



Abigael grins after receiving sight-restoring cataract surgery



Abigael's siblings, Enock (top) and William (bottom), also received cataract surgery

The Gift of Sight for three siblings, the gift of hope for an entire family

Young Abigael (8) recently received a transformational gift: the Gift of Sight. In August, she had cataract surgery at our partner hospital in Eldoret, Kenya. Our team captured this heartwarming photo just moments after the bandages covering her eyes had been removed and she was able to see the faces of her mother and siblings clearly for the first time. Soon afterward, Abigael headed outside to play with a hula-hoop and chase a ball around with her little brother, William. She had a big smile on her face as if experiencing these activities for the first time all over again.

To make a happy day even sweeter, Abigael's little sister, Enock (4), also received cataract surgery. Post-surgery, nestled in her mother's lap, she eagerly reached for a bright orange ball (pictured above). It had been a big day for both girls, and no doubt

a bit scary at times to be in a new environment and going through surgery, but they were incredibly brave, and their bright eyes took in the world around them with excitement and curiosity.

Little William (6) also had bilateral cataracts and his surgery was originally planned for the same day; however, he wasn't feeling well, so he had to wait a couple more weeks for his operation. He was so happy when the day finally came for him to have surgery so his eyes could "see well", just like his sisters' eyes.

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When our Kenya team called the family to check in, all three children were upbeat. Abigael was eager to return to school. She said to her mother, "Now that I see well, please buy me books and a nice bag so I can go and learn." She wants to be a doctor someday, so she can help treat others. As for the children's mother, Naomi, she is relieved and grateful to see her children so happy.

"It seemed like a dream when I was told my children would be able to get surgery that would restore their sight," Naomi says. "I am overjoyed to see them playing happily and independently. I feel proud to be a mother of active children."

Now that their vision has been restored, Naomi is excited for William and Enock to go to school. She used to wonder if it was even worth sending them to school only to have them struggle and fall behind the way Abigael had. "She keeps shuffling between the blackboard and her desk to read and write," Naomi had explained when we first met her. "Sometimes when she gets to her desk, she has forgotten what she read on the blackboard."

"When eating, William has to get so close that his nose touches the plate," Naomi had explained. As for Enock, sunlight used to torment her young eyes. "I had lost all hope," Naomi says. "I had resigned myself to staying with the children at home."

Today, Naomi can finally see a positive and exciting future for her children, thanks to the generosity of donors like you and the support of our program partners.



Abigael (right) is eager to participate in class now that she can see the blackboard clearly

In June, the family was visited by a community health volunteer named Bernard who told them about Operation Eyesight. Naomi and her husband were hesitant to take the children to the hospital at first. Despite having jobs as casual labourers, they feared the cost of surgery would be out of reach, especially with six kids to provide for. Bernard assured them that all hope was not lost and that there were excellent local doctors supported by Operation Eyesight who wanted to help people in their situation. Arrangements were made for the children to receive treatment at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, 84 kilometres away.

There are many families in Kenya and around the world with circumstances similar to Naomi's family. With your ongoing support, many more children, women and men will receive the Gift of Sight and the gift of hope. Thank you for your generosity!

To watch a video message from Naomi, make a donation or order a Gift of Sight eCard, visit operationeyesight.com/giftofsight



As we near the holidays of my first year as President and CEO of Operation Eyesight, I am filled with gratitude for the many people who have made an impact this year. From our dedicated staff and volunteers around the world, to our compassionate donors and community partners, so many people have supported our work to eliminate avoidable blindness. Thank you for your continued support, and best wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season.



Abhinav



A primary eye care worker checks a woman's vision during a door-to-door survey in Ghana

World Sight Day a success

On October 14, we celebrated World Sight Day, an international day for advocacy and awareness of eye health.

In the month leading up to the big day, we participated in the EVERYONE COUNTS Global Challenge organized by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB). The goal was to get one million people to pledge to get an eye exam or to care for their eyes. Thanks to global efforts, IAPB smashed their goal, receiving over 3.6 million pledges!

