



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Contact:

Jeannie Barbieri-Low  
805-963-3303 ext. 24  
[jeannie@seeintl.org](mailto:jeannie@seeintl.org)

**LOCAL OPHTHALMOLOGIST DR. JOHN ARENDSHORST  
RESTORES SIGHT TO PATIENTS IN INDIA**

**Travels with SEE International Volunteer Humanitarian Team**

**SANTA BARBARA, Calif.**, January 28, 2008 – Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International today announced that John Arendshorst, M.D. an ophthalmologist based in Holland, Michigan, has successfully helped to restore sight to 152 patients, blinded by cataracts, in India.

As part of an international team of volunteer eye surgeons, Dr. Arendshorst performed cataract surgeries in a free clinic in Siliguri, India in December 2007. Coordinated by the humanitarian medical organization SEE International, the three-day free eye clinic was hosted by ophthalmologist Janak Shah, M.D. Other team members included Deep Dudeja, M.D., a volunteer eye surgeon from Southern California and Nicki Arendshorst, spouse of Dr. Arendshorst, retired and working presently with local township commissions and boards.

Cataracts, the clouding of the eye lens, can eventually lead to blindness if left untreated. According to the World Health Organization, cataracts account for almost half of the world's 37 million cases of blindness.

“The need is so great in developing countries,” explained Dr. Arendshorst. “People don’t have access to basic healthcare and specialized procedures such as cataract surgery. These eye surgery camps draw people in need from the entire surrounding region, sometimes from quite a distance. You hope that what you do makes a difference. When you remove the bandages the next day and the patient can see and recognize their family members, it’s a joyous event. You realize in those moments that you have made a profound difference for that person.”

“This eye clinic represents the true spirit of international cooperation and humanitarian aid,” said Kim Krajeski, SEE International general manager. “With a 30-minute cataract operation, a person’s sight and life is restored. Not only is the patient’s life transformed, but the entire community benefits, starting with the immediate caretaker who can now return to work or school.”

-more-

7200 Hollister Avenue, Unit A Goleta, CA 93117-2807 Phone: (805) 963-3303 Fax: (805) 965-3564  
[www.seeintl.org](http://www.seeintl.org)

### **Restoring Sight and Restoring Lives**

Siliguri is based near the Himalaya mountains. With a population of 470,000 people, it is the largest city in the area of North Bengal. Prior to the traveling surgical team arriving on December 7, the host ophthalmologist Dr. Shah and his local team screened nearly 1,500 patients. Patients were chosen due to the severity of cataracts and economic and social needs. During the three days and nights of the clinic, 152 cataract surgeries were performed.

“The outpouring of volunteers at the Siliguri eye camp was tremendous,” said Dr. Arendshorst. “The logistics of setting up operating rooms, cooking food for the patients and doctors, coordinating the medical teams, and transporting patients to and from the clinic, were all tasks that the local volunteers managed. Adults, teenagers, local volunteer groups—they all helped to make this eye clinic a reality. My wife Nicki was among the non-medical volunteers who contributed her limitless energy in a medical setting—circulating in the operating room, facilitating patient surgical technical support, equipment supply, and transport as needed.”

In the past, Dr. Arendshorst has participated in SEE International expeditions to Tonga and India. On a previous trip to Surajgarh, India in 2005, Dr. Arendshorst reported, “Patients came by donkey and camel cart from 35 surrounding villages, some as far as 93 miles distant (150 km). For five days, we performed surgeries. Each day the exhausted staff briefly rested and returned the next morning with enthusiasm and seemingly boundless energy. I think we made a real difference; although all through this trip we daily observed the seemingly endless enormity of the need in India.”

Dr. Arendshorst is a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University and received his medical degree from Wayne State University. He completed ophthalmology training at the University of Michigan. He currently practices ophthalmology at the Holland Eye Surgery and Laser Center in Holland, Michigan.

### **SEE International’s Work In India and Around the World**

SEE International is committed to restoring sight in India. In 2008, SEE has planned 15 free eye clinics in India in the cities of Khambhatt, Jodhpur, Bhavnagar and Siliguri. Studies show that while there are an estimated 10 million people with severe visual loss from cataract in India, the annual cataract surgery rate is only 2 million.

SEE International is a pioneer in the fight against global blindness. According to the World Health Organization, every five seconds someone in the world goes blind. Last year, SEE International performed sight-restoring eye surgeries for 9,000 people in 33 countries.

In addition to direct surgical interventions, SEE International helps train U.S.-based ophthalmologists in specialized surgical techniques that are appropriate and effective in developing countries. SEE International also promotes skills exchanges between host and visiting ophthalmologists.

### **About SEE International**

SEE International is a humanitarian nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring sight to disadvantaged blind individuals worldwide through medical, surgical and educational services. Founded in 1974, SEE International has screened more than 1,000,000 patients and restored sight to 330,000 patients. More than 600 eye surgeons from 75 countries belong to SEE International’s global network of volunteers. For more information, visit [www.seeintl.org](http://www.seeintl.org).

###