



Faces of Hope Faces of Hope

Winter 2025



People making a difference on Hopeful Ways Projects.

"We provide medical & humanitarian services and educational opportunities to improve the quality of life for the people of Nicaragua. We do this with great love, compassion, and a sincere desire to be of service to those living in impoverished conditions."

Providing Hope. Enriching Lives.

President's Message



This newsletter is way overdue, and not because there is nothing to report. Quite the contrary, so much is happening that there has been no time to prepare one. This newsletter will highlight a few of these latest activities.

Most importantly, the Hopeful Ways Eye Care Mission to Nicoya, Costa Rica was a HUGE success. The preparations for the first Costa Rica Mission were time consuming, but hard work and dedication brought the project to fruition on time. Acquiring government permits and authorizations, coordinating logistics with our volunteers and the Costa Rica Lions, gathering supplies and equipment were only a few of the many required tasks. I can't begin to say enough about the volunteers from many organizations that came together and worked cooperatively and seamlessly to complete the mission. Volunteers included members of Hopeful Ways, Nicoya Lions Club, Centro Educativo Católico San Ambrosio (English teachers as interpreters), and staff and Hospital de la Anexion. About 50 - 60 volunteers worked in the clinic each day to provide free services. 900 people had their lives enhanced with better vision due to their efforts.

In addition to the mission trip, cataract screening clinics and eye surgeries continued in Nicaragua in cooperation with multiple Nicaragua Lions Clubs and FONIPRECE / Ojo Sano Eye Clinic. This program continues to restore eyesight to people nearly blind with severe cataracts. Severe cataracts are the leading cause of "curable" blindness in developing countries.

To fund these programs, multiple fundraisers were planned and executed during the fall months. The recent 8th Annual Bicycling for Sight successfully met its goal by raising over \$2,000, and a "Game Night" fundraiser provided a fun time for both adults and kids while adding another \$2,000 for the mission program!

We are thankful for the time, talents and treasures offered by all of our volunteers, partner organizations, sponsors, and donors. You are making a HUGE difference in the world by significantly enhancing the lives of people in need.

*~ Always in service, **Jim Carlins, President**, 716-909-8942, jjcarns@hopefulways.org*

*"Try to imagine how you would feel if you were suddenly stricken blind today."
- Helen Keller, Address to Lions Club Int'l Convention in Cedar Point, Ohio in 1925*

Eye Care Mission Helps Hundreds with Better Vision

The first Hopeful Ways Eye Care Mission since 2018 and the first ever in Costa Rica was conducted at Hospital de la Anexion in Nicoya, Guanacaste, Costa Rica. Moving the mission to a new country created much additional work, but was very much worth it. Hopeful Ways is proud of its 21 member team.

Each day, 50 - 60 volunteers from Hopeful Ways, Nicoya Lions, the hospital and interpreters worked cooperatively in the clinic each day to provide free services. During the 5-day clinic, 900 people had their lives greatly enhanced by better vision as a result of free eye care services that would not have otherwise been available to them. Services included: eye exams, prescription and reading eyeglasses, sunglasses and safety glasses, and referrals to the hospital ophthalmologist for further consultation and/or surgery.



Above: Dr Norah Lincoff administering eye drops.
Left: Volunteer Team



Above: Cris Ryker & Dr. Kerry Swenson at autorefractor
Left: Optician Zak Chase dispensing eyeglasses



The Mission Stats Are In:

- 900 People Served
- 444 Prescription Eyeglasses
- 391 Reading Glasses
- 62 Referrals for Surgery or Consultation
- 16 Safety Glasses
- 759 Sunglasses
- 800 Bottles of Moisturizing Eye Drops



Above: Hopeful Ways Banner at Registration

Left: Dispensing Area with 5,000 pairs of eyeglasses

Bottom: Patient Registration Area



Fundraising Yields New Equipment

With existing Hopeful Ways equipment still in-use in Nicaragua, preparing for the first Eye Care Mission to Nicoya, Costa Rica required the acquisition of new equipment for the doctors. The “Bicycling for Sight” and “Game Night” fundraisers during Fall 2024 along with a grant from The Phase Foundation provided sufficient funds to acquire a new Luxvision LRK-7000 Autorefractor Keratometer (below) and a new Optometrics TS-700 Portable Phoropter Stand (right, phoropter not included). Hopeful Ways thanks The Phase Foundation and our steadfast supporters for making this possible so that the January 2025 eye care clinic in Nicoya could provide free eye care services to 900 people.





Cataract Surgeries Continue to Bring Joy

During the 2nd half of 2024, the Hopeful Ways “Gift of Sight” Program continued to restore vision to dozens of people with cataract surgeries. These people were nearly blind due to severe cataracts with 20/400 or worse vision in both eyes. Having their sight restored was a miracle that changed their lives.

In coordination with Nicaraguan Lions Clubs and FONPIRECE / Ojo Sano Eye Clinic, mobile cataract screening clinics examined nearly 300 patients in Rivas, Santo Tomas, and San Juan Del Sur. Of these patients, 60 people were found to be nearly blind with severe cataracts and had their sight restored with free cataract surgery.

San Juan Del Sur Clinic



Patient Registration & Autorefractometry



Patient Eye Examination





Rivas Clinic & Surgery

Santo Tomas Clinic





Education Opportunity for Hopeful Ways Interpreter

Hopeful Ways first met Maria Isabel Prendiz in 2012 as a volunteer interpreter for our Rivas Eye Care Clinic. A native of Rivas, she followed Hopeful Ways to annually volunteer at Hopeful Ways clinics in Camoapa, Juigalpa and Teustepe. She traveled 2 and 3 hours to these towns spending 2 weeks of her own time for each clinic. With her clinic experiences and to her interpreter skills, she has been a valuable member of the Hopeful Ways Nicaragua Missions. She maintained her involvement with Hopeful Ways, even as the government restrictions prevent our mission teams from traveling there.



Maria (2nd from the right above) recently won a full 1 year scholarship for graduate studies in Tourism at an Austrian University, including tuition, airfare, and room and board. Her only obstacle was a requirement to translate her official documents from Nicaraguan Spanish into English and German. Unfortunately, the documents required translation from an agency with an official government seal at USD \$50 per page. This expense was beyond her financial limits so Hopeful Ways stepped in and provided funding for the translations, as well as a winter coat and gloves that would be a must during the Austria winter months.

We wish Maria the best during her studies and look forward to seeing Maria again during future Hopeful Ways Eye Care Mission.



Maria in Austria





Many thanks to Hopeful Ways' Partners and Sponsors for their continued cooperation and support. The success of our mission is a credit to their commitment and generosity.

Partners



USA, Nicaragua
Costa Rica



Nicaragua Mission Project

PROVIDING HOPE. ENRICHING LIVES.

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