices are an attractive opportunity for quilters, crafters and sewers of all types. Don't miss this chance to stock up for your winter projects.

Golfing Event

All are welcome to participate in the Rayjon Golf Scramble event on Sunday, September 23rd at the St. Clair Parkway Golf Course (132 Moore Line, Mooretown) at 1:00 p.m. (shot gun start). Enjoy 9 holes of golf with cart, prizes and a steak dinner to follow at the St. Joseph Parish Centre (346 Beresford, Corunna) \$50 (golfing \$30, dinner \$20). All proceeds will go to support the work of Rayjon's projects.

For further information, or to register, contact Gisele (519-384-8594) or Father Dan (519-868-7757 or dvere@dol.ca).

Thank You!

To our many donors, we must say again a tremendous thank you. With your donation you make a lasting change to the lives of people in Haiti and the Dominican Republic

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