



March 9, 2013

## ***Introduction***

See the Lord<sup>1</sup> (看見主) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation based on Catholic principles that seeks to serve the underprivileged around the world by providing healthcare, Catholic ministry, and education by bringing together volunteers with the necessary skills and the underserved in order to share talent and faith. See the Lord is a tax-exempt public charity established on June 24, 2011 in the State of California.

Planning for the inaugural mission trip began in April 2012 when Dr. Kao made a trip to Taiwan to meet with local representatives. Over the course of eight months, the Board of Directors worked in conjunction with numerous volunteers, local and abroad, in order to make the first trip possible. Two five-hour-long training sessions were held in Berkeley to properly train all the members prior to the trip.

See the Lord held its inaugural mission trip to Taiwan on December 26, 2012 to January 7, 2013, focusing on vision and eye care services. The team consisted of a total of six volunteers: two optometrists, one optometric technician, and three U.C. Berkeley undergraduate students. The trip was led by CEO and founder, Dr. Kelly C. Kao, with the assistance of the Vice President of Administrative Operations, Crystal Wang. The other members of the team included: Dr. Esther Yeh, Wendy Lin, Tai Pang, and Dovi Mae Patino.

## ***Itinerary, Clinic Sites, & Statistics***

Upon arrival at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport the morning of December 27, 2012, the team headed up to the Fuxing Township (復興鄉) of Taoyuan County for a two-day stay. Teacher Lu (呂慈涵) from Fu Jen Catholic University<sup>2</sup> (輔仁大學偏鄉教育關懷服務團隊) accompanied the team up the mountain and at the Ba Lin Medical Clinic they were joined by Sister Anna (黃貴梅修女 [安娜修女]) and the rest of the medical personnel from St. Paul's Hospital<sup>3</sup> (聖保祿修女會醫院) in Taoyuan. The first clinic site was Ba-Lung Elementary School<sup>4</sup> (巴陵國小) in the Fuxing Township. In the school's library, all 68 students were examined in the span of 5 hours in the afternoon. A total of 8 pairs of glasses were prescribed.

On December 28, 2012, patients were seen at San Guang Elementary School<sup>5</sup> (三光國小), another school in the Fuxing Township. Including teachers and staff, 67 patients were examined in the library over the span of 7.5 hours. A total of 13 pairs of glasses were prescribed. The team had a chance to visit the neighboring village of Yeheng (爺亭) where many of the students of San Guang Elementary School reside.

On December 29, 2012, on the way into Taipei, the team spent three hours in the afternoon examining the school children at St. Anne's Church<sup>6</sup> (天主教五股聖亞納天主堂) in the Wugu District of New Taipei City. Of the 13 students examined from the Saturday tutoring and catechesis program, six were prescribed glasses. The exams took place in the activities center. There was certainly a higher prevalence of myopia in the city compared to the rural mountain areas.

December 29 to December 31, 2012 were spent as free days in Taipei.

On January 1, 2013, the team visited Cathwel Service Jonah House<sup>7</sup> (財團法人天主教福利會約納家園) an orphanage located in the Shengkeng District of New Taipei City. Thirty-three patients, ranging from toddlers to teenagers, were examined and eight pairs of glasses were prescribed. Some of the children had prior diagnoses of Down's syndrome, cerebral palsy, and various types of developmental delays. Besides five hours of clinic in the main activity center, the team had a chance to visit with the children in the nursery, playrooms, and living areas. Due to time constraints on January 1st, Dr. Kao returned on February 7, 2013 to examine the remaining 17 infants in the nursery.

The second portion of the mission trip took place in Chiayi County, where the team was hosted by the Chiayi Catholic Mindao Foundation<sup>8</sup> (財團法人嘉義縣私立天主教敏道社會福利慈善事業基金會). On January 2, 2013, clinic was held at the Good Day Community<sup>9</sup> (日安社區), a community built after the devastating effects of Typhoon Morakot on August 8, 2009. Patients were seen in the activity center from the morning to the afternoon over the span of six hours. Of the 33 patients seen, 26 patients were prescribed glasses. The patient population consisted mainly of middle-aged and elderly individuals.

