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**LOCAL OPHTHALMOLOGIST DR. DEEP DUDEJA
RESTORES SIGHT TO PATIENTS IN INDIA**

Travels with SEE International Volunteer Humanitarian Team

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., January 21, 2008 – Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International today announced that Deep Dudeja, M.D. an ophthalmologist based in La Habra, California, 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. Dudeja 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 John Arendshorst, M.D., a volunteer eye surgeon from Michigan. This was the second trip to Siliguri that Dr. Dudeja has volunteered on behalf of SEE International.

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 tremendous experience of restoring sight to the blind in a developing country is what motivated me to return to Siliguri,” said Dr. Dudeja. “There is so much need for sight-restoring surgeries. When patients thank you the day after their bandages come off and they can see again, they really mean it. Even if they don't speak the same language, you can see the gratitude in their eyes.”

“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.”

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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-day clinic, 152 cataract surgeries were performed.

“What stands out about this particular eye clinic was the tremendous efforts of the volunteers,” explained Dr. Dudeja. “Local medical volunteers from the community such as scrub technicians and anesthesiologists all donated their time and efforts, along with the SEE International team. Everything in the eye camp had to be set up from scratch. Countless volunteers made sure that everything ran smoothly. It was truly a group effort and amazing to witness.”

Dr. Dudeja has volunteered on three previous eye clinics with SEE International, including two in India and one in Bolivia. “As part of a multi-national medical team, you learn from each other. You also realize what you can do with minimal resources. You may not have the newest microscope that you are used to in the United States. It makes you think on your feet. It is also a great cultural learning experience. For example in Siliguri, the patients expect the doctor to tell them that they are doing well. Even if they are seeing fine after the surgery, the patients want to hear it personally from the doctor.”

Dr. Dudeja is a graduate of University of California, Irvine and received his medical degree from St. Louis University. He practices ophthalmology at Southern California Eye Care in La Habra, California.

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 cataracts 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, 37 million cases of blindness are treatable and/or preventable. Cataracts, the clouding of the eye lens, account for almost half of world blindness. 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.

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