

AMIGOS News

Belize, Guatemala, Eye Ball, and More!



AMIGOS At Home & Abroad

This past summer and fall, AMIGOS students, doctors, and volunteers have stayed busy traveling Oregon and internationally to provide eye care to underserved communities. Teams went to both Belize and Guatemala (pictured above), as well as the Columbia River Gorge, the Oregon Coast, and the Portland Metro. We also had an amazing time at our 31st annual Eye Ball in September! Read on to learn more about our activities these past months, and keep an eye out for information on future trips & events!

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AMIGOS Eye Care
- PUCO Student VOSH

EYEBALL 2025

For Sponsors:
Please contact **Anna**
(annareard@pacificu.edu)
or **Karah**
(hpg7000@pacificu.edu)

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10% off and 5% of the
proceeds go to our
organization!

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



Belize, August 2024

Testimonials by Alexa Wong and Kallista Ashton

Traveling to Belize this past August was a humbling and unforgettable experience. Over the course of 4 clinic days, we connected with approximately 400 patients in 4 different villages around Belize. As third year students, this was a reminder of the responsibility and privilege we have to serve others in underdeveloped communities. For many, this was their first-ever eye exam, and witnessing their joy and relief in knowing their vision needs were finally being addressed was truly inspiring. Their expressions of gratitude and the impact of our work on their daily lives reaffirmed my commitment for helping others see a brighter future. We had the best team and I am incredibly grateful to everyone who supported this trip and helped make it all possible.

- Alexa Wong



One encounter on this trip that was especially memorable was watching an elderly patient cautiously walk into the building, holding on to the walls and using anything in his vicinity to help guide him as he was walking. My initial thought was that he had a leg or hip injury. However, as I began my eye exam, I found over 10 diopters of uncorrected myopia and 8 diopters of uncorrected cylinder in both eyes. The smile on this man's face when I put the trial frame on was something I will never forget. He had never worn glasses and told me he forgot what "clear" looked like. We were fortunate enough to order a pair of glasses with his exact prescription, and in the meantime gave him a pair that was the closest to his prescription.

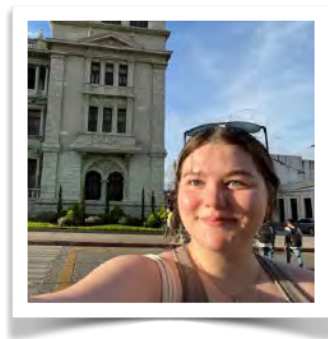
- Kallista Ashton



Guatemala, August 2024

"Universal Languages," a Testimonial by Kalica Kohner

For as long as I can remember, travel and service have been my two biggest passions. And until this past August, they never had the chance to intersect. In partnership with AMIGOS SVOSH at Pacific University and Enfoque Ixcan, I had the opportunity to travel to Guatemala to provide eye care to the people of Playa Grande. I traveled in a group of eight students, two optometrists, and a couple volunteers. Over the course of three clinic days, we saw around 550 patients and dispensed over 300 pairs of glasses and many sunglasses.



The beginning of the trip had a rocky start. The travel down included many obstacles and mishaps, all of which were out of our control. However, nothing got in the way of us making it to our destination on time. I was hoping the journey would not spell out the theme for the rest of the trip, and thankfully it did not. When we arrived at the peroquia, it was storming. Some would take that as a sign of bad luck, but not for me. I am from the midwest, and storms are my favorite. It was like a little slice of home in this foreign place. To me it was a sign that we were being cleansed from our travels and we can start fresh and new. I helped move our bags into the peroquia, and then stood out in the courtyard to soak it all in. Ready for anything.



The next morning was our first day of clinic. We were greeted with a long line of people who had got up early for a chance to be seen. As soon as we could, we got to work seeing as many people as we could. This first day of clinic was very humbling to me. If I am honest, I was a bit overwhelmed by the weight of it all. I had only completed one year of optometry school, and I was being trusted to look at people's eyes to determine if they were healthy, and to give a prescription. I wanted to do well, for myself, but especially for those I was seeing. I wanted them to have the best possible experience and care. It felt very much like a sink or swim situation, and I really wanted to swim. Now, I was not completely in the deep end of the water, as the doctors we came with supported me and all the students. With them, I was able to improve my skills and gain the confidence to keep going. My learning experience went from books, to sitting in the school desk chair in front of me.

The community these people shared in this little village was palpable. It was inspiring to see people with seemingly so little actually have so much. The kindness and care between everyone there and to us touched me greatly. Each kid I saw was patient with me, and they all stood so still to help me see into their eyes. They asked for pictures with us, and we even got a game of soccer going when we had a little downtime before lunch. Though we could not communicate very well with each other, we shared laughs and smiles, and that language is universal.