On January 3, 2013, the team traveled to the Dapu Township (大埔鄉) of Chiayi County. The students of Dapu Elementary School<sup>10</sup> (嘉義縣大埔國小) and Dapu Junior High School<sup>11</sup> (嘉義縣立大埔國中學), along with local villagers, were examined in the auditorium of Dapu Junior High School. The school-aged patients were seen during school hours and the villagers, mainly middle-aged and elderly, were seen later in the day. A total of 85 patients were seen over the span of 11 hours, and 47 pairs of glasses were prescribed.

On January 4, 2013, clinic was held in Puzi City at Christ the King Church<sup>12</sup> (朴子天主堂). Students and staff from the local schools, parishioners, and townspeople attended our clinic in the activity center of the church. Seventy patients were seen and 24 pairs of glasses were prescribed, all within 7.5 hours.

The last day of clinic was on January 5, 2013. The team traveled up to the mountains of Alishan (阿里山) to the Xinmei Village<sup>13</sup> (新美村). Clinic was set up outdoors in the open space on the grounds of Xinmei Church (新美天主堂). Over the span of 7.5 hours, 45 patients were examined and 37 pairs of glasses were prescribed. The patients were primarily middle-aged and elderly villagers, with a few children.

January 6 to 7, 2013 were spent as free days in Taipei.

Overall, the team of six clinicians examined 418 patients and prescribed 169 pairs of glasses within 6.5 clinic days at eight clinic sites. Prescription glasses were dispensed to the patients by Dr. Kao between January and March 2013, depending on the availability of the patients and their respective facilities.

### ***Examination Process & Patient Demographics***

Students and optometric technicians performed pre-testing and dispensing. Optometrists determined refractive error and performed ocular health assessment. Due to the constraints of foreign medical professionals in Taiwan, the team provided analysis of refractive error and ocular

health. No treatment of any kind was performed. Appropriate glasses were prescribed for refractive error and patient education along with referrals were done according to ocular health findings. When any conditions or diseases were noted, patients were given the proper education and referred to a local clinic or hospital as needed. When surgeries were required, appropriate referrals were made. Taiwan has universal healthcare managed by the Bureau of National Health Insurance (BNMI), which citizens can readily seek if they have access to it and can afford the co-payments. The presence of universal healthcare allowed for relatively easy referrals for patients. Besides prescribing prescription glasses, over-the-counter reading glasses and sunglasses were provided as needed at the time of the examination. A debriefing was held after each clinic day to discuss patient flow, team dynamics, highlights, interesting cases, strengths, weaknesses, areas for improvement, and where the team saw the Lord that day.

The patients ranged from age two to 87 years old. School-aged children spoke Mandarin whereas most of the adult rural patients spoke only Taiwanese or their local mountain dialect. The main systemic conditions reported by adult patients included: hypertension, Type II diabetes mellitus, heart disease, myocardial infarction, and liver disease. A significant number of rural patients reported work-related injuries, including injuries to the ocular area and the orbit itself. Many reported the lack of protective eyewear when working, which is extremely important since many of the villagers harvest bamboo and other crops. The main ocular conditions noted in the adult population were: cataract, dry eye, pinguecula, pterygium, macular degeneration, and blindness due to trauma. The main ocular conditions noted in the pediatric population were amblyopia and strabismus.

### ***Spiritual Growth & Outreach***

On December 30, 2012, the team attended Sunday English mass together at Kuting Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Taipei. For two Christian, non-Catholic, members on the team, this was their first experience of Catholic mass. Their response to the experience was of respect and reverence. One of them commented that it was an eye-opening experience, and though Catholic mass is different from services at Christian churches, we are praising the same God. One team member did not associate with a particular faith but grew up attending Catholic school remarked that the Catholic practices of STL was “refreshing and spiritually nourishing.” The Catholic members of the group were deeply grateful to share these experiences with their fellow team members and were honored to witness their faith and the traditions of their Church. On January 2, 2013, most of the team members attended daily morning mass at Francis House<sup>14</sup> (敏道家園) with the sisters and patients from the rehabilitation center. On January 6, 2013, the team attended Sunday Mandarin mass together at Christ the King Church (朴子天主堂), a unique opportunity to attend in liturgical and Eucharistic celebration with the congregation that consisted mainly of our patients from clinic held at the very same church two days prior.

