







"I always approach storytelling with the idea that the audience will get it. They understand almost better than we do, because they get to watch it from an entirely different perspective with new eyes" - Salim Akil

in Daryagani is

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While working here at SCEH, we all get to see our hospital from the inside, and over a period of time, the routine seems mundane and the surroundings grow on us like second skin. That is when we stop appreciating the little things that someone new can cherish. Sharing a fresh perspective on SCEH, through the eyes of Mr. Stuart Robertson, an artist and a photographer by profession but a storyteller at heart...

-Stuart Robertson

imbedded in heart of Old Delhi. the The architecture alone makes it stand out. with an elaborate battle of flowers themselves fighting among for prominence in its courtyards. On Editorial entry you are met with guards – smart with all the uniform one expects - all day managing the ins and outs of the Daryagani traffic. All the chaos of outside is left at the threshold of this beautiful hospital. Inside it's quietly organised - from the guards and gardeners, to the nurses and surgeons.

> I notice a tick-tock in the background. The polished floors in the corridors stand up to a continuous stream of daily Delhi traffic. A team of dedicated staff meticulously and admirably maintains them. I once observed a child that spilled some food on the floor, within one minute the floor was cleaned and re-polished.

The tick-tock is still there...

The gardeners are in tune with their flowers and know every one of them, so much that when I borrowed a flowerpot to use as a doorstop, the gardeners enquired specifically about its absence. The manicured grass is the greenest in Delhi.

SCEH has developed training programs specifically targeted empower the women residing in Daryaganj and Chandni Chowk by encouraging and providing the means for them to join the healthcare workforce. These very busy uniformed ladies come into the hospital like soldiers ready for battle. They have the energy of Gods, smiling all day and sounding like little birds when they speak. I hold classes with them three times a week and, to me, they are the birds of the early



morning. When I often use the wrong word in Hindi, they laugh openly, but otherwise they are beyond polite. The administrative team is more like a family; every day we meet we share laughter and respect.

The hospital receives, on average, 1200 patients per day. The hospital staff members care for each patient like they would care for their own

mothers. I have seen it when no- one else is looking. Their patience and sensitivity are unwavering, whether transferring a patient from a hospital bed to the operating theatre, or helping a patient to navigate an uneven walkway; there is always the helping hand of an angel.

Meanwhile, the tick-tock continues.....

You are reminded at every corner that this hospital is very much alive. The operating theatres are places in heaven, with all



personnel in masks, surgical caps and the helping hands of the angels here adorned in white gloves, posing like Michelangelo's sculptures. The hands move with intent, never too fast, and embody a majestic flow within the operating theatres. Covered head to toe, the eyes become the only identifying features in the room, conveying emotions and affirming decisions, crafting a language of their own.

The nurses move and handle the surgical instruments with precision. Many of the same hands have prepared their family's meals for the day before they reach the hospital. The rhythm of their movements is like watching a musician tuning their instrument as they work alongside the surgeons' steady hands. I notice many surgeons holding their eyes closed for a few moments, seemingly in focus, whilst their surgical gowns, gloves and instruments are prepared. Every measure is taken to ease away the patients' worries. After checks are rechecked and the theatre doors close, the orchestra begins.

I am privileged to observe the dexterous skills of these surgeons and their teams. It's like they have trained all their lives to work on balloons with sharp instruments, and they have practiced to do so while walking on a tightrope. Patched and ready for aftercare, the attention doesn't stop there.

It dawns on me that the tick-tock noise in my head is an enormous metaphorical clock, with each cog as important as the next, moving in tandem with the duties performed at all levels of the hospital. If one cog fails the clock will not work.

Despite the unbelievable work that goes on in its walls, SCEH profoundly comes across as an institution devoid of egocentricity, a place that has welcomed my services and made it a pleasure for me to volunteer. The day must come where I am forced to depart, but I suspect that until then, my admiration for every member of the SCEH community will continue to be waved away and instead met with the warmest and most familiar of smiles.

My photo blog, consisting of patient stories and photography at SCEH in collaboration with the staff, is available on the following link:

https://www.artofseva.co.uk/blog





Village Chandora has been declared the seventh Avoidable Blindness-Free Village (ABFV) in Modina-

gar and is the fourth village in Jani Khurd block, Meerut district, to achieve this distinction.



