

# A SHARED VISION:

## THE SEVA CANADA COMMUNITY AND THE HONEY & BARRY SHERMAN LEGACY FOUNDATION UNITE TO INCREASE EYE CARE ACCESS



At its heart, Seva—the Sanskrit word for “service”—embodies our unwavering commitment to restoring sight and preventing blindness for the people who need it most. Today, we’re excited to celebrate a remarkable milestone in this journey through a new partnership.

The Honey & Barry Sherman Legacy Foundation has pledged a transformative \$2-million gift to strengthen Seva Canada’s global eye

care programs over the next five years. This contribution will increase access to eye care services in underserved communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, South America, and beyond.

*“We are thrilled to support Seva Canada and its work to expand community-based eye care around the world,”* said Alex Krawczyk, founder of the Honey & Barry Sherman Legacy Foundation. *“This gift builds on the legacy of my parents who were committed to advancing health equity for everyone.”*

Together with regional program partners, Seva Canada aims to deliver more life-changing surgeries, provide more eyeglasses, and increase the distribution of essential medicines. We’ll also invest in capacity-building projects that empower communities to sustain their own eye care programs—creating a ripple effect of opportunity and well-being.

This spring, we’re focusing on increasing access to eye care in Tanzania with our partners at the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology (KCCO). Together we plan to fund pediatric ophthalmologist training to meet the growing need for services, as well as establish an outreach program to identify and treat both children and adults in underserved areas. The Honey & Barry Sherman Legacy Foundation is inviting you to join this effort!

**Thanks to the Foundation’s generosity, donations of up to \$2,500 per person made by May 31<sup>st</sup> will be triple-matched to a maximum of \$65,000.**

Whether through a donation, or by sharing our mission, your support can help us bring the gift of sight to even more people worldwide. By embracing the spirit of Seva alongside the Honey & Barry Sherman Legacy Foundation, we’ll ensure that everyone, everywhere, has access to the high-quality, life-changing eye care they deserve.



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# WHAT'S IN A NAME? A GREAT DEAL.

## The meaning of Seva

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### Dear Seva Canada community,

When I tell people about Seva Canada, they usually ask me how to spell and pronounce our name (it's not as tricky as it sounds!), what it means, and how this idea relates to eye care.

The word *Seva* is unfamiliar to many folks outside of South Asia, but the idea is universal and usually immediately understood. *Seva* is a Sanskrit word that means "selfless service". It's the act of helping others without expecting anything in return, and it's a central concept in both Hinduism and Sikhism. It's our name, and it's at the centre of everything we do.

Our supporters express *Seva* or service through donating, volunteering and spreading the word—

to send the precious gift of sight to someone halfway across the world, whom they will never meet. The gift of vision, freely given.

Our staff and board share a "service mindset" in relation to our program partners, to support them as they both define and solve their own problems. The results are localized solutions and context-specific programs, which are only possible when we serve our partners, and not the other way around.

Our partners also have a service attitude toward their patients, regardless of their means or stature in society. They treat patients with dignity, and ensure they achieve quality visual outcomes in line with World Health Organization standards.

The concept of *Seva* is perpetuated when these patients, the most important, but by no means the last person in the long chain of service get their sight and their life back and so regain the ability to GIVE back and be of service to others once again.

There are many ways to perform *Seva* and relieve human suffering in the world, and vision care is our way. Everyone, everywhere deserves their best possible vision. Thank you for being with us in your *Seva*.

**Liz Brant**  
Executive Director



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# YOUR LEGACY IS THEIR FUTURE

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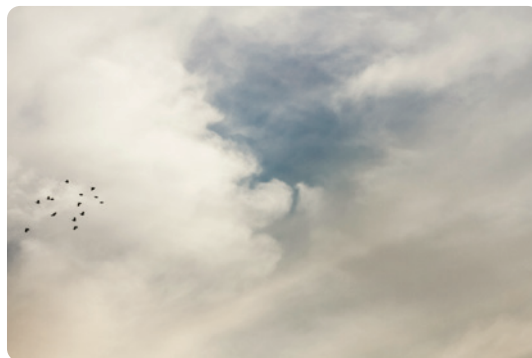
After you've remembered your loved ones, consider a gift in your Will to Seva Canada and give the power of sight for generations to come.