Besides attending mass, the team prayed together daily prior to clinic, prior to each meal, and at the beginning and end of each daily devotional. Daily devotions included the reading and reflection of relevant bible passages, usually the gospel of the daily mass readings.

Direct catechesis and spreading of the Good News was limited due to busy clinic schedules and language barriers. The majority of the spiritual outreach was done through patient interactions during the examination process when patients asked why services were provided in such rural areas and also free of charge, the Children’s ministry that provided bible coloring books and care packages that contained bible-themed gifts, interactions with the local volunteers and the media, and encounters with Taiwan natives that were interested with our mission, like taxi drivers and

friends and family members of the team members.

### ***Leadership Roles***

Each team member took on a leadership role in order to carry out the necessary responsibilities prior, during, and/or after the trip.

Devotional Leader: Crystal Wang coordinated and led devotions for each day of the mission trip. Social Chair: Wendy Lin planned and led activities for group bonding during free days on the trip. Fundraising Chair: Tai Pang oversaw team fundraising events. Photographer: Dr. Esther Yeh documented the trip and shared photos with team members. Materials Leader: Dovi Mae Patino maintained a list of all materials needed for all projects, ensured that all material requests were filled prior to the trip, coordinated transport of material, and oversaw all materials at each site. Children's Ministry / Care Package Chair: Dr. Kelly Kao planned activities for children while they were waiting for their eye exams and organized the execution of care packages.

### ***Local Volunteers***

There were many volunteers and supporters besides the doctors and clinical team that made our service efforts possible.

Fu Jen Catholic University in conjunction with Sister Anna from St. Paul's Hospital was responsible for coordinating the first portion of the mission trip. The volunteers from Fu Jen Catholic University included: 呂慈涵老師, 林宏彥老師, 下愛群先生 (friend of 呂慈涵), 顧力豪學生, 康嘉佑學生, 朱家莉學生, 黃于庭學生, 古雅雲學生, and 邱方昱學生. From Ba-Lung Elementary School, the volunteers included: 鄭武信 (巴陵國小校長, Headmaster), 林誠義 (巴陵國小主任, Director), and the administration and staff. From San Guang Elementary School, the volunteers included: 李忠孝 (三光國小校長, Headmaster), 陳瑞美 (三光國小主任, Director), and the administration and staff. San Guang Elementary School was kind enough to provide two nights of room and board for the team during their stay. Sister Anna from St. Paul's Hospital assisted with translating and various support during these two days of clinic, along with Mr. Guo (郭大威先生) at the Yeheng Care Station (爺亨關懷站). Support at St. Anne's Church was from Father Moi Estacio (米達修神父) and 賴貴美老師.

The clinic at Cathwel Service Jonah House was set up through collaboration with Sister Rose Wang (王長慧) and Ruey-ling Yang. The nurses and staff volunteered to translate and support the clinical team during the eye examination process.

The second portion of the mission trip was coordinated by the Chiayi Catholic Mindao Foundation, which is headed by Director Tzo (鄒輝堂). Supporters from the Diocese of Chiayi<sup>15</sup> (天主教嘉義教區) included Most Rev. Thomas Chung (鍾安住主教, Bishop of Chiayi), Auxilliary Bishop Wu (吳終源副主教), Secretary General Pu (浦英雄秘書長), Chief General Guo (郭正利總務長). The clinic at Good Day Community was coordinated by the following staff of the Chiayi Catholic Mindao Foundation: 蕭望生, 唐睿儀, 林佳慧, and 林俊港. Clinic at Dapu Junior High School was coordinated by the following staff of the Chiayi Catholic Mindao Foundation: 蕭望生, 唐睿儀, 林佳慧, 林俊港, and 方淑香. Their efforts were matched with the support of Dapu Elementary School and Dapu Junior High School, including: 張寶宗 (大埔國小校長, Headmaster), 李建彥 (大埔國小主任, Director), 黃俊傑 (大埔國中校長, Headmaster), 葉

