



EYE CARE INTERNATIONAL

2019-2020

Providing compassionate, quality eye care to the underserved people of El Salvador, Central America.

www.eyecareint.org

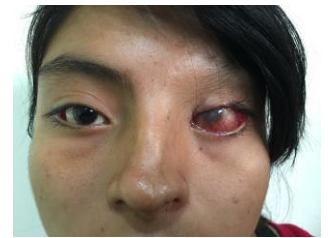
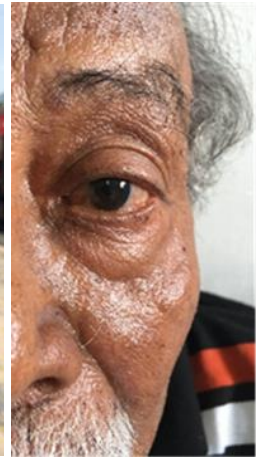


EYE CARE INTERNATIONAL

EL SALVADOR, CENTRAL AMERICA

Eye Care International is a 501(c)3 not-for profit which has provided quality eye care to the underserved of El Salvador, Central America, for more than 20 years.

TOTAL PATIENTS SERVED IN 2019: 5,017



The 2019 Eye Care International mission was held in the tiny 15th century town of Juayua, about an hour and a half drive from the capital, San Salvador.

Over a span of nine days in mid-February our team of volunteers provide a variety of eye care services, including:

- Cataract/Pterygium surgeries: **86**
- Eyeglasses distributed: **4,217**
- Patients seen by an Optometrist: **4,908**
- Prosthetic eyes made: **98**

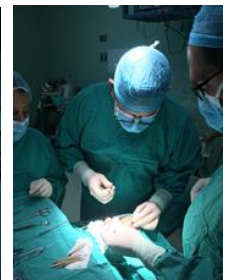
Many patients seen in Juayua traveled several hours by bus (or walked) to be seen in this comprehensive ophthalmological outreach. While we are grateful for everyone's contribution, special acknowledgments need to be given to Jardon Eye Prosthetics, INC. of Southfield, Michigan, SEE International, Alcon Laboratories Inc., and to Oculo-Plastik, INC. of Montreal, Canada for the generous surgical donations. Also- great thanks to TY Inc. Marketing Department for the generous supply of Beanie Babies for the sick children at Bloom Children's Hospital, San Salvador.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

We are seeking eye care professionals, including: **Opticians, Optometrists, and Ophthalmologists** for our annual visit to El Salvador.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Visit our website: www.eyecareint.org or call Tad MacDonnell, Eye Care International Program Coordinator, at (703) 623-2015.





WARREN and MARYLOU RIEGEL

78 MISSION TRIPS AND COUNTING

It's hard to imagine places less alike than Ridgeway, Pennsylvania—a charming speck of a town that looks as if it was yanked from a Norman Rockwell painting and plunked down at the edge of the Allegheny National Forest—and the villages of El Salvador, an impoverished and war-ravaged Central American country seemingly in a state of perpetual collapse.

Yet, despite the differences, an indelible and vital link connects coal- and natural-gas-rich Ridgeway with communities tainted by violence and an image as a hothouse for the deadly street gang, MS-13.

The link can be found in the form of 85-year-old Ridgeway optometrist Dr. Warren Riegel, his 80-year-old wife of more than 50 years, Mary Lou, and their shared vision: helping improve the vision of thousands, who would otherwise likely do without quality eyewear, through their work as volunteers for Eye Care International.

In a span of five decades, the couple has balanced raising four children with Dr. Riegel's work as an optometrist, first in the Philadelphia area, and since 1963, Ridgeway, with the inspiring and often exhausting volunteer journeys to El Salvador and nearly a dozen other Central and South American countries.

Well over 70 trips and counting.

The mission for the Riegels is now and has always been a simple one: Deliver quality eye care to men, women, and children in villages and towns where clean running water and electricity are a luxury of the few well-to-do, and quality medical care of any kind, let alone optometry services, is nearly non-existent.

So how did the Riegel's get from the tree-lined streets of small-town USA where Dr. Riegel maintains his optometry practice on Mill Avenue in downtown Ridgeway and Mary Lou as his assistant, to a country where crime and poverty are far from the exceptions and closer to the rules? The answer? Through dedication to helping others—in most cases, people they will never meet.

Throughout the year the Riegels collect, clean, sort, measure, and package used, donated eyeglasses for eventual shipment out of Baltimore, Maryland with a final destination of El Salvador.

Operating in the spacious basement of Ridgeway's historic First Presbyterian Church, of which the Riegel's have been dedicated members for decades, the couple and other volunteers sift through dozens of stored boxes of used, donated eyeglasses. A separate warehouse in Ridgeway houses additional crates of donated eyewear, waiting for the Riegel's painstaking process.

The work means sifting through the thousands of eyeglasses, including spectacles—eyeglasses with gold frameworks, nose pads and bridges, usually made before 1950. While generally not used for second hand eyeglasses, the gold can be recycled to help support the ongoing mission. It is not uncommon for the Riegels to ship over 4,000 eyeglasses to be used at one mission alone.

This selfless work has remained at the center of the Riegels' busy lives since 1973. And 46 years later, when others their age might be ready for a well-earned retirement, long walks and time with grandchildren, the Riegels hard work is far from finished.



YEAR	COMMUNITY	TOTAL	CUMULATIVE			
1995	Zaragoza, El Salvador	3337	3,337	2009	Perquín, El Salvador	5549 81,558
1996	Chirilagua, El Salvador	2681	6,018	2010	Perquín, El Salvador	3052 84,610
1997	La Unión, El Salvador	4651	10,669	2011	La Libertad, El Salvador	4358 88,968
1998	La Unión, El Salvador	4870	15,539	2012	Santa Rosa de Lima	4729 93,697
1999	Jiquilisco, El Salvador	5647	21,186	2013	Perquín, El Salvador	4904 98,601
2000	La Libertad, El Salvador	5586	26,772	2014	La Libertad, El Salvador	4305 102,906
2001	La Libertad, El Salvador	6101	32,873	2015	Chalatenango, El Salvador	5,523 108,429
2002	Juayua, El Salvador	7279	40,152	2016	Perquín, El Salvador	4,552 112,981
2003	Juayua, El Salvador	5975	46,127	2017	La Libertad, El Salvador	4,443 117,424
2004	La Palma, El Salvador	5985	52,112	2018	Chalatenango, El Salvador	4,009 121,433
2005	Perquín, El Salvador	6509	58,621	2019	Juayua, El Salvador	5,017 126,450
2006	Perquín, El Salvador	4123	62,744			
2007	Santa Rosa de Lima	7907	70,651			
2008	Santa Rosa de Lima	5358	76,009			