Our last clinic day was back at the peroquia. This last day, I had a couple of harder cases. One man had been hunting, and his gun had backfired. The bullet exploded, and he got some small metal fragments in his eye. After the accident, he had gone to the hospital and they removed the larger metal fragment. Upon examination, there were a lot of smaller fragments scattered throughout the surface of his eye. We were able to give him answers as to why his eye was still bothering him after the hospital had removed the one fragment. Unfortunately, the fragments were too small for us to remove, but we were able to send him home with some drops that would help aid his healing journey. Another case was with a boy about 12 years old. I had remembered him from the first day. His glasses prescription was drastically different in both eyes, as well as having a large amount of astigmatism. This combination made it incredibly difficult to find a pair of glasses that could accommodate him well. Unfortunately with the craziness of the first day, and the language barrier, the boy and his mother left us that first day unsatisfied. They came back to us on our last day of clinic, and I am glad they did. I had better access to a translator, and I found out that he was involved in a motorcycle accident with head trauma, and that is what caused the difference in his prescription between his two eyes. Even though we did not have a pair of glasses with us to fit his prescription, we picked out a frame, and we were able to order custom lenses at a much reduced cost to him.

Watching that mom fight for her son, and seeing the relief on her face when we were able to do more for him the second day taught me a lesson I will never forget. The love we have for family is the same no matter where we are, or what our circumstances are. Everywhere we go, we will face obstacles. Our world is not perfect, and neither are we. We never know who we will encounter, or how we will impact those around us. The best we can do is love fiercely and strive to be better every day.



More from Guatemala & Belize!



Lions Run/Walk For Sight & Hearing

We had 208 participants run 5km and 10km distances!

Thank you to everyone who came out to support AMIGOS and the Lions club while going for a run or walk! We also had a lot of fun either running or volunteering to help the day run smoothly and the participants safe. We raised over around \$13,500 for AMIGOS and the School of Audiology!



Eye Ball 2024

This year we hosted our 31st AMIGOS Eye Ball Gala and Fundraiser at the beautiful Sentinel Hotel in Downtown Portland. The night was filled with a variety of fun activities, including a silent auction with donations from companies throughout our community, and a live auction, wine roulette, and a celebration honoring our student and faculty of the year. We also showcased videos from our trips throughout the year, ending the evening with students dancing the night away. Most importantly, we were able to raise money so that we can continue our service trips all over the world and provide eye care to those in need. The event also allowed current doctors within the community to mingle with our students at PUCO. This elegant event truly made a night to remember, and we look forward to continuing this tradition next year.

Thank you to all of our sponsors & attendees! We can't wait for Eye Ball 2025!



Students enjoy good food & good company as they bid on activities with their favorite faculty!



Our silent auction table was full of incredible items donated from generous businesses in the community! We even had some unique pieces brought back from trips to Belize and Guatemala!

Summer & Fall Service Days

A look into a few of our events in 2024

EYE SMILE

This summer, AMIGOS and PUCO Outreach worked alongside Pacific University's dental hygiene students to provide both eye exams and dental cleanings in The Dalles. Between the two services, we had over 50 patient encounters! This was a great opportunity for interprofessional service and to improve the quality of life of those in our community in more ways than one. We provided glasses at no-cost and made several referrals for advanced care of eye conditions.



DAY OF DIGNITY

AMIGOS partnered with Pacific University's NOSA chapter to provide over 50 vision screenings to the homeless population. Those that required more in-depth care were given vouchers to receive comprehensive eye exams at no cost! Many of these individuals had never had their vision checked, so it was a privilege to be able to serve the eye care needs of this community.



OHSU HEALTH EQUITY FAIR

This October, we partnered with Casey Eye Institute to participate in OHSU's Health Equity Fair in Downtown Portland. As whole, this event provided a wide variety of services to people in need in the Portland area. Pacific University Outreach and Casey Eye Institute together provided twenty-nine eye exams to members of the community at no cost, providing both glasses prescriptions and referrals to preserve the gift of sight.



COAST SERVICE TRIP

AMIGOS also accompanied Casey Eye Institute to visit Nehalem Bay and Tillamook County over the summer! We love getting to meet people from all over Oregon and help those in our state enjoy life with clear, healthy vision.



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 EyeCare - Pacific University
2043 College Way
Forest Grove, OR, 97116

EyeBall 2025 Sponsorship Opportunities

For inquiries regarding sponsorship for our annual EyeBall event, please contact:

Anna (annareard@pacificu.edu)

or **Karah** (hpg7000@pacificu.edu)



STUDENT OFFICERS AND BOARD

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