



SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER



TAKE CBI'S BIRTHDAY CHALLENGE!



Everyone loves a birthday party — especially when gifts are involved!

You can give the precious gift of sight during **Combat Blindness International's 37th Birthday Challenge, June 24-25, 2021.**

Our challenge? Provide life-changing cataract surgery to at least 100 people.

Help change others' lives overnight by contributing at combatblindness.org/donate/.

Thank you!

Dear CBI family and friends,

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

While the COVID pandemic has begun to recede in certain parts of the world, the second wave has taken a heavy toll in India, adversely affecting our partners there. We hold them close in our thoughts.

If there is one thing that the pandemic has taught us at CBI, it is that **we all** can play a key role in strengthening our partners so they can continue serving men, women and children in need — even through times of crisis.

You can support our work in these challenging times by taking part in our **June 24-25 CBI Birthday Celebration**, featuring a challenge to give vision to 100 people (details at left). **And, we're pleased to invite you to our virtual World Sight Day event on Thursday, October 14.**

During this online event, you'll learn all about our sight-restoring impact so far this year. You'll also discover how technology and innovation can reduce global blindness in our lively talk with **Kovin Naidoo**, senior vice president of inclusive business, philanthropy and social impact at Essilor, a world leader in ophthalmic optics.

And, we'll have a fun online silent auction, including international art, jewelry, enriching experiences and more!

We encourage you to register today at combatblindness.org/world-sight-day.

Thank you for making a transformative difference in the lives of visually impaired and blind people who need our help.

With gratitude,

Reena Chandra Rajpal, MPH
President & Executive Director

SHAKTI: COMBATING BLINDNESS, EMPOWERING WOMEN

Earlier this year, CBI collaborated with key partners to launch an exciting new initiative to address the severe shortage of eye health professionals in remote, low-income regions.

The “Shakti” initiative offers a self-sustaining business model for reducing preventable blindness by bringing vital eye-screening personnel and technology literally to the doorsteps of the rural



Shakti screeners use a mobile survey on their smartphones to gather screening data door-to-door in remote villages.

poor. It achieves this by training teams of women technicians who go door-to-door in villages to conduct vision screenings using a smartphone-based screening survey. If needed, these technicians also dispense eyeglasses and make referrals for follow-up treatment.

“Shakti could be a game changer in advancing CBI’s mission by dramatically increasing vision screenings among the most vulnerable, underserved people,” says Reena Chandra Rajpal, CBI’s executive director. “It also creates pathways to prosperity for the women vision screeners of Shakti, which means ‘power’ in Hindi.”

Expand Shakti’s
impact — visit
[combat
blindness.org/
shakti-donate](https://combatblindness.org/shakti-donate)
today!

At the heart of Shakti is Dr. Shroff’s Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH), which recruits, trains and equips the women vision screeners, and serves as the main operational and logistical partner. Students in SCEH’s Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic Program served as Shakti’s very first screening team during Phase 1.

“In a relatively short time frame, this talented team of young women screened 2,841 people who otherwise would have little to no eye care,” says Umang Mathur, MD, Shroff’s executive director.

The “brains” behind Shakti is the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater chapter of Enactus, a global student/business organization dedicated to entrepreneurial social action. The savvy team of UW-Whitewater students designed the self-sustaining, scalable business model that literally will “power” the Shakti initiative, so it also can be replicated in other countries.



Students in SCEH’s Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic Program receive intensive training before conducting mobile vision screenings.



Those requiring eyeglasses receive them from Shakti workers on the spot.

In fact, the students won the 2021 Enactus national championship with their groundbreaking work on Shakti, and they will represent the United States at the Enactus World Cup in October.

“Shakti was a big win for the students, and will be an even bigger win for Combat Blindness International and the people it serves,” says CBI board member Choton Basu, who is a professor of information technology at UW-Whitewater as well as the Enactus faculty advisor on campus.

And SAP, a world leader in enterprise software, was a crucial technology partner in Phase 1 through its One Billion Lives social entrepreneurship initiative. SAP technology provided the foundation for the mobile survey used by Shakti screeners in the field.

“The Shroff team, SAP and the UW-Whitewater Enactus students were great partners in this effort,” says Reena. “This is what CBI does best: collaborating with others and experimenting with new ideas to change the status quo when it comes to preventable blindness.”

MISSION JYOTI 1,000 ACCOMPLISHED!

We are pleased to announce the successful completion of “Mission Jyoti 1,000,” a joint effort between CBI and the Jayapriya Medical Foundation (JMF), part of Jayapriya Eye Hospital in Hubli, India. Through CBI’s support, 1,000 impoverished people received free cataract surgeries.

“In a matter of months, JMF transformed 1,000 lives, thanks to the incredible generosity of CBI’s caring donors,” says Peter Holm, MD, CBI’s vice chairman and chief medical officer. “This impact will be felt for generations to come.”



Thanks to your support, 1,000 people can see again via the successful “Mission Jyoti 1,000” initiative.



CBI’s support for Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital comes at a crucial time.

RESTORING SIGHT IN KENYA

Combat Blindness International has renewed its support for cataract surgeries at Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital (LSEH), a longstanding CBI partner in Nairobi, Kenya. Through its outreach programs, LSEH has served over 2 million disadvantaged people since 1997.

Understandably, the pandemic has affected LSEH’s traditional vision screening camps and outreach efforts. However, it found new ways to treat those in need through its satellite facilities and local partners.

“Because of your organization’s generous supporters, we will be able to open the doors to so many more people who are suffering from reversible blindness,” says Manilal Dodhia, MD, LSEH’s board chairman.



Combat Blindness
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SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US

Why do *you* support CBI?
Send a brief video clip
or short message to
info@combatblindness.org
and we'll feature it on social
media and at our World
Sight Day event this fall!



SHOP ONLINE, GIVE OTHERS SIGHT

If you enjoy shopping on Amazon, this message is just for you! You can support CBI via the amazing AmazonSmile program in 3 easy steps:

- 1) Visit smile.amazon.com and log in to your Amazon account.
- 2) Select Combat Blindness International, Inc.
- 3) Follow the on-screen instructions.

A portion of your purchases will go toward CBI's sight-restoring mission. Shopping online never felt this good!



Combat Blindness International is dedicated to eliminating preventable blindness worldwide by providing sustainable, equitable solutions for sight through partnerships and innovation.