SPRING 2025 MAY 10, 2025

AMIGOS News

Vietnam, Costa Rica, Local Outreach, and More!



AMIGOS in Vietnam

Read more about our trip to Hanoi, Vietnam & partnering with optometry students abroad! In this issue we also recap providing eye care in Costa Rica this past December, as well as local outreach in rural communities of central Oregon. Coming up, we're excited to be planning international trips for Summer 2025 to Guatemala and Peru! All of this work to provide eye care to underserved communities would not be possible without the help of our generous donors—Thank you to all of our supporters!

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AMIGOS Eye Care - PUCO Student VOSH

EYEBALL 2025

Interested in sponsoring or donating to our annual Eye Ball Gala & Fundraiser?

Please contact **Anna** (annareard@pacificu.edu) or **Karah** (hopg7000@pacificu.edu)

WHO ARE WE? WHERE HAVE WE BEEN?

Learn more about AMIGOS Eye Care, including our past and future trips, on our website below! ↓↓↓

www.amigoseyecare.org







Vietnam, March 2025

Testimonial by Troy Neilson

Going on an AMIGOS trip has been an aspiration of mine since before I even started optometry school. Outreach and providing equitable access to care is something that has always been deeply important to me, and I've tried to say "yes" to as many local outreach opportunities as my schedule allows. I've seen firsthand how something as simple as updating a five-year-old pair of glasses can transform someone's life—from 20/50 to 20/15 vision, and with it, renewed confidence and function.

Participating in a trip to Hanoi, Vietnam was a special and unique experience that has strengthened my desire to continue in this profession.

The optometry profession in Vietnam is relatively new, with their first graduating class just six years ago. It was truly special to partner with the optometry school in Hanoi and work alongside students, doctors, and volunteers to provide care to many children across three clinic days. Our first clinic was held at a school for the deaf and mute—a perfect place to start, since my Vietnamese vocabulary was pretty limited! This challenge sharpened my non-verbal communication and reminded me that compassion often doesn't require translation.

One moment that stood out happened early in the trip. A young girl took it upon herself to make sure I found someone who could help translate during her exam. She was serious and determined, and after my classmate translated her words, I learned she had said: "Tell this uncle he is not good at pointing at the





letters on the chart." It was humbling. I adjusted my approach immediately, determined to be more deliberate and precise. Later, when I placed a trial frame on her with just -0.75D in each eye, everything changed. Her expression softened instantly into a beaming smile. The prescription was small, but the impact was enormous. It's a moment I'll never forget.

Each day, we worked alongside students and professionals from Hanoi's optometry and ophthalmology programs. The clinic setup was thorough—we used an autorefractor, automated lensometer, slit lamps, and performed trial frame refractions with retinoscopy as needed. I was grateful for the opportunity to improve my clinical skills, especially with 90D undilated exams. Since coming back, I've noticed that I feel more confident and capable in clinic, and that's a great feeling.

Being immersed in Vietnamese culture, even briefly, also deepened my cultural awareness—something that will make me a better clinician for years to come. Witnessing optometry grow in a country where the profession is still young was inspiring, and reminded me why advocacy at every level—local, national, and global—is so important.

Of course, the food was incredible. The people were kind and welcoming. And the work we did was very meaningful. I feel so fortunate to have been a part of this trip and to carry these lessons forward.

McKenzie River, March 2025

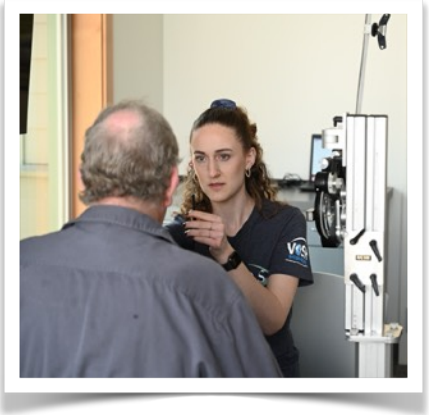
With Casey Eye Institute



The town of Blue River is nestled along the beautiful McKenzie River in the Cascades of Central Oregon. Following the Holiday Farm Fire of 2020, many homes, businesses, and community resources have been in the process of rebuilding, including the Orchid Health Clinic that hosted us. It was here that AMIGOS and the Pacific University Outreach team partnered with OHSU Casey Eye Institute (CEI) to bring eye care to this community. From Blue River, the nearest city with accessible optometric care is located at least an hour away, making it very difficult for people to manage their vision and eye health regularly. Some patients shared that they hadn't had an eye exam in decades—due to time, financial, travel, and other constraints. Over two days, AMIGOS and CEI provided dilated eye exams to nearly 70 patients, over 50 of which received prescription glasses at no cost, and many of which received referrals or recommendations for follow up care. Our team was so grateful to work with the McKenzie River community, and we could not have asked for more wonderful hosts, hardworking team members, and kind patients.

