



March 2018

IEC's Carla Laverenz Reflects on "Sharing A Legacy" Trip to Nicaragua

Last month we told you a bit about Isthmus Eye Care Optometric Technician Carla Laverenz preparing to visit Nicaragua as part of a mission trip organized by Sharing A Legacy, a small non-profit organization based in Campbellsport, Wisconsin. Carla and a group of about 15 others spent 10 days of February in the small Nicaraguan mountain town of Siuna, working from sun up to sun down providing eye exams and other services to hundreds of patients each day.

The Sharing A Legacy group:

- Saw more than 900 patients of all ages - from babies to 90-year-olds - from 186 different surrounding communities; many traveled several hours on foot, on horseback or by bus to receive vision care.
- Gave donated sunglasses to all patients and more than 800 pairs of eyeglasses to patients, including 70 pairs requiring special prescriptions which will be custom made back in Wisconsin and shipped to Nicaragua.
- Distributed school supplies, personal hygiene items and other necessities.

The group saw many children, including some who were possibly thought to have cognitive or learning disabilities because they were unable to read. In some cases, providing these children with the correct eyeglasses helped them be able to see and read letters for the first time. In other tougher moments, patients were found to have more significant vision or health issues that required them to be immediately referred to MINSAs, the Nicaraguan Health Ministry, for surgery or other treatment.

"All of the people we saw, even the most difficult cases that we could not fully treat, were so grateful for our involvement in some way," says Carla. "Although the group was there to help them, we were also able to get a lot out of it, too. The whole experience was so humbling, to be able to serve them, learn from them and experience their culture and their beautiful country."

Due to the amount of coordination and preparation, this Sharing A Legacy mission trip happens every other year. This was Carla's second trip with the group, and she hopes to have the opportunity

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What is CareCredit?

At Isthmus Eye Care, we are committed to helping patients navigate payment options whether through their medical insurance or other avenues. One of these other avenues is CareCredit. CareCredit has been providing a valuable financing option for treatments and procedures that typically are not covered by insurance, or for times when insurance doesn't cover the full amount. It can also be used to pay for deductibles and co-payments. While CareCredit functions somewhat like a credit card, there are often lower financing rates and other benefits that are not typical of credit cards. If you're interested in exploring [CareCredit](#) as a financial option, our team is happy to assist you and provide



IEC Recognized by Optometry Giving Sight

We are pleased to announce that Isthmus Eye Care has been recognized as a Chairman's Club member by Optometry Giving Sight. The Chairman's Club designation acknowledges donors who have contributed a total of \$12,000 or more over the course of a year. We are extremely thankful to the patients and customers that generously support our annual and ongoing efforts to raise funds for Optometry Giving Sight - we would not be able to achieve this level of support without you!



March is Save Your Vision Month

Nearly every month offers different opportunities to shine a spotlight on, and generate awareness of, different health and wellness issues. We at Isthmus Eye Care, of course, put special focus on and pay extra attention to eye care. To celebrate Save Your Vision Month, we offer the following top 10 list to help patients ensure they are putting their vision and eye health first.

1. Make sure to have an annual, comprehensive eye exam by a qualified optometrist.
2. Tone down the tech by taking appropriate breaks from the screen. We recommend the 20/20/20 rule: at least every 20 minutes, take a break for 20 seconds and focus on something at least 20 feet away.
3. Protect your eyes, whether at work or at play, with proper sunglasses or safety glasses.
4. "Eat the rainbow" for eye health: bright orange carrots and shiny red tomatoes deliver beta-carotene; while dark leafy greens including spinach and kale are full of antioxidants and offer a wide variety of vitamins and minerals (as do brightly colored berries).
5. Check your family history for diabetes or high blood pressure, which can increase your risk for sight-threatening eye diseases.
6. Got moving! Research suggests that regular exercise, even walking, can reduce the risk of age-related macular degeneration by up to 70 percent.
7. Stay hydrated by drinking the recommended eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day.
8. Sleep is critical for overall wellness, including eye health, so try to log eight hours of sleep a night.
9. Even if you are tired, try to avoid rubbing your eyes.
10. Quit smoking - or, better yet, never start!

Medicare Card Changes April 1

We would like to remind our patients with Medicare that beginning April 1 your Medicare ID number will change to a unique ID number. Please bring your new Medicare card with you to all appointments so that we may submit your visit to your insurance. Please contact us with any questions.

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Last week three of our doctors and a handful of our staff provided vision screening for children at Goodman Community Center. "This preschool vision screening was a great opportunity



for us to reach out to the community and help raise awareness of the importance of eye health and vision in children," says Dr. Callie Maursetter. "The Goodman Center is such a wonderful resource for so many families, and we are excited to partner with them to help detect kids that may encounter obstacles in their learning due to vision or eye health concerns."