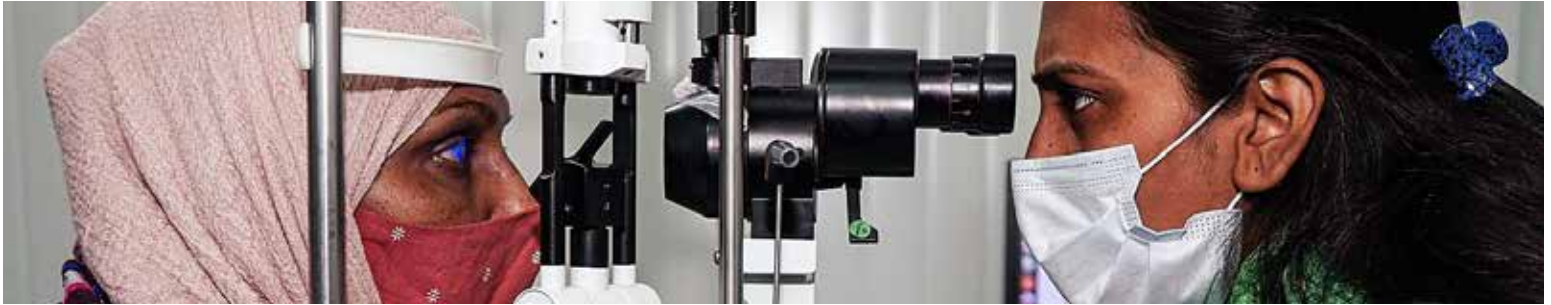




**Combat Blindness**  
INTERNATIONAL

# SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER



## GIVE THE GIFT OF SIGHT FOR A LIFETIME



Become a monthly ally and give a transformational gift at [combatblindness.org/donate](https://combatblindness.org/donate)

### **\$5/MONTH**

Give someone sight so they can return to work.

### **\$10/MONTH**

Give sight to 4 individuals so they can contribute to their community.

### **\$15/MONTH**

Give sight to a child (support for eye surgery) that will empower them to return to school.

**Dear CBI family and friends,**

**I hope you and your loved ones are healthy, happy and enjoying the start of summer.**

As we all emerge from the shadows of the pandemic, we at CBI continue to be in awe of our partners' resilience and strength as we serve so many men, women and children in need. True to our mission, we are continuing to explore innovative ways to not only reach those without access to eyecare, but also empower women.

In this newsletter, CBI board member, Choton Basu shares details from his recent visit with our partners, Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH) in India, where he spent time with both the Aadya screeners and SCEH's Certified Ophthalmic Paramedics (COP). The trip was life-changing for Choton.

Also, this year, we are launching our Monthly Ally Program making it easier than ever to contribute towards our initiatives. When you join CBI's Monthly Ally Program, you can see the impact of your support over the entire year by providing much needed sustainable funding. For a small amount, you are ensuring access to eyecare for some of the most vulnerable people in the world. Go to [combatblindness.org/donate](https://combatblindness.org/donate) to learn how you can make a transformational impact.

Finally, I am pleased to invite you to our virtual World Sight Day event on Thursday, October 13. During this online event, you'll learn all about our sight-restoring impact so far this year, including a glimpse into the life of a cataract patient.

We encourage you to register today at [combatblindness.org/world-sight-day](https://combatblindness.org/world-sight-day).

We are most grateful to you for opening the door to opportunities for so many men, women and children who need our help.

**With gratitude,**

**Reena Chandra Rajpal, MPH**  
**President & Executive Director**



Choton Basu with SCEH staff and COP students.

## AADYA UPDATE

As the COVID pandemic entered a second year, Combat Blindness International, Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH) and University of Wisconsin Enactus met that challenge by launching a revolutionary new effort to ensure access to quality eye care in low-income rural communities.

The Aadya Initiative brings vision screeners and mobile technology to the very doorsteps of the rural poor. By training teams of women to conduct door-to-door screenings using a custom-built smartphone screening survey, Aadya is reaching significantly more people in less



Woman getting her refraction checked by an Aadya screener.

time than conventional screening efforts while promoting gender equity by equipping women with training, patient skills, and jobs with decent wages.