"Never confuse a single defeat with a final defeat" — F. Scott Fitzgerald

### Patient Story

Story contributed by Kareena Zehra Fellow - Patient Educator (Under the tutelage of Mr. Stuart Robertson) Baby Indu, a 4-year-old girl, was unable to see due to glaucoma, cataract and congenital nystagmus in both eyes.

She was born prematurely at six-and-a-half months as one of three triplets and was placed on a ventilator for one-and-a-half months. When it was known that the triplets were born with eye complications, their mother abandoned all three children while they were still on the ventilators. Their father was unable to undertake the cost of their care, which fell onto the grandparents who sought out treatment for the triplets' eyes.

After initial retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) treatments involving laser surgery at the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Indu's

grandparents had no choice but to give up one of the triplets for adoption as the family collectively could not afford to raise all three. Indu's father couldn't earn enough money, and the extended family could not contribute any funds towards their healthcare. Indu's grandfather, who earns money by repairing washing machines and earns around Rs 5,000-10,000 per month could not make ends meet.

That is when Indu's grandparents heard of SCEH. Here, Indu underwent a glaucoma surgery free of cost in her right eye, which had been substantially worse. To gain vision, she still needs a cataract surgery, but her family is positive and is determined to give her the life she deserves.

## "Change is hard because people overestimate the value of what they have, and underestimate the value of what they may gain by giving that up" —James Belasco & Ralph Stayer



### Humans of SCEH

**Sajy Thomas** Lab manager, Delhi and Lead, Secondary Center Lab

ioined SCEH nearly two decades ago, on May 1st 1997. I knew someone here and they told me about a spot that had opened up for a technician in the lab. EICHER had taken over SCEH in 1996 and Mr. Steven Roy was the CEO then. I remember coming and meeting him for a job. Truth be told, if had seen the lab at that time, I may not have taken this job. But fate has its ways of getting each one of us exactly where it wants....

I belong to Kochi, Kerala. As my elder siblings had moved to Ambala for further education, I too joined them there for a Diploma in laboratory skills. After completing my education, I moved to Delhi for better job opportunity and started working in a private lab. While working in a private lab was good, I was looking for a job with more stability. And SCEH fit the bill.

The microbiology lab in this hospital has seen a lot of changes, being first located where the canteen is, then shifting to the spot where the optical shop is to its current location. There was no ocular microbiology set up at the time, and the microbiologist only came part time. Initially, the hospital only worked in the first half of the day. and Dr. Steven Roy faced a lot of resistance from people to come to work post-lunch. So, he decided to keep a staff meeting every afternoon, and the people gradually got out of their comfort zones and the hospital started working in the second half too. As the work in the microbiology lab was limited. I also worked as a PSC coordinator and laser assistant to Dr. Cyrus Shroff whenever he visited.

Gradually, the work picked up and I was sent for a week's observership

to LVPEI. When fellowship trained doctor's came to work here, they taught me a lot about special stains and organisms beyond a KOH mount and Gram's staining. With Dr. Arpan Gandhi came exposure to pathology, and SCEH lab services have grown exponentially since then, even to the satellite centers now.

What I like the most about SCEH is the relaxed work environment, and the support one gets from everyone for doing anything new. Good work is appreciated here. All I want to say to the new doctor's who join here is that only spend time in the lab if you are really interested, because there is a lot to learn here at SCEH, and utilizing the time well is very important.

I am not a very ambitious man, and for me family comes first. Hence, I always wanted a relaxed place to work, so that I can go back home happy and without any stress. I think if I work more than my capacity, I will make mistakes. My wife is a staff nurse in AIIMS and my children are pursuing higher education. My wife and me love to spend time watching movies and taking short vacations. While my son and real brother are abroad, I am not very keen to visit other countries. My ideal retirement is to go back to God's own country where the air and water are so much cleaner, and there is so much peace. Not sure when I will retire, but deep down I long to go back home someday. And like other things in life, even this I leave to fate!



### **Convocation Ceremony**

"Teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it is inspiring change.