For more information, contact Erika at **604-713-6622** or email [erikakinast@seva.ca](mailto:erikakinast@seva.ca)



# LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

## PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION & RECEPTION



Last year we launched the "Love at First Sight" campaign, featuring beautiful photography captured by Nepali eye patients after their sight was restored through glasses or cataract surgery. The images told the powerful stories of the people and moments they had missed most—now brought into clear focus following treatment made possible by you.

We equipped Nepali eye patients with cameras once they were back at home. They received training on how to use the cameras and documented heartfelt glimpses of their world—families, friends, pets, homes, and even birds soaring through the sky.

Building on this idea, we recently invited our Tanzanian patients to do

the same and take photos of what they love and can now see clearly again.

To celebrate their happiness and to see the world through their eyes, we're hosting a free photo exhibition and reception at the Pendulum Gallery in downtown Vancouver, and everyone is welcome. Visit the gallery with friends and family to celebrate the joy of seeing again, made possible by the Seva Canada community.

The reception will feature speakers, delicious appetizers, drinks, and the opportunity to mingle with fellow supporters, volunteer photographers and videographers, Seva's staff, and board members, while enjoying the *Love at First Sight* photography.

### Event Details

#### Location:

Pendulum Gallery  
885 W Georgia St, Vancouver,  
BC V6C 3E8

[www.pendulumgallery.bc.ca](http://www.pendulumgallery.bc.ca)

#### Dates:

##### Photo Exhibition:

April 7<sup>th</sup>—May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

##### Reception:

7pm April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025

#### Cost: Free

**P.S.** Our exhibition is running as an independent event during the Capture Photography Festival. If you love photography, check out the festival and make a day of it! Visit <https://capturephotofest.com/> to learn more.

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# THE EVOLUTION OF SEVA CANADA'S PROGRAMS

## Seva Canada's Annual General Meeting

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**Thank you for joining us!** On November 14, 2024, we hosted our Annual General Meeting (AGM), both in-person and virtually. This year's program focused on *The Evolution of Seva Canada's Programs*. Guests were welcomed by Board co-chairs Jill Guthrie and Marty Spencer, followed by the approval of the 2023 AGM minutes.

The business portion of the AGM included the RHN Chartered Professional Accountants auditor's report for Seva Canada's fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and RHN was reappointed as Seva's auditor for another year. The business portion ended with the election of the board of directors, during which we welcomed aboard two new board members: Michael Rapps and Anna King.



**Special guests from India –  
Priya Reddy and Dr. GVS Murthy**

Following the business portion, Liz Brant, Executive Director, shared exciting news of Seva Canada's work expanding to support new programs in Peru and India. Liz introduced our special guests visiting from India: Dr. GVS Murthy (President, PRASHO Foundation) and Priya Reddy (Seva Canada program research consultant). They shared personal stories, describing how their life paths had taken them to Seva. They spoke about the work they're doing with Seva Canada to use and share research and evidence to improve programs, as well as their plans to grow this work over the coming years, changing even more lives through the power of sight.

The evening concluded by honouring 30 donors who have supported Seva Canada's work for over 25 years.



**Board Co-chairs Jill Guthrie and Dr. Marty Spencer**

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# WELCOMING PRIYA REDDY TO THE SEVA CANADA TEAM!

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Seva Canada welcomes its newest member of the program team, Priya Reddy. Priya, who was born as the third daughter of a farmer's family in a beautiful South Indian village, showed her motivation to learn from a young age, walking 5 km to and from the bus stop and travelling 25 km to and from the school each day. After completing high school, undergraduate studies and a Master of Health Administration, Priya began work at the Aravind Eye Care System (AECS).

During her time as a project/grant manager with AECS, she successfully conceptualized and managed several projects including various multi-country research projects funded by USAID, and worked toward the eradication of childhood blindness for more than 2-million children funded by Lavelle Fund for the Blind. Priya was also part of the team from Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology that provides consultancy for various

eye hospitals across India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia and Madagascar to enhance their eye care services through a process of training, capacity building and resource management. Ms. Reddy initiated and facilitated a partnership between AECS and the Government of Pondicherry to screen premature children to prevent and cure retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). With her knowledge in research methodology, she is also actively involved in research activities of AECS, and has published several research papers in peer-reviewed journals. She has written many successful grant applications for various multi-country research projects through funders like USAID, XOVA, and BCPB.

