



December 2022

Dear Friends of International Eye Institute,

This has been a very exciting and productive year for the International Eye Institute. We sent two surgical teams to work at Hospitalito Atitlan, Guatemala. One team arrived in May and the other in November. We've had the pleasure of working with Dr. Julio De Leon and his ophthalmology fellows-in-training. With donations of medical equipment and supplies from IEI, our surgeons have been instrumental in teaching modern, state-of-the-art ("phaco") surgical techniques to these budding eye surgeons.

Dr. Dance writes from the November team:

"Our November surgery trip was another great success. After 4 intense days of operating and overcoming challenges, we were able to perform 89 surgeries. I could share inspiring stories of individual patients that regained their sight and small miracles that made our work possible, but I think what stands out most to me on this trip, is the work of our fellow-in-training, Dr. Eduardo Ventura.

With our support and funding, and careful mentoring by Dr. De Leon, Dr. Ventura has logged 80 cataract surgeries since starting his fellowship in February of 2022. It wasn't until the end of 4 grueling days of surgery that I realized Dr. Ventura had performed 10 modern small incision phaco cataract surgeries on his own, with little mentoring, and without complications. None of these cases are beginner cases. For Dr. Ventura to contribute in this way to the success of this mission trip is truly astounding.

When Dr. Ventura returns to his hometown of San Miguel (the third largest city in El Salvador), he will be one of only two phaco-trained surgeons in that city. In his career, Dr. Ventura will do more for his country and people than our organization could ever hope to provide."

It is exciting to see how far eye care has come for the people of Santiago Atitlan. When we first started working there almost 15 years ago, there was NO eye care available to the people of this largest city on Lake Atitlan. Now they have access to a full spectrum of eye care, year-round, including up-to-date surgical care.

While the International Eye Institute will continue to provide sight-restoring surgeries to individual patients in need, performed by our traveling teams, our hope is that by also supporting local hospitals, doctors, and surgeons-in-training, we can start to improve health care in sustainable ways for entire communities.

We are very appreciative of your interest in, and support of, the International Eye Institute over the years. With your continued support, we look forward to helping provide sustainable eye care into the future for the people of Guatemala and beyond.

Sincerely,

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