



## Guatemala Report

VOSH Ohio travelled to San Lucas, Toliman, Guatemala from January 18-26, 2025. Our team included 8 optometrists, 3 opticians and 8 support staff. The Friends of San Lucas, a Catholic outreach, hosted us. This group was really easy to work with and helped to make our mission a success.

After arriving in Guatemala City, our adventure continued with a four hour drive along very narrow and windy roads (partly in the dark!) to reach San Lucas. We were greeted by our host, Eisa, who helped us get settled into our lodging. The following day, after a brief orientation, we enjoyed a boat ride on Lake Atitlan and visiting small towns along the banks of the lake complete with honey, coffee and weaving demonstrations.

The plan was for us to hold clinics in five different villages within a 30 to 40 minutes drive from our base. Each town or village has a central gathering place that we were able to use for our clinics. Ninety percent of the population in the San Lucas area are of Highland Maya descent. We were able to hold clinics in the villages of Tierra Santa, San Julian, Chitlulul, Quixaya and Pacoc.



We received a warm welcome in each village. Our last day was held at the Women's Center in Pacoc where the women are learning sustainable trades to help lift them out of poverty. Many of us took advantage of the gift shop to purchase handmade crafts for souvenirs.

Unfortunately, the timing of our mission coincided with the coffee harvest and therefore, many were in the fields at the times of our clinics. Although the number of people was lower than we usually see, we agreed that we were able to help many people who have no access to quality eyecare. Our final number was 860 people, most of whom needed corrective lenses. Thanks to Changing Life Through Lenses, we were able to have 117 pairs of glasses made here in the United States.

These were prescriptions that we did not have in the 3,000 pairs that we brought with us. These "specials" have since been shipped to San Lucas for delivery. We also had 68 referrals for cataracts or other eye related problems.



We finished our time in San Lucas with a sunrise hike up Volcan Atitlan before boarding our bus to travel back to Guatemala City for our flight home. All of us will carry in our memories the beautiful people of Guatemala and the joy of serving them.

Brenda J Kraus, ABOC  
Director, VOSH Ohio

