



# 2017: A YEAR OF GROWTH



## COLLABORATION WITH STICHTING ZIENDEROGEN

While keeping a close eye on the political developments in Gambia, the year started off with us still making preparations for our short-term collaborative eye-screening project with the Dutch foundation 'Stichting Zienderogen Nederland' at a primary school in Gambia. However, with the sitting president continuing to refuse to step down after being defeated in the December 2016 presidential elections and the Senegal troupes mobilizing on the Gambian borders, by the end of January we had decided to cancel the Gambia project for the safety of our volunteers.

Since our volunteers had all already organized time off from their work and studies, and as we had already raised funds for a screening project, we decided to still make use of the available resources but instead divert these into a project in Ghana, where we already have an established network. The choice fell with Sister Aba and her team for a collaborative project in Ghana. Sister Aba is the founder of the Jachie Eye Clinic (in a town close to Kumasi), which provides eye care through the clinic in the Ashanti region. Additionally the Jachie Eye Clinic has an outreach program that goes to areas where there is no eye care available.

Within a month of cancelling the Gambia project, our team consisting of



Elen, Johan, Vera and  
Sjieuwke on their way to  
Ghana



Outreach team in Jachie

Ellen Blom (orthoptist), Johan Franken (optician), Vera van Uum (orthoptics student) and Sjiewke Koorevaar (orthoptics student), set off to Ghana to collaborate with Sister Aba and her team in an outreach program.

Sister Aba's outreach team and our volunteers worked tirelessly in the sweltering heat and were able to screen 2409 people in different villages in Ghana. As fate has it, Acheampong Oppong our 2016 Frans Oosterhof Travel Grant awardee who attended the TFOS conference in

Montpellier, happened to be working with the outreach team as part of his semester work, and was teamed up with our volunteers at the screening day at Atieku in the Western Region of Ghana.

After the final screening day our volunteers went for a tour at the School of Optometry at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi.

As a token of our appreciation to sister Aba, who's monastery was able to host our volunteers on such short notice, our volunteers donated a large suitcase filled with small frames, ready-made reading glasses and sunglasses, to the Jachie Eye Clinic on behalf of Stichting Zienderogen.



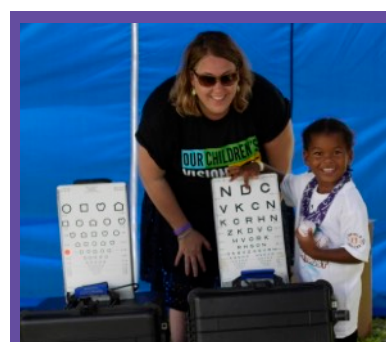
Children waiting for their eye test

## TOF'S COLLABORATION WITH OUR CHILDREN'S VISION

In July 2017, our chair, Carolina Kunnen and videographer/photographer Rens Bais teamed up with Our Children's Vision, Major League Baseball Players Trust and KaBOOM! in Opa-Locka, Florida, as part of the community playground building event.

With the aim of giving kids in this community something of childhood that every child should be entitled to have, more than 200 volunteers (from the here fore mentioned organizations) and the Miami community joined forces to build a new playground (based on the children's drawings) at the Room2Bloom community center.

Knowing that playing outside is not only good for building muscles and imaginations, but that it also has a protective effect on children's eyesight - all of the children that attended the playground building event had the opportunity to receive free eye testing hosted by Our Children's Vision.



Carolina Kunnen performing eye tests in Opa-Locka in collaboration with Our Children's Vision



The Optical Foundation was honored to be part of this initiative and provide vision testing for the children in the Opa-Locka community and help make a change in the lives of these children.

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## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Being a non-for-profit organization with the objective of making eye care accessible for everyone in Ghana (especially children), TOF created a sustainable eye health care program that provides children with full eye exams while at the same time giving Ghanaian Optometry students at Universities hands-on practical experience by allowing them to perform these comprehensive eye exams under supervision. The key to long-term sustainability is to enable the project to be driven by Ghanaians themselves and TOF both encourages and supports local eye health care projects and initiatives in Ghana by way of funding and/or use of equipment for optometry projects that involve Screenings, Education and/or Research.

