

MSI PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES EYEWEAR OVERSEAS

BY **TUJAUNA WHITE**, MARKETING SPECIALIST/INTERNET/COMMUNICATIONS, MICHIGAN STATE INDUSTRIES



Boys in Honduras wearing glasses refurbished by Michigan State Industries

*IMAGINE NOT SEEING THIS
IMAGINE NOT SEEING THIS*

Unfortunately, this is a reality for millions of people worldwide. Our vision affects our ability to work, go to school, and function in society. These are all important parts of daily life that most of us take for granted. In the US, the number one cause of legal blindness is eye disease. In contrast, the number one cause of legal blindness in many third world nations is simply the lack of proper eyeglasses.

SVOSH (Student Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity) is a charitable and educational organization that strives to provide eye care and eyewear to portions of the world that would otherwise receive no care at all. The organization is made up of optometry students that donate their time collecting and preparing used eyeglasses to be taken on both homeland and overseas missions, where they assist with eye examinations and eyeglass distribution.



A box of used and ready to refurbish eyewear

SVOSH students have been providing this service for over 20 years and in that time have distributed thousands of used eyeglasses and have helped thousands more accomplish what so many of us take for granted.

Donated glasses are first sorted and categorized by members of the Michigan College of Optometry SVOSH. This work is part of the volunteer time required for the students to participate in a SVOSH mission. The sorting process involves disposing of unusable glasses, lenses, and frames. Usable glasses are further categorized as male, female, child, sun, reader and specialty glasses. Many glasses then go to various in-state and out-of-state locations to be cleaned, sorted by prescription, and labeled as part of service club programs. Finally, mission leaders select the glasses most appropriate for their mission, and the glasses are packaged and shipped to the mission location. Each mission trip takes approximately 5,000 pairs of glasses!

Michigan State Industries Optical Lab is proud to be a partner in this mission as one of the sorting and process centers where offenders are given the opportunity to learn valuable work skills training and real-life experiences by contributing to the refurbishing of eyewear to help kids in third-world countries.

Continued on page 22

MISSOURI VOCATIONAL ENTERPRISES

New Products!



3-Season Coat



Maternity Utility Belt



Safety Green Hi-Vis Caps

Beanie Style Knit Caps



Accord Stool



FlexiSpot Sit-Stand Work Station



Study Chair



U-Bolt Door Locks



www.doc.mo.gov/mve
573-751-6663 • 800-392-8486

Continued from page 21

Matthew Yeager, MSI Optical Lab Technology Trades Instructor is credited with creating the **H.O.P.E.** (Humanitarian Optical Prescription Endeavor) within the MSI program to assist with the mission efforts. Donation boxes are set-up at various local Lions Clubs to collect used eyeglasses. Anywhere from 100 – 20,000 pairs of glasses are donated every 1 – 2 months. Unusable glasses are

stripped down and recycled for parts to repair other glasses. Offenders in the MSI Optical Lab in turn, clean, sort, document and package the usable glasses which are transported 2 –3 times per year to the SVOSH program at Ferris State University. The Ferris SVOSH team distributes the glasses to the less fortunate on mission trips to Dominica, Honduras, and Mexico. Offenders in the program learn valuable life lessons while creating a brighter future for others in need.

VOSH Dominica (Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity) Team Photo outside Goodwill Parish Hall, Roseau



Dan Wrubel, VOSH-MI Board Member and Professor at MCO of FSU sent the following thank-you to Matt Yeager and his MSI staff/workers for 25 years of supporting their Mission:

A sincere Thank You! To Matt and his crew for their Years of Service to us here at MCO and SVOSH. For over 25 years now, we through the Michigan College of Optometry have sent Mission Teams throughout the World, we average 5-6 Missions per year, Average Team is 20-25 members, Average number of Eye Exams performed is 1,000 each trip, Average number of glasses Rx, readers or sunglasses dispensed is over 1,500 per trip.

We could simply not go without the help of the Lions Club Projects and Matt's Program through the MI Prison System / Michigan State Industries.

How can you Help?

- We always welcome donations (tax deductible) to help fund our missions
- Eyeglasses are key to the success of our missions
- We are always in need of more!!
- Spread the word! While you may not be able to assist us at this time, please let others know about us so they can help too.

If you can help in any way, please contact us (MI-VOSH/SVOSH) @ (231)-591-2193. We will be happy to provide you with more information about our organization.

Check out our SVOSH web page (just link off the MCO web page—www.ferris.edu/mco). Also check out the VOSH International web site @ www.VOSH.org.

What do we need?

Sunglasses - Sunglasses, both Plano (no prescription) and prescription, are always needed. These are given to all patients receiving an exam. Many of our mission trips are to locations near the equator, where UV rays from the sun

can cause significant damage to the eyes. For these residents, our sunglasses may be the only source of UV protection available to them.

Glasses in good condition - Men's, women's, and children's glasses are all in high demand. Broken frames and/or damaged lenses are disposed of. If in doubt - donate!

Children's frames - Glasses and frames for children are always in short supply. Because of the need, we have optical companies who will make lenses to match the frame if it does not currently have lenses.

Readers/bifocals - As readily available as readers are in the United States, they are a precious commodity in the places we visit. When residents gradually lose their ability to focus at near due to natural aging processes, they are forced to give up reading and traditional handicrafts.

Antique or gold - We accept all antique or gold glasses regardless of the condition. These are sold for the gold content or as antiques. The money generated is used to help fund the mission trips.

Eyeglass cases - Due to shipping costs, only cases that are clean and in good condition are taken on mission trips.