Learning is more than absorbing facts; it is acquiring understanding" –

William Arthur Ward

Standard Chartered – Shroff's Eye Care Education Academy organized a convocation ceremony for the fellows and DNB students who completed their respective courses last year on 29th March. The guest of honor, Dr. Taraprasad Das, Vice-Chair Emeritus, L V Prasad Eye Institute, gave the commencement speech. 35 students got certified, exciting awards were presented to both students and trainers and the event was followed by a group photograph and high tea.



"Today in an open world, when a lot of YouTube videos are available, you don't require a fellowship at all, you can read the books, watch surgeries on YouTube, make some mistakes and get in there, what you have to learn in a fellowship is how to become a good decision-maker...how to become a good human being. As a trainer myself at Hyderabad, I had a very strict rule, that every Sunday or holiday, my fellows and me will go out for a brisk walk from 5:30 -6:30, a four kilometer walk, with one thumb rule that we will not talk about hospital, subject, patient, but talk about life...That's more important than talking about the subject"





## "Women can do whatever they want. There is no limit to what we can accomplish" - Laverne Cox



The hospital celebrated International Women's Day by honoring the women in the hospital for their dedication and contributions to the patient care. The event featured inspiring stories, awards, and discussions on women's empowerment in health-care. A special wellness session in collaboration with *Sleepwell Foundation* was organized, which included tools to manage stress, importance of expressing one's needs and emphasized on importance of mental health.

On the occasion of Women's Day, SCEH Karol Bagh organized a successful eye screening camp at Kilkari Rainbow Homes for Girls, providing comprehensive eye check-ups for 92 children and promoting eye health awareness.





On 20th March, under the Samagra Shiksha project supported by SBI Foundation, SCEH Vrindavan distributed essential aids and appliances to children with special needs. A total of 190 children benefited from this initiative, receiving 74 KAFO and AFO devices, 11 wheelchairs, 13 CP chairs and toilet chairs, and 118 ration kits. This project aims to promote inclusive educational and empower children with special needs.



Celebrating integrity and honesty: Ms. Megha and Mr. Satender, staff members of SCEH, demonstrated exceptional integrity by returning a patient's bag containing INR 6000, ID's, and bank cards that had been left unattended. Their prompt action and honesty earned the gratitude of the patient, Mr. Hukum Singh, who was overjoyed to be reunited with his belongings.

# Saluting the backbone of any good surgical team: the anesthesiologist!

No surgical team is complete without a great anesthesiology team having their back. While the team amazes us each day with their determination to support us, two occasions in the last month stood out, when they handled a case of a mentally challenged woman with bilateral cataract, and a 28-day old infant for a glaucoma surgery.







#### World Glaucoma week

During the World Glaucoma Week (March 9-15), SCEH organized several activities to raise awareness about glaucoma. Key highlights included a CME session honoring Late Dr. Monica Gandhi and featuring expert speakers discussing glaucoma advancements, A Vision 2020 India Webinar on enhancing glaucoma awareness and accessibility in underserved areas, A public lecture at RP Centre, AIIMS, in collaboration with ACOIN-Delhi State Chapter and Glaucoma Society of India and free screening camps and awareness talks across centers, as well as social media campaigns and live TV and radio programs to educate the public about glaucoma prevention and detection.

AIOS Prayogshala in association with SCEH under the aegis of Delhi Ophthalmologic Society organized a workshop in ophthalmic genetics with in-house and guest speakers who gave talks regarding the basics of genetics in ophthalmology, various anterior segment and posterior segment pathologies and the need and importance of genetic counseling.



A new Allied Ophthalmic Personnel (AOP) hostel, "Ashiyana", was inaugurated in SCEH Mohammadi with the support of G. Surgiwear, in a ceremony graced by Mrs. Renu Agarwal, wife of Dr. GD Agarwal, and attended by Dr. Santosh Gupta, CMO Lakhimpur, and Dr. Anil Gupta, ACMO.







### **World Optometry week**

World Optometry Day is observed on March 23rd each year to honor and celebrate the vital role optometrist's play in eye care. This year's theme was "Advancing Optometry's Commitment to Global Eye Care."

At SCEH, we celebrate this occasion throughout the week with various activities, including quizzes, model displays, and sports events, involving our entire team across SCEH network. A Run for Awareness – "Steps for Sight", was also organized to get the whole hospital together to appreciate the work our optometrists do everyday.