We have established an advisory committee that will carefully select local projects ensuring they are legitimate and that all requirements are met.

Charged with this responsibility is TOF's newly established Advisory Committee. TOF is honored to welcome Professor Eric Papas, Dr. Thomas Stokkermans, Bianca van Leeuwen, Dr. Ayeswarya Ravikumar and Fayiz Mahgoub as the members of this committee.



Eric  
Papas

Thomas  
Stokkermans

Bianca  
van Leeuwen

Ayeswarya  
Ravikumar

Fayiz  
Mahgoub

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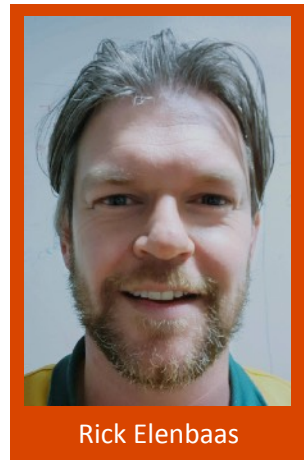
# NEW BOARD MEMBERS

## Welcome Rick Elenbaas

Rick Elenbaas joined The Optical Foundation as our web administrator in April this year. He brings with him a wealth of experience as a Digital Performance & Analytics Specialist, specializing in SEO & analytics, gained through senior digital agency experience and having worked with first tier clients across Australia.

Not only has Rick implemented vast improvements to our existing website, he has also commenced building our new fresh look website which he is aiming to have ready for launch within the first quarter of the new year.

We are absolutely thrilled to have someone with his expertise in charge of our website and we are delighted that Rick has accepted a seat on the board as an integral member of The Optical Foundation team. We look forward to working with him on many projects that his work will help facilitate.



Rick Elenbaas

## Welcome Simone Stad

Simone is an optometrist with a Masters degree from the City, University of London. She has a career that spans over 30 years. With a special passion for multifocal contact lenses, her experience covers retail, customer service, working in hospital practices and managing an ophthalmology clinic. In her current role of Professional Advancement Manager Northern Europe, Simone has been with Specsavers since 2014.

Based in the Netherlands, she is regularly visiting and organizing conferences throughout Northern Europe and as a result she has a large Dutch and European network of opticians, optometrists and other professionals in the industry, making Simone the perfect candidate to join our team.



Simone Stad

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## ANOTHER PRODUCTIVE TOF YEAR

The Optical Foundation's board members all work for the foundation on a voluntarily basis and although we are each driven by our own desire to want to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate. It is important to acknowledge the team at the core for all the effort they have put into the foundation over the year which includes: Dr. Carolina Kunnen, Charlotte Marbus, Huub Villevoeye, Dr. Maria Markoulli, Mathieu Kunnen, Dr. Rianne Harmsen, Rick Elenbaas and Simone Stad.

Spread out all over the world (the USA, the Netherlands, Australia, and Norway), each month our board members have a small window of opportunity in which we are all awake and available at the same time so we can schedule a video conference call.



## THANK YOU

As the year draws to a close there are a couple more acknowledgements we would like to make: We would like to first thank each of advisory committee members for taking on this role and whom are already barnstorming some brilliant options for TOF. We look forward to being able to achieve so much more with you support.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all the organizations with whom we have collaborated throughout the year. Working together doesn't only allow for the sharing of knowledge but it also allows us collectively to achieve so much more when we combine recourses.

We also wish to extend a massive thanks to our volunteers, who had taken time out of their lives to make their knowledge and skills available to serve a community far away from their homes. They are on the ground making eye care accessible for the children of world one screening at a time.

Last, but not least - we would like to thank our donors who have made everything we have achieved possible through their generous ongoing support.

Thank you to each and every one of you for supporting The Optical Foundation.

**THE OPTICAL FOUNDATION WISHES YOU ALL A HAPPY, HEALTHY & PROSPEROUS 2018!**