政達 (大埔國中主任, Director), with their administration and staff. Support at Christ the King Church in Puzi City was from Father Domi Moi (莫道明神父) and 洪文騫福傳師. From Xinmei Church in Alishan, the volunteers included: Father Piotr Budkiewicz, SVD (柏克偉神), Father Wu (鄔儒迪神父), Village Chief Wang (汪堅雄村長), 石梅香, and 楊佩珍. Francis House (敏道家園) graciously provided five nights of housing with a hot breakfast each morning with special thanks to Chairman Liu (劉振旺院長), Vice Chairman Tu (涂淑錦副院長), Sister Mary (滿詠萱修女), and Sister Yi (伊德萊修女). Ground transportation was made possible by Director Lee (李雪瑛主任) from the Tainan St. Raphael Opportunity Center<sup>16</sup> (台南瑞復益智中心). Lastly, Director Su (蘇秀慧主任) from the Chiayi Catholic Mindao Foundation provided support as well.

There were countless local volunteers at the various schools, parishes, facilities, and villages that offered their valuable time, skills, and talents. Since language was a barrier for many members of the clinical team, many local volunteers spent the whole day translating. Volunteers offered a helping hand whenever they saw a need and the team was very grateful. Without the help of all the local volunteers, the mission work would surely not have been possible.

### ***Expenses & Donations***

Each member of the team was tasked to fundraise a total of \$3,000 USD in order to cover their own airfare, room & board, local transportation, in addition to supplies costs and the fabrication of lenses for prescription glasses. Many family members and friends supported the team members as they fundraised. Donations were made by See the Lord to the local facilities that provided room & board. All expenses of the mission trip were covered by the amount fundraised by each of the six members of the team and by See the Lord. Three hundred pairs of brand new frames were purchased by See the Lord, along with 200 pairs of reading glasses. Prescription lenses for the 169 pairs of glasses were fabricated by Grace Optical Co., Ltd.<sup>17</sup> (得恩堂眼鏡) Taipei and Chiayi, Taiwan at a discounted rate.

Four companies were generous enough to donate various supplies to support See the Lord. Eye Care and Cure<sup>18</sup> donated eye examination supplies, Good-Lite<sup>19</sup> donated eye charts, iCare<sup>20</sup> donated ocular drugs (for future use), Sunny Sunglasses<sup>21</sup> donated 200 pairs of sunglasses, and Bible Vision<sup>22</sup> (明望社) donated 20 bilingual Chinese/English New Testament Bibles.

All services and glasses were provided free of charge to all patients.

### ***Conclusions***

All six members of the team participated in a team debriefing on the last day of the trip (January 7, 2013). A week upon return to the United States, each member of the team was given an individual debrief, which included about 20 questions, to complete prior to the in-person team debrief that was held on February 1, 2013.

After witnessing firsthand the conditions in Taiwan, it is apparent there is a shortage of qualified eye care professionals in Taiwan. Specialized medical doctors, like ophthalmologists (OMDs), are few. According to International Council of Ophthalmology<sup>23</sup>, there are 1,580 OMDs for the total population of 23,305,021, or 68 OMDs per million people (as of 04/20/2012). Many of the OMDs tend to be practice in the hospitals and clinics of larger cities. The lack of appropriate care is especially evident in the rural areas where many of the aboriginals reside. The shortage of jobs in rural areas has left a split generation in these villages - grandparents are left to care for

grandchildren while the working-aged are in the bigger towns and cities. Many of these villagers do not have adequate transportation or funds to seek care. The presence of universal healthcare in Taiwan is advantageous when the citizens have access to the care. Universal healthcare incorporates eye health, however does not include correction of refractive error, like glasses or contact lenses. Currently, professional qualifications and licensing requirements of optometrists and opticians have yet to be standardized in Taiwan. See the Lord seeks to continue working with the Taiwanese people to provide quality eye care throughout the country, one patient at a time, because everyone deserves the gift of sight.