Someone shared a memory of a childhood classmate winning a competition with their slogan, "Vision is color and magic." Accessible eye care allows people to enjoy the magic of their vision and the colors of life for years to come. We are passionate about sharing the gift of sight in our communities and are so thankful for the opportunity to do so!

Thank you to Casey Eye Institute, Orchid Health Clinic, and the people of McKenzie River! We look forward to returning in the future!







Costa Rica, December 2024

The Costa Rican Humanitarian Foundation (https://www.crhf.org/) is a group founded and operating in the recently constructed neighborhood of La Carpio within the capital city of San Jose. Built on an isolated piece of land on the outskirts of the city- the refugees who've founded La Carpio have faced generational poverty and trauma. The older founding members of the community fled their home country of Nicaragua during the country's civil war which took place throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s. Their children and their children's children have now found jobs within the city of San Jose and have built a growing neighborhood for their families. Without Costa Rican citizenship and facing immense poverty, many of the people of La Carpio have not been able to access healthcare or eyecare at all. The patients who came into our lanes are friends and neighbors of the foundation and rely on its support for resources like water, food, childcare, education, building materials and more. Please consider visiting the website linked above for more information on the incredible and selfless work CHRF does for the community of La Carpio.



In total, we spent 4 days working within the foundation's walls from 8am-5pm. Our clinic included a full slit lamp and autorefractor transported all the way from Oregon. We feel so fortunate to have met the lovely people of La Carpio and provide nearly 400 comprehensive eye exams, dispense hundreds of pairs of prescription glasses, readers, and sunglasses, educate on dry eye, and dispense dozens of bottles of artificial tears. We dilated the large majority of patients and saw an array of ocular disease, and were able to write referrals for patients requiring immediate care. We could not be more grateful for this emotional and fulfilling experience!









PHOTOS FROM VIETNAM!







Welcome to the Board, Dr. Morris!



We are so excited to have a new addition to the AMIGOS Board this year! Scotty Morris, OD graduated from the Pacific University with a Doctorate of Optometry in 2018; it was here he also received a Bachelor's degree in Biology with a Music Minor from Pacific University in 2012. He is a current member of the American Optometric Association and the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association. Currently, Dr. Morris works as an adjunct optometry faculty member at Pacific University and as an optometric physician at NW Eyecare Professionals.

As for AMIGOS, Dr. Morris has been involved both recently and in the past during his time in graduate school. As a student, he was part of the 2016 AMIGOS trip to Tanzania, Africa where they helped communities in the Muguere School, the Children's Village, and the Ngorongoro Crater Conservation Area. More recently, Dr. Morris served as one of the attending physicians for the Costa Rica Trip to La Carpio in March 2024, the EyeSmile Event in The Dalles (Oregon) in Aug 2024, and in Beaverton (Oregon) for the Binational Health Fair in Nov 2024.

On a more personal note, Dr. Morris has been a long-time resident of the Hillsboro/Portland metropolitan area since his toddler years. He is hoping to start eye mission trips to Palau at some point where his family heritage is from. As the newest board member, Dr. Morris is excited to bring all he can to AMIGOS and to the communities we serve!

Interested in Donating?

Scan the QR code here!

We accept prescription glasses, drops, and monetary donations. Contact amigos@contact.pacificu.edu for donation coordination help.

Our Address:
AMIGOS Eye Care
Pacific University Optometry
2043 College Way A134
Forest Grove, OR 97116

Upcoming Trips

August 2025:

Ixcán, Guatemala

Zapallal, Peru

If you are interested in learning more about our upcoming trips or donating to help bring eye care to underserved communities, please visit our GoFundMe via the QR code below!



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