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Long known for its physicians' clinical excellence, **Princeton Eye Group** earns high marks for its philanthropic work both near and far.

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Relief in Sight

Long known for its physicians' clinical excellence, **Princeton Eye Group** earns high marks for its philanthropic work both near and far.

by **BILL DONAHUE**

The team of eye care specialists at Princeton Eye Group (PEG) has gone to great lengths to make a difference in the lives of their patients. Whether someone requires cataract surgery, treatment for a serious condition such as macular degeneration or glaucoma, or something as simple as a routine eye exam, PEG's ophthalmologists and optometrists strive to deliver the most comprehensive care with grace and compassion.

In addition to treating patients at three New Jersey offices, PEG's physicians volunteer their time and talents to helping those in need. The impact of their philanthropic work has been felt far from the Garden State. In fact, many physicians have trotted the globe in their quest to give back.

Daniel Lee, M.D., a glaucoma specialist who joined PEG in 2022, recently returned from a medical mission to Kakamega, a small farming town in Kenya, Africa. Over the course of six days, from late January to early February 2025, Dr. Lee and three other American surgeons performed cataract surgeries for patients with compromised sight. He estimates he performed 40 to 50 of the surgeries provided to the 250 people served by the mission.

"It's gratifying to be part of something like that, and it's challenging work," he says. "You're operating in conditions that would not be acceptable in the United States. The OR is hot, you're sweating, you're dealing with power outages. In America, there are people who go blind from cataracts, but it's a rarity. In Kakamega, I think we touched only 1 to 2 percent of the people who have cataract blindness. It helped me appreciate how good we have it here."

Dr. Lee's mission was organized through Operation Restore Vision, an arm of Operation International, which since 2009 has been performing no-cost sight-restorative surgeries to people living in some of the world's most impoverished areas. Dr. Lee was invited to participate by Seth Meskin, M.D., a former mentor who led the mission.

Dr. Lee's mission to Kenya reminded him of an experience from his high school years, in which he accompanied a team of family doctors, dentists, and other medical professionals to South America to provide essential care to people who otherwise would have gone without.

That long-ago mission is what first ignited his interest in medicine.

"I would love to go back [to Kenya] and do it again, maybe once a year," he says. "If you've been given much, you should also give much. I personally feel like it's my responsibility to use my training and skills to help people, and I think everyone at Princeton Eye Group feels the same way."

PEG ophthalmologist Michael Y. Wong, M.D., has done a dozen similar medical missions, from Africa to South America, throughout his career. He has also spent the past several years leading missions to the Central American nation of Belize. In January 2022, Drs. Wong and his fellow ophthalmologists Suzanne K. Jadico, M.D., and Sarah D. Kuchar, M.D., as well as nurse Annice Bacsik, traveled to Belize City to perform cataract surgery for needy patients at the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired clinic. Many of these patients struggled with compromised sight for years and, in some cases, were functionally blind. During the 2022 mission, PEG's trio of doctors completed nearly 50 sight-restoring cataract surgeries and several urgent sight-saving glaucoma surgeries.

Michele D. Solarte, M.D., participated in a previous Belize mission, and Anita I. Miedziak, M.D., looks forward to going on yet another mission to that country later this spring. Dr. Wong has organized all of these trips through SEE International, a worldwide nonprofit organization devoted to providing life-changing eye surgery to patients around the world.

"Belize does not have any resident practicing ophthalmologists [for the indigent population]," Dr. Miedziak says. "The limited eye care is provided by ophthalmic assistants and a handful of optometrists. Mature cataracts are the leading cause of blindness in that country. I hope to donate my time, surgical skills, and medical supplies gathered [provided by a handful of medical suppliers coordinated in advance] to hopefully reverse blindness in 50 to 60 patients that we hope to screen and operate on during the week I and Dr. Wong are there."

PEG's charitable nature should come as no surprise considering the organization's close ties to Wills Eye Hospital, which was established in 1832 "to help the blind, lame, and indigent." To this day, Wills Eye Hospital serves a large indigent population in Philadelphia's inner city. Drs. Miedziak, Jadico, and Wong, as well as R. David Reynolds, M.D., spent parts of their careers as attending physicians at Wills Eye—teaching, seeing patients, giving lectures, and taking trauma calls on a volunteer basis. Today John A. Epstein, M.D., as well as Drs. Solarte and Lee, continue the tradition.

Of course, PEG gives back close to home, too, through events such as PEG Cares Day. Created in 2018 by Katerina Liu, a Rutgers University alumna and the daughter of PEG surgeon Samuel M. Liu, M.D., Ph.D., PEG



PEG physician Dr. Daniel Lee recently returned from a medical mission to Kakamega, a small farming town in Kenya, Africa.



Cares Day has become an annual event in which PEG employees volunteer to provide no-cost eye care to those who have no health insurance or otherwise lack the means. Following a workup by volunteer ophthalmic technicians, these patients are seen by a PEG

physician, and patients who require glasses are referred to the practice's Optical Shoppe and offered low-cost glasses. Drs. Wong, Liu, and Solarte, as well as Peter D. Murr, M.D., have all volunteered their time and expertise at these events.

In March, PEG will hold its 14th PEG Cares Day, in which one of its physicians and some of its technical and front-desk staff will volunteer their time to examine and treat local patients who are uninsured. More than 175 clinic patients have received treatment through these events; many have benefited from low-cost glasses, while some have received laser procedures and surgeries to help preserve their sight. ■

LASER FOCUSED

Princeton Eye Group offers the full scope of eye care, including LASIK surgery to help patients achieve clear vision without the need for corrective lenses. Through Wills Laser Vision at Princeton, PEG's surgeons use LASIK to treat patients for myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness), and astigmatism (blurred vision). PEG's physicians are among the most extensively trained in Central New Jersey. Their surgical skills have enabled Wills Laser Vision at Princeton to earn a LASIK "Center of Excellence" designation from Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, perhaps the world's most prestigious health systems for eye care. For more information, visit willslaservision.com.



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For more information on **Princeton Eye Group**, including details about its locations in Princeton, Somerset, and Monroe Township, New Jersey, visit princetoneyegroup.com.