See the Lord is proud that the inaugural mission trip was a success and affords all the accomplishments to the generosity, support, and prayers of everyone involved, from the team members to the volunteers both near and far. The warmth and hospitality of the Taiwanese people allowed for the most enjoyable and unforgettable experience, for which See the Lord is forever grateful. But above all, See the Lord would like to thank God for watching over the team and opening the eyes of those served and those that served. This unique opportunity to both serve and witness faith is a testament of God's love. Though varying backgrounds and language barriers were present, through the sharing of time, skills, and talents, people from across the world were brought together. Over the course of two weeks, students gained experience, doctors shared knowledge, and villagers received the gift of sight. Through the whole process, the goal is to bring physical sight that eventually leads to the spiritual sight of the one, true, and loving God.

See the Lord looks forward to the many opportunities to share the gift of sight. The next mission trip is planned for the spring, in March 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kelly C. Kao, O.D., F.A.A.O.

- <sup>1</sup>See the Lord (看見主): <http://seethelord.org>
- <sup>2</sup>Fu Jen Catholic University (輔仁大學偏鄉教育關懷服務團隊): <http://www.fju.edu.tw>,  
[http://140.136.240.107/english\\_fju/](http://140.136.240.107/english_fju/)
- <sup>3</sup>St. Paul's Hospital (聖保祿修女會醫院): <http://www.sph.org.tw>
- <sup>4</sup>Ba-Lung Elementary School (巴陵國小): <http://www.bles.tyc.edu.tw>
- <sup>5</sup>San Guang Elementary School (三光國小): <http://www.skcs.tyc.edu.tw>
- <sup>6</sup>St. Anne's Church (天主教五股聖亞納天主堂): <http://www.catholic.org.tw/wugu/>
- <sup>7</sup>Cathwel Service Jonah House (財團法人天主教福利會約納家園): <http://www.cs.org.tw/index.asp>
- <sup>8</sup>Chiayi Catholic Mindao Foundation (財團法人嘉義縣私立天主教敏道社會福利慈善事業基金會):  
<http://www.mindaofoundation.org.tw/mindaof/>
- <sup>9</sup>Good Day Community (日安社區): <http://gooddaycommunity.blogspot.tw>
- <sup>10</sup>Dapu Elementary School (嘉義縣大埔國小): <http://www.dpps.cvc.edu.tw>
- <sup>11</sup>Dapu Junior High School (嘉義縣立大埔國中學): <http://www.dpjh.cvc.edu.tw>
- <sup>12</sup>Christ the King Church (朴子天主堂):  
<http://www.catholic.org.tw/en/Congre%20Chiayi/congChiaE0224.html>
- <sup>13</sup>Xinmei Village (新美村): <http://www.ali-nsa.net/user/Article.aspx?Lang=1&SNo=04003726>
- <sup>14</sup>Francis House (敏道家園): <http://www.mindaohome.org.tw/content.asp?m0=3&m2=1&m3=1>
- <sup>15</sup>Diocese of Chiayi (天主教嘉義教區): <http://www.chiayicath.org.tw>
- <sup>16</sup>Tainan St. Raphael Opportunity Center (台南瑞復益智中心): <http://www.straphael.org.tw>,  
<http://www.straphael.org.tw/en/com02.htm>
- <sup>17</sup>Grace Optical Co., Ltd. (得恩堂眼鏡): <http://www.grace.com.tw>
- <sup>18</sup>Eye Care and Cure: <http://eyecareandcure.com.sg>
- <sup>19</sup>Good-Lite: <https://www.good-lite.com/default.cfm>
- <sup>20</sup>iCare: <http://compassionvision.wordpress.com>
- <sup>21</sup>Sunny Sunglasses: <http://sunnysunglasses.com/catalog/index.php>
- <sup>22</sup>Bible Vision (明望社): <http://www.biblevision.org/index.php>
- <sup>23</sup>International Council of Ophthalmology: <http://www.icoph.org/ophthalmologists-worldwide.html>