

April 8th, 2019

Eye Care International
To whom it may concern:

I have witnessed first hand the exceptional work of Eye Care International here in El Salvador, Central America. In particular- the work of Michael Hughes, Board Certified Ocularist.

Michael Hughes started to volunteer his skills and services over ten years ago in rural areas of El Salvador- where custom Ocular Prosthetics (Artificial Eyes) are not readily available. As a pediatric ophthalmologist-oculoplastic surgeon, I see first hand the need of Ocular prostheses. I first encountered Michael Hughes through a family where three of the young children in the same family lost an eye due to retinoblastoma- a life threatening eye cancer. It was devastating, both financially and emotionally, to this needy family- however- Michael carefully took over the care of this young family (they previously traveled to Guatemala where only one family member would obtain a prosthetic eye) and has cared for them (all) ever since.

Since that lucky encounter I had with Michael Hughes, we have worked closely together several weeks a year- every year, for the last six years as Michael has personally taken on the 'job' of caring for the hundreds of truly needy children here in El Salvador- where there is no realistic option for these special children. Michael- through Eye Care International, has focused his work mainly at Bloom Children's Hospital here in San Salvador, where it is routine to see dozens of children missing one- or two eyes (resulting in total blindness) due to congenital malformations, trauma or disease, in a single day. These children have survived their disease- but they also must survive rehabilitation in terms of a restorative appearance. Michael does that unselfishly for them.

While it is all in a (very long) day for Michael Hughes to volunteer his services- to the children in need that I witness firsthand, his charitable work- and all of the work of Eye Care International volunteers, is life changing.

I worked with Michael for two weeks this past February, 2019, and we will meet again here in San Salvador later in the summer. The caseload for Michael swells as the days drag on before his arrival. I am thankful- as the mother's/fathers, family members and supporting hospital staff and of course the patients here in El Salvador for Michael's charitable visits.

Sincerely,



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Ophthalmologist

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