

Canadian Friends – Vision Care Outreach

Dan Williamson



Introduction

- Canadian Friends - St. Thomas Health Care Organization is a Toronto based charitable group that endeavours to address some of the health care needs in Jamaica
- The Group's long-term goal is to assist Jamaicans island wide to receive quality eye care
- There are 50 members

History

- The group was formed in 1984 by seven young men from eastern St. Thomas, in response to a needless tragic death that occurred because of lack of appropriate medical assistance
- For the first 15 years, the group provided hospital supplies (e.g. hospital beds, blood pressure machines, bedding, etc.) to Princess Margaret Hospital



History

- In 1988 the organization partnered with the Canadian Foundation for World Development to provide additional equipment in response to the devastation caused by hurricane Gilbert
- In 1998, the group equipped a building at Princess Margaret hospital with vision care machines
- In 1999, the clinic received its first patients
- Due to the success of the clinic, the clinic was moved to a larger location at the hospital in 2002, where it remains today





Eye Clinic Overview

- A permanent eye clinic is located at Princess Margaret Hospital in Morant Bay, St. Thomas. Throughout the year the building is used by the FISH clinic for eye examinations for children in the parish
- Each year, the group conducts a drive to collect donations of unused frames, reading glasses and hard cases from glasses suppliers, then purchases the remaining frames needed
- The outreach sponsors optometrists and opticians from Canada and The United States to volunteer their time at the Eye clinic at least 1 week each year to examine and fit the patients with prescription eye glasses
- The doctors are assisted by group members, and the team receives additional assistance from staff at the Princess Margaret Hospital

Equipping the Eye Clinic



2 upgraded phoropters installed in 2019



State of the art overhead projector installed. This is not available in most Canadian doctors' offices

2 portable visual field machines installed in 2016



2 new AC units were donated by the Rotary Club of Agincourt to replace the older units that were donated by Jamaica National Bank



Our Patients



The clinic primarily serves the residents of St. Thomas and Portland



However, we have treated patients from Clarendon, St. Catherine, St. Mary and Kingston, and even as far away as Westmoreland!



Patients who are examined are given prescription glasses from our stock



For those whose prescriptions can't be filled onsite, those prescriptions are filled in Toronto and sent back to Jamaica. This process takes about 3 months



Patients diagnosed with cataracts, glaucoma or other eye problems are referred to other eye care facilities on the island. Most patients are referred to the FISH clinic for further treatment



In many cases, the group also finds sponsors that help with eye care expenses of patients

Our Patients



**Princess Margaret
Hospital Waiting room**



**Patiently Awaiting
Screening**



**School Children Invited
for Screening**



**Shaded Open-air
Waiting Area**

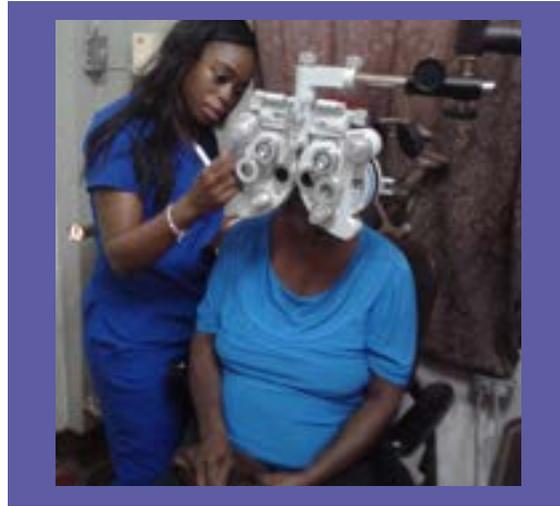
Our Satisfied Patients



Our Volunteer Optometrists and Opticians



**Dr. George Sewell
(Late)**



Dr. Rhonda Thompson



Dr. Camy Grewal



**Marilyn Smith
(Optician)**

- The clinic began in 1999, with one Optometrist – Doctor George Sewell
- Most of the optometrists are from Ontario and the United States
- These practitioners have on average 20 years experience in their field

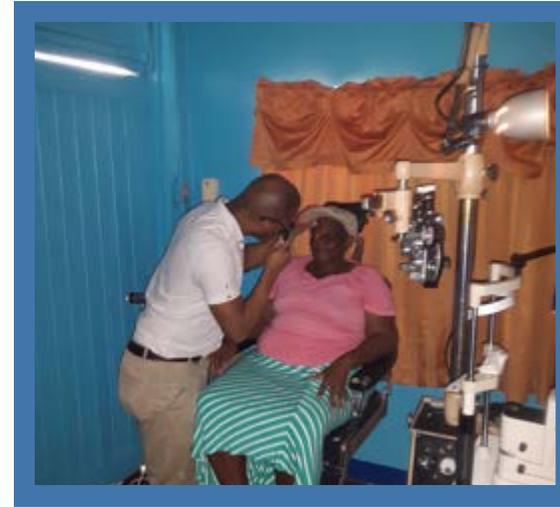
Our Volunteer Optometrists and Opticians



**Dr. Rosemarie
Rodrigues**



Dr. Randall Pauls



Dr. David Spence



Dr. Nancy Chung

- Two optometrists and one optician visit the eye clinic for each “tour”
- The doctors examine an average of 400 patients in 4 ½ days
- The optician is able to fill about 50% of the prescriptions on site from our stock
- One day of the week is reserved strictly for children

Our Volunteer Optometrists and Opticians

Optometrists

- Dr. Murchison Callender
- Dr. Jay Carey
- Dr. Vick Chan
- Dr. Edie Cheung
- Dr. Nancy Chung
- Dr. Camy Grewal
- Dr. Samuel Hoh
- Dr. Carolyn Jarrett (Late)
- Dr. Jim Ng
- Dr. Randall Pauls
- Dr. Rosemarie Rodrigues
- Dr. George Sewell (Late)
- Dr. David Spence
- Dr. Thomas Srun
- Dr. Rhonda Thompson

Opticians & Technicians

- Giuseppe Barbieri
- Veronica Chan-Ng
- German Cuartas
- Mario Dawes
- Richard Simpson
- Monique Sinclair
- Marilyn Smith



Our Volunteers

The volunteers are members of Canadian Friends from Toronto, Montreal and the United States



Each year they spend their own money for travel and accommodations



Staff from the Princess Margaret Hospital also volunteer their time to support the mission

Volunteers





Key Accomplishments

- Provided clinic with eye care equipment worth approximately CDN\$80,000
- In 17 years of vision care:
 - Over 5,500 patients were examined
 - Approximately 4,500 patients were fitted with prescription glasses
 - Over 1,000 patients were referred for treatment to other facilities
- Secured financing to several patients that were referred to facilities with other eye problems

Additional Work

- The group works with the department of Optometry and Optician at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, the Foundation for International Self Help (FISH) Clinic in St. Andrew Jamaica and The Rotary Club of Agincourt to host portable eye clinics around the island
- The group also sponsors and provides eye care at different locations for the health segment spanning the last three Diaspora Conferences partnering with our associate FISH Clinic in Jamaica



Our Fundraising

- The group is financed by donations from members, sponsors and two major annual fundraisers; The annual Palm Sunday Brunch and Fashion Show and the annual 5 - 10K Walk – A – Thon in September. We welcome all donations to the outreach.

Thank You

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