Priya left Aravind for a prestigious Fulbright/Humphry Fellowship in Public Health in 2016-17. After her fellowship, she developed and acted as the lead field researcher and first author on the PROSPER randomized controlled trial, the first study to demonstrate that vision care could significantly improve workplace productivity. The trial, carried out among rural, female tea pickers in Assam was published in the Lancet Global Health and subsequently covered in the Economist, Financial Times and BBC World.

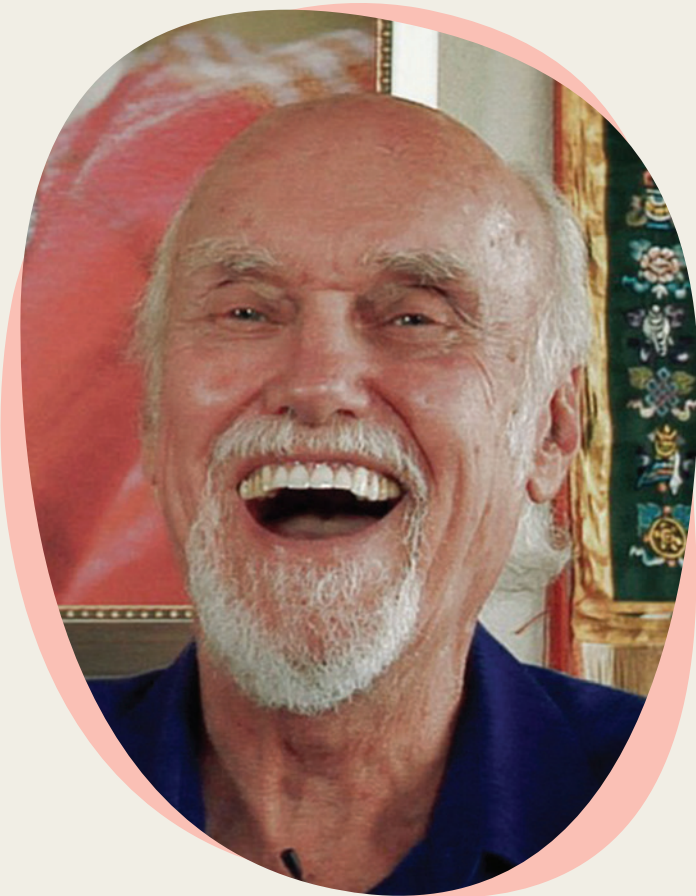
Her interest in public health and research led her to pursue a PhD from the University of Belfast, which will be completed this year. Her PhD research has focused on how to improve prescription glasses compliance and financial sustainability of children's eye programs in India.

Using her interest in public health research, which started with her father in eye camps as a child, Priya will lead an international program of research-capacity building among eye care institutions, starting in India and Nepal, and conducting clinical studies of community ophthalmology innovations, designed to increase the equity and efficiency of eye care programs in multiple countries.

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# THE LEGACY OF RAM DASS

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*When I got involved with Seva, it was like putting on an outfit that multiplied my capacity to be involved with the relief of suffering a thousand-fold. Because this group had such extraordinary diversity of skills and talents and preoccupations, if you will. And we were able at the same moment to do something that was sophisticated scientifically, and that was financially large-scale and responsible and at the same moment be involved with the individual human heart.”*

– Ram Dass

Ram Dass’ ideas still guide Seva Canada and countless individuals, reminding us how powerful compassion can be in tackling global problems. Ram Dass’ legacy and teachings continue to be relevant today, pushing for a kinder, more united world.

Ram Dass, born Richard Alpert, was a spiritual teacher who taught about—and lived a life of—love, compassion, and service. 2024 marked five years since Ram Dass passed away, but his impact lives on.

Along with an eclectic group of public health experts and activists, he was one of the co-founders of Seva. His teachings around the concept of seva—compassionate service, and helping others without expecting anything in return—inspired a generation, and are at the heart of Seva Canada’s mission to restore sight and prevent blindness all over the world.



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# TEARS OF JOY

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**Mr. Gurung after cataract surgery**

Mr. Suk Bahadur Gurung, a 69-year-old farmer from Bharatpur, Nepal, had long struggled with deteriorating eyesight, particularly in bright sunlight. He found it increasingly difficult to recognize people from a distance, a situation that left him feeling isolated and anxious. His worsening vision threatened not only his livelihood but also his ability to provide for his wife and six children.