During the week of World Sight Day, our global team screened nearly 4,500 people, performed or booked 270 cataract surgeries, provided 297 pairs of prescription eyeglasses and trained 28 community health nurses in primary eye care.

In Canada, The Alex hosted a free eye screening event in Calgary in partnership with Operation Eyesight and Essilor Vision Foundation Canada. In addition, our digital awareness campaign reached over 46,000 people, encouraging them to take the eye care pledge and to learn more about why everyone counts.

Visit operationeyesight.com/worldsightday to see more photos from the field.



An ophthalmologist performs cataract surgery in Kitale County Referral Hospital in Kenya



This new vision centre, equipped with teleophthalmology technology, was inaugurated in partnership with C.L. Gupta Eye Institute, India



Before the borehole in her village was fixed, Karen had to fetch water from this hole in the ground



Karen smiles as she pumps fresh water from the recently rehabilitated borehole in her village

Rehabilitated boreholes lead to safer, healthier communities

In June 2021, Karen and her husband welcomed a healthy baby boy, Peter. Like most new mothers, Karen was overjoyed but also exhausted. This exhaustion was compounded by the fact that the borehole in Nkumbaisha, her village in Zambia, had stopped working in May 2020.

Without a functional borehole, she had to fetch water from a ditch dug in the nearby marsh. Not only was the water dirty, but it was also difficult to reach; the ditch was quite steep and slippery, and lifting the heavy buckets out of it required considerable physical strength. This was especially challenging for Karen while she was pregnant and for the first few weeks after giving birth.

With support from donors like you, the borehole in Nkumbaisha was rehabilitated in July 2021, as part of our efforts to prevent the spread of blinding trachoma. For Karen and many other mothers, this was a turning point in their lives and a huge source of joy.

“It used to take me more than two hours to fetch a single bucket of water,” Karen explained. “Now, I can access clean water within five minutes. I am extremely relieved! This will help us improve our hygiene and give me more time to focus on my son.”

A small gift in your will can have a big impact

Many people believe that they can't support both their loved ones and their favourite cause with bequests left in their will. The truth is, just a small percentage of your estate left to a not-for-profit can have a big impact, while still taking care of your loved ones.

Learn more about the impact your will can have today by trying out the free and easy legacy calculator on our Will Power page:

willpower.ca/charities/operation-eyesight



Chiri is grateful for the community health worker who helped her get her diabetes under control so she could go for cataract surgery. Now she can tend to her garden again.

Community health worker goes above and beyond


Chiri lives in Thankot, Nepal where she loves helping on the family farm and looking after her grandchildren. About a year ago, her vision began to get cloudy. Gradually, it became difficult for her to go about her daily tasks unassisted. Not wanting to lose her independence, Chiri continued to try to do things on her own, until she injured her head during a bad fall. Her family didn't know what to do. They feared her vision – and her independence – would be gone permanently.


Fortunately, an Operation Eyesight-trained community health worker named Meena visited their house as part of her door-to-door screenings. Meena diagnosed Chiri with cataracts, but Chiri was afraid to go for surgery because she also has diabetes and struggled to keep her blood sugar stable. Over the next few months, Meena regularly visited Chiri to help her stabilize her blood sugar. Once it was safe for her to receive surgery, Meena escorted Chiri the 15 kilometres to Nepal Eye Hospital for the operation. With her diabetes now under control and her vision restored, Chiri is back to her normal life and doing better than ever.

We're so grateful for our community health workers. Their dedication to their communities drives them to go above and beyond to ensure that good vision and healthy eyes are in the reach of as many people as possible.

Holiday closure

Our Calgary office will be closed from Dec. 24, 2021 to Jan. 2, 2022. If you'd like to make a donation and receive a 2021 tax receipt, we encourage you to call us before the holiday break or visit our website to donate online before Dec. 31.

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