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Special thanks to our sponsors who have supported Vision Care in Jamaica since 1999. Without them we would not have accomplished all that we have.

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Thanks to the members of the Volunteer Team who came from Canada, the United States and Jamaica and headed by optometrists Dr. Nancy Chung and Dr. Rosemarie Rodrigues, for your contribution in making the 21st Anniversary of the Eye Care Clinic a resounding success.

Canadian Friends — St. Thomas Health Care Organization (CFSTHCO)

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NEWSLETTER • 2020 – 2023

Since 1999, Canadian Friends – St. Thomas Health Care Organization has specialized in providing Vision Care Services to the people of St. Thomas, Eastern Portland and other parishes. The Group works with the departments of Optometry and Optician at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada and the Foundation for International Self Help (FISH) Clinic in Papine, Jamaica.

Canadian Friends built and operate an Eye Clinic at the Princess Margaret Hospital in Morant Bay, St. Thomas. Fitted with very modern eye care equipment, the clinic facilitates visits of Optometrists and Opticians from Canada and the United States enabling them, with the support of group members from Toronto and support staff in Jamaica, to examine and fit over Five Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty (5,250) patients between 1999 and 2020. On each Outreach Mission, patients diagnosed with Cataract, Glaucoma or other serious eye diseases are referred to Specialists at the FISH Clinic and other facilities in Jamaica.



Canadian optometrists, Dr. Nancy Chung (left) and Dr. Rosemarie Rodrigues (centre) with help from volunteers Pastor Ravi Kandiah (2nd left), Dan Williamson (2nd right) and Verna Andrade (right), at the January 2020 Outreach Clinic.

There hasn't been an Outreach Clinic since 2020 because of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. The 2020 clinic took place from Jan. 13-17, 2020 and enlisted the services of Optometrists Dr. Rosemarie Rodrigues (1st visit) and Dr. Nancy Chung (1st visit), who with a team of volunteers from the Canadian group, the United States and Jamaica, examined 477 patients, who came from St. Thomas, St. Mary, St. Andrew, St. Catherine, Portland and Clarendon.

CFSTHCO is a charitable organization whose mission is to assist in the provision of health care and other services to communities in Jamaica. Founded in 1984, the organization is administered by a Board of Directors headed by Dan Williamson, Chairman; Verna Andrade, President; and Pauline Henry, Vice-President.

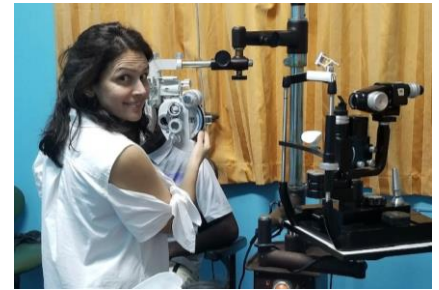
Highlights of the January 2020 Clinic:

- 477 patients examined
- 41 patients referred to FISH clinic for further consultations, some being for Glaucoma & Cataracts
- 138 reading glasses were dispensed
- 144 prescriptions were filled in Canada and returned to patients in Jamaica
- Over 100 children seen, the majority coming from Yallahs Primary and Dalvey Primary
- Patients came from St. Thomas, St. Mary, St. Andrew, St. Catherine, Portland and Clarendon
- Visits by Custos Marcia Bennett, Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Christopher Tufton, Member of Parliament Fenton Ferguson and St. Thomas Councillor, Michael McLeod



Optometrist Dr. Nancy Chung examines an eye patient

WORK IN PROGRESS: CFSTHCO currently liaises with the FISH Clinic to set up a regular eye care examination program that operates at least once per month at the Morant Bay facilities to examine and fit Grade One students attending schools in St. Thomas and Eastern Portland. These negotiations are ongoing.



Optometrist Dr. Rosemarie Rodrigues examines an eye patient at the 2020 Clinic

FUNDING: The organization gets its funding from:

- (1) The Annual Pre-Easter Brunch which takes place on Palm Sunday (a week before Easter Sunday) each year.
- (2) The Annual Walk-a-Thon which takes place on the third Sunday in September of each year.
- (3) Sponsorships and Donations are welcomed from all friends and supporters.
- (4) Donations can be made through our new website – **www.can-friends.ca**

PRE-EASTER FUNDRAISING BRUNCH 2023: After a three-year hiatus due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the Pre-Easter Brunch & Fashion Show returned in 2023. It was held at the Jamaican Canadian Centre in Toronto on April 2, and many persons came out to support CFSTHCO. The MC was Chris Hayles who also provided entertainment along with singer Latoya Mullings and dancer Ayanna Lee-Rivers. President of CFSTHCO, Verna Andrade, coordinated the fashion show, which featured designs by Yanis Allen and Fucha Couture. The keynote speaker was Dr. Mary Anne Chambers, Chancellor of the University of Guelph.

Congratulations to the following persons who received awards at the organization's 28th Annual Pre-Easter Brunch:

- Optometrists **Dr. Nancy Chung** and **Dr. Rosemarie Rodrigues**, for volunteering professional service of vision care in Jamaica
- **Pastor Ravi Kandiah**, for sponsoring and volunteering vision care service in Jamaica
- **Gloria McLean**, for volunteering service to CFSTHCO in Canada and Jamaica



An Appreciation Ceremony was held on the last day of the outreach clinic, January 17, 2020. It was chaired by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Princess Margaret Hospital, Ms. Melecia Linton. All team members received certificates for their volunteerism, hard work and continued dedication.

CFSTHCO works closely with the Rotary Club of Agincourt and other Rotary Clubs in Canada and Jamaica which assist the program by providing funds for the procurement of equipment.

On August 18, 2023, Canadian Friends – St. Thomas Healthcare sponsored staff from the FISH Clinic to screen eye patients at the Free Town Health Fair in Free Town, Clarendon.

FUTURE OUTREACH CLINICS: Clinics are scheduled for January of each year at the Princess Margaret Hospital in St. Thomas. As usual we will have a team of dedicated volunteers who are willing to generously give of their time to help the residents of St. Thomas, Portland and other parishes. Plans are in earnest at the moment to ensure another successful Clinic.



President of Canadian Friends, Verna Andrade (in blue), thanking members of the organization at the 2023 Brunch, for their continued support and dedication over the years.