With limited financial resources, seeking treatment at an eye hospital was beyond his means. But fate intervened when a friend told him about a free community screening camp hosted by Bharatpur Eye Hospital, a Seva partner, just a short distance from his home. Seizing the opportunity, Mr. Gurung and his friend attended the camp, where he was diagnosed with cataracts—a treatable condition that was clouding his vision and robbing him of his independence.

Thanks to the generosity of Seva donors, Mr. Gurung underwent cataract surgery at Bharatpur Eye Hospital just days after his diagnosis, all at no cost to him. When his eye patch was removed, the first thing Mr. Gurung wanted to see clearly were the faces of his beloved family. As his vision returned, tears of joy welled up in his eyes, and the smiles of the eye care team reflected the joy of this life-changing moment.

Overcome with gratitude, Mr. Gurung vowed to share his experience with his community, urging others to prioritize their eye health and not fear cataract surgery. He became a passionate advocate for regular eye exams, spreading the word about the exceptional care he received at Bharatpur Eye Hospital and the life-transforming impact of Seva's work.

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## DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

# TOBY FOUKS

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Toby with Sammy

Toby Fouks remembers the exact moment her world became clearer. At just eight years old, she put on her first pair of glasses and saw individual leaves on trees for the first time. That experience showed her, in an instant, the profound difference that access to vision care can make.

Toby believes in making the greatest possible impact with every donation she gives. She relies on Charity Intelligence to guide her giving and was introduced to Seva Canada through its 5-star rating. What stood out

most was how much Seva achieves with every donation. *“Even a small donation can completely change someone’s life,”* she says. She is particularly inspired by Seva’s focus on independence—giving children the ability to learn, adults the chance to work, and entire communities access to sustainable eye care. She also deeply admires the people doing the work on the ground, restoring sight one person at a time.

Toby’s commitment to Seva Canada extends beyond her generous donations. She actively encourages others to get involved by using Seva’s greeting cards to spread the word. *“By donating or sharing Seva’s work, you bring light into lives,”* she shares. You can get your own cards by visiting <https://sevacanada.myshopify.com/>

**Thank you, Toby, for being an advocate and an inspiring part of the Seva Canada community!**





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# THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE: REFLECTIONS FROM OUR FOUNDERS

## DRS. BEV SPRING & ALAN MORINIS

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Recently, we had the privilege of speaking with Seva Canada's founders, Drs. Bev Spring and Alan Morinis, to reflect on what Seva meant to them when the organization was founded in 1982 and how that meaning has evolved over time. *"I believe that organizations have souls, just like people do,"* Alan shared. *"From the start, Seva was formed by many conversations about who we were, what we stood for, and what we were going to do. In Seva's early days, we were shaped by the pull of the head and heart... and we wanted to take meaningful action that kept head and heart in balance."*



Drs. Bev Spring and Alan Morinis in the early 1980s

Bev recalls that back in the late 1970s, the effort to eradicate smallpox in which she and Alan worked in India was motivated by a desire to reduce the burden of human suffering. That wasn't just a mandate from the World Health Organization; it was also a spiritual calling from the guru of Drs. Larry and Girija Brilliant and Ram Dass. The program was ultimately successful, and the deep collaboration it engendered gave rise to a recognition of the interconnectedness of all people and the importance of alleviating suffering for everyone. This was the model for what was to come after when some of the people who had worked toward the eradication of smallpox, including Bev and Alan, were called together by Larry along with an eclectic group of hippie activists, physicians, spiritual seekers, and public health practitioners. They became Seva.

The lessons of the smallpox program were applied to tackling preventable blindness—a natural progression, as blindness was one of smallpox's devastating side effects. Based on experience with the smallpox program, Dr. Nicole Grasset approached this mission with scientific rigor and a focus on evidence-based solutions, ensuring

programs reached as many people as possible. Meanwhile, Ram Dass emphasized the spirituality of service, believing that how the work was done—with compassion, humility, and love—was as important as what was achieved. *"The process mattered as much as the end goal,"* Bev recalled. *"We didn't want to stomp on anyone or anything in the process of striving for good. This is what made both the smallpox program and Seva so different."*

From its founders to its supporters, volunteers, board of directors, and staff, the meaning of Seva lives on. *"Serving and helping in places of need is such a meaningful way to create purpose in life, which is something I think we universally desire,"* Alan reflected. *"The trick is that we gain so much more from having a purpose than we give."*

As we reflect on the meaning of Seva, we're reminded that it's not just about **what** we do, but **how** we do it—together, with open hearts, thoughtful minds, and a shared commitment to serving selflessly.

