



PRESS RELEASE

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State Street Flags Celebrate SEE International and Local Founder

Santa Barbara, Calif., July 17, 2009 — From July 20 to 27 flags will line State Street to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International. In 1974 local ophthalmologist Dr. Harry S Brown, M.D., created SEE International with a few colleagues and donated surgical supplies from Alcon because he believed that with the right support, a small group of skilled eye surgeons could transform the lives of thousands. He was right. SEE has grown into a global humanitarian organization with a network of over 600 affiliated ophthalmologists who have restored sight to over 370,000 worldwide. In 2009, SEE International will hold clinics in over 35 countries, increasing the number of lives transformed by sight-restoring surgery by about 10,000.

The way SEE International works is simple. Board-certified ophthalmologists join SEE International because they are inspired to give their skills freely to combat curable blindness in developing countries, places where a lack of medical services make it impossible for large populations to access adequate health care. SEE's staff works with a volunteer surgeon in the developing country who gains approval from the local health board, screens patients and prepares the surgical site. SEE also procures medical supplies and equipment necessary for a large volume of successful eye surgeries and packs it so the surgeons can carry it with them anywhere in the world. The volunteer surgeons put their practices on hold, pay for their own travel expenses, work long hours in the free SEE eye clinic for three to four days to restore sight to 50–150 people, train local surgeons, and when possible leave in their care valuable medical supplies for use in future charitable eye surgeries.

The need for free eye clinics in developing countries is great. Every five seconds, someone in the world goes blind and about half of all cases are caused by curable cataracts. Blindness is a

contributing factor in a vicious cycle of poverty and low levels of development around the world. Sight-restoration returns a productive person back to his or her family who can once again work, interact, and contribute to the larger community as they did before losing their sight. Restoring the sight of a single individual transforms the potential for the entire family to work toward a better life. Multiply that by 10,000 each year and whole communities can be positively affected and given a boost toward strong development.

For a lifetime of humanitarian achievement, Dr. Brown has received the International President Award – Lions International; a tribute by the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honor Award, American Academy of Ophthalmology; Lifetime Achievement Award, Santa Barbara *News-Press*; Community Service Award, George Washington University Alumni Association; American Academy of Ophthalmology Outstanding Humanitarian Award; Hampton Roy Medal, World Eye Foundation; Leslie Dana Gold Medal Award, St. Louis Society for the Blind & Visually Impaired for Outstanding in the Prevention of Blindness & Services to Those Who are Blind, and Rotary International Paul Harris Award.

About the SEE International Flag

The SEE International flag depicts a blue background with the organization's logo and the word SEE. SEE International's unique logo is based on the design of the rod of Aesculapius, the god of medicine and healing. Situated atop the staff is the symbol of an eye with the ideogram of the planet Earth inside it, reflecting SEE International's mission to provide sight restoring surgeries worldwide.

About SEE International

Founded in 1974, SEE International is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit humanitarian organization that utilizes volunteer ophthalmic surgeons to provide sight-restoring surgery to blind individuals worldwide. Based in Santa Barbara, California SEE International provides the link between hundreds of volunteer eye surgeons and thousands of patients in over 37 countries every year. To learn more about SEE International please visit www.seeintl.org.

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