EARN Trial is a Randomised Controlled Trials of the Economic Advantages of Readers for Near vision implemented in Shahjahanpur and Lakhimpur Kheri districts Uttar Pradesh targeting working class (35 to 65 years of age) individuals with bilateral presbyopia. Sally Gallespie, Operations Manager at the International Centre for Eye Health (ICEH) at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) visited us for this collaborative project between SCEH & LSHTM to discuss key financial reporting and budget tracking aspects of this long terms prospective study spanning around 4.5 years, dividends of which are expected in assorted ways. There was discus-

sion on the financial utilization scope and reporting methods under this project and we also utilized the opportunity to walk her through SCEH's ever flourishing successful training model - Certified Ophthalmic Paramedics (COP) program and outreach intervention hub-and-spoke model - Mustafabad Vision Centre addressing unmet eyecare needs of semi urban and rural population of north-eastern Delhi.

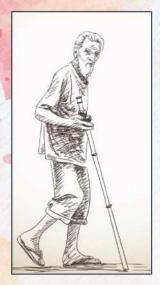


## Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital

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## The man with a stick



A few days back I was walking on the road outside the hospital, a road I seldom take on foot. Maneuvering a car through the double-parked roads, with pedestrians who couldn't care less for their lives, I hardly ever notice the people, just the bodies I avoid hitting or touching. When on foot, I was the pedestrian saving myself from the maniacs on two-wheelers and cars wider than the road itself. I was just about to reach the hospital gate, when I saw a man with a stick, walking almost in the middle of the road, his stick tapping the road with each tick of the watch and a bike missing him by a hair's breadth. Even at a distance I could see him unperturbed. I instantly understood that he is a patient from our hospital, going back home after a visit. I couldn't help being disturbed by the fact, that he was alone. Taking a bus..alone, crossing a road..alone, waiting in long

registration queues...alone, finding the right room in the maze of a hospital...alone and lastly, not having a hand to hold or a shoulder to cry on after hearing some bad news. A pinch of extra waiting here or there goes without saying. All of it...alone, by himself.

My mind was just spiraling into thoughts about what all can go wrong from him being alone, when I reached closer to him. Two men walking in front of me ran into him before I could. He gently touched the shoulder of one them and asked where the bus stop was. They not just guided him but also gave him a walking time estimate. This man with the stick then crossed me with a confident stride. His assured pace allayed my anxiety a tad. I watched him walk away for a few seconds, and only when I lost him behind a building could I turn my gaze back to where I was heading. I walked back thinking, if I am doing enough?

We work tirelessly to make the lives of people without sight better. I genuinely feel that what we do, makes a difference. We can't touch the lives of everyone, but for sure we are contributing and maybe much more than most people. But is it enough?

This was one man, who dared to make this trip alone, but what about the others? Sitting in the OPD room, sometimes, we very casually call for visits every few days, or prescribe drops without realizing that they may not be carrying that kind of money with them. We are considerate and passionate, but maybe not a one hundred percent, but maybe not each second of the day, but I guess, that's understandable. We are human too. But is 99% enough?

Apart from the helplessness I felt in that moment, I also felt a little shame. I am not sure why. Maybe because deep down, I think I am not doing enough to help someone like that man with the stick. I am not sure what effort or what change can make me feel like I have done enough, but till I do feel satisfied, I will not let this man with the stick leave my thoughts.

#### **Foolishly Yours**

Charlie Chaplin once said "A day without laughter is a day wasted", and to bring you your daily dose of cheer, here is a...

...List of STRENUOUS ACTIVITIES that do not require much PHYSICAL EFFORT...

Beating around the bush... Jumping to conclusions... Climbing up the wall... Swallowing your pride... Passing the buck... Throwing your weight around... Dragging your heels... Pushing your luck... Hitting the nail on the head... Wading through paperwork... Bending over backwards... Jumping on the bandwagon... Balancing the books... Running around in circles... Eating crow... Blowing your own horn... Climbing the ladder of success... Pulling out all stops... Adding fuel to the fire... Opening a can of worms... Putting your foot in your mouth... Setting the ball rolling... Going over the edge... Picking up the pieces...

Whew! That is some workout! Now SIT DOWN, and...

Exercise Caution!



-Contributed by **Padmashri Vipin Buckshey**