The Aadya Initiative entered Phase II from October 2021 to March 2022. In a six-month period, over 63,000 people were screened by the Aadya screeners. In addition, in Phase II, we learned that over 99% of those screened had never received an eye exam.

In Phase III, we have recruited 17 new Aadya screeners to join the

existing screeners. They will screen villages around 3 vision centers south and west of SCEH's surgical center in Saharanpur. The focus of Phase III will be on perfecting our process for recruitment, training, and implementation, and testing the sustainable business model. We want to be able to replicate this service model throughout India and other countries. But the ultimate goal is to ensure quality, equitable eye care to those who need it - to ensure eyecare for everyone.

## CHOTON'S STORY

In March 2022, as the pandemic was ending, I finally mustered up the courage to visit India. Despite pandemic-related rules in place, the fear of infection, quarantine and the unexpected was a reality. I am glad I went because it truly was a life changing experience. After 2 years of meeting with our partners online, it was wonderful to finally meet face-to-face. I toured the historic Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH), visited the current cohort of Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic (COP) students, and spent time with Dr. Umang Mathur and his incredible team that have given SCEH the stellar reputation that it deserves. I had several takeaways from my trip about our programs, our partners and the people who are at the center of all these programs.

First, the people and partners Combat Blindness International works with are the key to our collective success – the passion and dedication the SCEH doctors, nurses, technicians, and staff exhibit is wonderful to experience. They are engaged, curious and have a problem-solving attitude. It was clear that they have a keen understanding of the difference they are making in the lives of the patients and their families every day and the impact they were having in their fight against preventable blindness.

The second big takeaway for me started with the strategy sessions with Dr Umang Mathur and others in the SCEH leadership team. They have a definite plan and have started taking steps towards the future. These sessions made me even more

excited that CBI has this unique relationship with Dr. Shroff Charity Eye Hospital. During my meetings with the current cohort of COP technicians, I realized that we are literally transforming the basic fabric of their lives and a socio-economic transformation is starting to happen.

Seeing all the pieces of our partnership and collaboration coming together was transformational for me. The sense of clarity I feel about the work we are doing makes every effort worth it. I am completely committed to these projects and the strategic vision that is unfolding. CBI, together with Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital, are on a unique journey to make our projects self-sustaining. That is the future.

## AMY MURRAY'S STORY

Fifteen years ago, my naïve view of the world changed. Even as an adult, I foolishly believed that everyone's basic needs were met until I accompanied Combat Blindness International and its founder, Dr. Suresh Chandra, to India.

While I anticipated my journey to India to be a humbling, educational and an eye-opening experience, I did not expect the degree to which I would be affected and how that experience would change my perception of humanity. My time in India with CBI was primarily spent in the free clinics of the large eye hospitals. Specifically, I witnessed grandparents who were able to see the smiles on their grandchildren's faces for the first time in years after receiving sight restoring cataract surgery. However, there were

times where fighting back tears of heartache was near impossible. Looking into the eyes of a child who faced a lifetime of little to no vision in one eye from a simple corneal ulcer, that had it been diagnosed and treated timely, would have healed without scarring.

My confidence and trust in CBI came from personally witnessing their commitment to their mission to eliminate preventable blindness worldwide by providing sustainable, equitable solutions. This is why I continue to support Combat Blindness International through financial contributions over the years but more so, why I did not hesitate to join their Board of Directors. Most importantly, I will forever be grateful for the people that I met through Combat Blindness International,



Amy Murray with a child during her trip to India.

fellow board members, donors, patients, their families and the dedicated hospital staff and doctors who treat them. Each one of them in their own way has had a hand in changing my view of the world.





**Combat Blindness**  
INTERNATIONAL

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## BECOME A CBI ALLY!

- Be a monthly donor and see your impact throughout the year.
- Be a CBI Volunteer.
- Follow, like and share our posts on social media.
- Have your company match your gift and double your impact.



## SAVE THE DATE!

**WORLD SIGHT DAY** 

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2022

### A Virtual Event

### More Details to Come

Visit [combatblindness.org/world-sight-day](http://combatblindness.org/world-sight-day) to register for CBI's World Sight Day event.

Join our festive online celebration highlighting CBI's impact and the people we serve, featuring a fun silent auction, and more. **The entire event is free!**

