

Grandparents Help Take Vision To The World

Grandparents now have a chance to share the joy of giving sight with their grandchildren.

It's astonishing that globally some 250 million people are blind or vision impaired simply because they don't have a pair of glasses.

The International Centre for Eyecare Education (ICEE), has just developed a campaign called '**Grandparents with a Grand Vision**'.

The campaign invites all Australian grandparents, who know better than most the value of sight, to make a donation on behalf of each grandchild. In return, supporters will receive a certificate of thanks acknowledging the grandchildren and know the joy of giving sight to those in need.

Funds raised will help support the critical eyecare work ICEE is performing in countries in desperate need.

Channel 9 television identity Peter Smith, OAM is backing ICEE's campaign:

'Just imagine the frustration of not being able to see or work simply because you didn't have a pair of glasses. This is the sad fact for so many people in developing countries. Tragically, people who live in the developing world are 10 times more likely to go blind than those who live in Australia. The cause? The lack of access to eyecare services! As a grandparent myself I believe 'Grandparents with a Grand Vision' is a wonderful initiative, because we are really helping to make a difference.'

Melbourne radio identity Bruce Mansfield added:

'As a grandparent myself, I often look at my grandchildren and think how lucky I am they have the sight so many millions don't have. It is an important message that we shouldn't take good vision for granted. I enjoy reading to my grandkids and I am well aware that I cannot do this without my glasses. 'Grandparents with a Grand Vision' is a great initiative, because you're really helping to give sight to the world.'

ICEE hopes that this initiative is another way grandparents can involve themselves in the young lives of those special grandchildren.

ICEE was on the ground in Sri Lanka helping the community after the Boxing Day Tsunami. One volunteer, field optometrist Nina Tahhan, has just returned. "ICEE has teams working to restore sight to thousands whose lives were devastated by the tsunami. Many quite literally had their glasses washed away while many more simply have never had access to an eye examination prior to the ICEE teams arriving.

"Over the two weeks we are in country, we see close to 200 people a day. Unfortunately, we are having to turn away hundreds of people. The need is just so great as there are simply little or no eyecare services in place," she said.

"My first patient was a lovely woman named Ginanamma. She was a 70 year old grandmother who said she hadn't seen very well since she was about 20 years old – in fact she had never had an eye test - by the end of the consultation, **she literally knelt on the floor and kissed my feet!**

"There are so many more stories like this and I am lost for words as to how I am feeling but this is easily the best thing I have ever done in my life. A pair of glasses can cost as little as \$5 but when it restores sight to a child who cannot see, its worth is beyond measure."

ICEE is an Australian based not-for-profit development organisation. To make a tax deductible donation contact the International Centre for Eyecare Education on 1300 66 42 33

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Media Contact: Feehan Communications: 02 9267 2711
Images Available: Children and grandparents in Australia or Sri Lanka
Interviews Available: ICEE Volunteer Optometrist Nina Tahhan
ICEE National Campaign Director Greg Campitelli - 0408 600 993