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# HOW YOU HAVE HELPED

Your generosity this past holiday season will transform lives. Children will return to school, adults will go back to work and seniors will reclaim their independence.

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This past holiday season, you joined a compassionate community with one goal: to restore sight to children, adults, and seniors living in low-income countries. Thanks to you, their futures are brighter.

Despite challenges like a Canada-wide postal disruption, Seva Canada donors stepped up. Together, we raised **\$253,515**, ensuring life-changing care will reach those who need it most.

**Your support helped achieve incredible outcomes this holiday season, and is enough to:**

- Provide **7,000 children and adults** with prescription glasses to see clearly again.
- **Cure 1,092 adults' blindness** through sight-restoring cataract surgery.
- Run **500 school screenings** to detect vision issues early and keep children in school.
- Conduct **250 community eye screenings** to reach those in remote areas.
- **Restore the sight of 692 children** through cataract surgery, covering their transportation, glasses, and follow-up care.
- **Train dozens of outreach workers** to connect community members with life-changing eye care.
- **Support the training of ophthalmologists and nurses** to build sustainable, local eye care programs.



**Your generosity isn't just going to restore vision—it will restore hope, dignity, and opportunity for individuals and their communities. Thank you!**

# TRIPLE MATCH YOUR DONATION AND HELP EXPAND ACCESS TO EYE CARE IN TANZANIA!

The Honey & Barry Sherman Legacy Foundation are triple-matching donations until May 31<sup>st</sup>!



- Outreach screenings in rural areas to identify adults and children with vision loss,
- Glasses and treatments to correct their vision,
- Surgeries for conditions like cataracts or strabismus, and
- Training local pediatric ophthalmology residents to provide sight-saving treatment for years to come.

This expansion is made possible thanks to our partnership with the Honey & Barry Sherman Legacy Foundation, who are triple-matching all donations until May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

With the Honey & Barry Sherman Foundations' triple-match:

- **\$50 turns into \$200** and can provide 40 pairs of glasses to children or adults
- **\$100 turns into \$400** and can provide 3 children and 2 adults with cataract surgery
- **\$150 turns into \$600** and can train pediatric ophthalmology residents to provide care to thousands throughout their career

**Donate by May 31<sup>st</sup> to triple-match your gift— increase your impact and access to eye care for Tanzanians today!**

The Honey & Barry Sherman Legacy Foundation is partnering with Seva Canada to expand and improve access to life-changing eye care for Tanzanians. This significant partnership pursues the unfinished philanthropic dreams of Honey and Dr. Barry Sherman (z'l), which included creating equitable access to health care, globally.

Your support can help launch a brand new pediatric and adult outreach program, creating a vital link between the doctors and nurses who provide treatment with the people living with vision loss in remote, rural areas.

Your gift today can strengthen and expand the eye care program in Tanzania through our local partner, the Kilimanjaro Centre for Community Ophthalmology by supporting:

**Please mail in the enclosed form or visit [seva.ca/triplematch](https://seva.ca/triplematch) to make your gift today!**

# BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

RESTORE SIGHT AND PREVENT BLINDNESS. EVERY MONTH.

Join ForSight, Seva Canada's community of monthly donors committed to providing the means, opportunity, and capacity for people in low- and middle-income countries to receive surgery, glasses and medicine, so they can build brighter futures. For more information, visit our website at [seva.ca/monthly-giving](https://seva.ca/monthly-giving) or call 1-877-460-6622.

## FOR SIGHT

*"Donating every month makes me feel like I'm making a small difference. It's simply amazing that a 15-minute cataract procedure can change someone's life."*

– Laurent P.

# ABOUT SEVA CANADA

## SEVA'S VISION

Seva Canada's vision is a world in which no one is needlessly blind or visually impaired.

## SEVA'S MISSION

Seva Canada's mission is to restore sight and prevent blindness in low- and middle-income countries.

## SEVA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We are guided by:

- Our belief in equal access to eye care for all
- Our belief that with adequate resources, all people can meet their own needs
- Our commitment to working with international partners to build local, sustainable eye care programs
- Our respect for cultural, ethnic, spiritual and other forms of diversity
- Our commitment to inform and inspire Canadians to join us in achieving our mission

## HONORARY PATRONS

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The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson

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