



THE  
SPECTACLE  
MAKERS'  
CHARITY

# Impact Report 2021/22





£78,000

14 charities, 19 student bursaries  
and 2 professional development  
awards supporting the next  
generation of visionaries

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# A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



**LIZ SHILLING**

*Chair of the Board of Trustees*

I have now had the honour of being the Chair of the Board of Trustees of The Spectacle Makers' Charity for two years.

During this time, as you will see from this report; we have made a real difference to the lives of vision impaired people and their families by helping improve quality of life; developing careers & education opportunities; and increasing access to sporting and cultural events. Our reach has spread throughout the UK and internationally, through the work of the wide range of charities named in this report.

We have also supported the next generation of eye health professionals; ophthalmologists, optometrists, orthoptists, dispensing opticians. We hope that the students we help now will become Spectacle Makers of the future, not only in clinical practice but also becoming active members of the Livery

As we look towards the Company's 400th anniversary, and our own 10th anniversary in 2029, we would love to have 400 people committed as regular givers to our unique Charity. I hope you will be inspired by some of these stories and think about how you could help the Charity. It could be a one-off special donation, you could remember the Spectacle Makers' Charity in your will or you could join the 100 club and maybe win our £1,000 star prize, awarded in December. There are lots of ideas on the charity section of our website and every little really does help. Go to [www.spectaclemakers.com/Charity](https://www.spectaclemakers.com/Charity) to find out more.

Together, with your help, we will support better vision for all.



# ANDEAN MEDICAL MISSION

The Andean Medical Mission was set up to help organise, build and manage eye care services in remote regions of the Bolivian Amazon.

Funding from the Spectacle Makers' Charity has enabled the Andean Medical Mission to train Bolivian doctors and healthcare workers to help sustain local eye health care.

This year they celebrated their 10th anniversary, and made a video of their impact so far which can be watched [here](#).



## £5,800

training to support local eye health care provision in remote areas of Northern Bolivia



# BEACON CENTRE

The Beacon Centre for the Blind supports visually impaired people through established pathways of support including domiciliary and residential care, health and wellbeing programmes, employment advice and digital assistance.

The Spectacle Makers' Charity grant enabled them to get people moving again after the Covid-19 pandemic through targeted support and activity sessions in their specialist gym. Over 70 sessions are delivered every month to beneficiaries, promoting health & balance, and increasing confidence and independence.



**£6,330**

towards helping vision- impaired people access fitness and wellbeing

***"I started with 30 seconds on the treadmill, I am now on 30 minutes!"***

*Participant*



## BLIND IN BUSINESS

Blind in Business is a charity that helps blind and visually impaired people to compete equally with sighted candidates for good jobs. and build satisfying careers, including in high-level professional services roles. Blind and sight impaired graduates can build practical, leadership and communication skills and explore team working through their confidence-building residential Education to Employment course.

This work enables those with little or no sight to transform their ambitions and confidence to become work ready. The Spectacle Makers kindly fund Blind in Business which enables them to deliver such courses and help blind and sight impaired people into jobs in marketing, law, IT, teaching and more, where their talent and capabilities can reach their fullest potential.

# CLEAR VISION

ClearVision is a postal lending library of children's books designed to be shared by visually impaired and sighted children and adults. They lend books all across the UK and Ireland.

The grant from the Spectacle Makers' Charity has allowed them to add new titles to the library, helped pay for vital Library software and contributed to the day-to-day operation of the service.

This year 4957 books were loaned to 503 borrowers: 296 families, 167 schools (most with multiple children accessing the books), 9 public libraries and 31 Sensory Support Services; from Cornwall up to the Scottish Highlands, from Cork to Kent.



## £2,500

postal library service for vision impaired and sighted family members to read together

***92% said that ClearVision books have helped their child's education, learning or development***



# DEAFBLIND UK

Deafblind UK works with people who are deafblind, making connections and delivering quality support and information to enable people who are deafblind to live more independently and with greater confidence and increased control.

Their Information & Advice Helpline became a integral part of the operation during the pandemic and beyond. The Spectacle Makers' Charity donation enabled them to provide extra helpline support to their vulnerable London members when they needed it most. Through this helpline they were able to explain to every one of their London members what support was available, and provide 6-week Wellbeing & Emotional Support package and counselling services. This year they have been able to make 1,776 contacts with 457 London members.



## £2,000

6 week intensive course  
providing 1-1 emotional and  
wellbeing support to deafblind  
people living in London

***"Shaun was very chatty and liked to joke, but it quickly became clear that something wasn't right. We made sure he got the support he needed."***

Hayley, Emotional & Wellbeing Coordinator, Deafblind UK



£2,000

Funding to become a Trauma Informed School (TIS)

TRAUMA  
INFORMED  
SCHOOLS<sup>TM</sup>

## NEW COLLEGE WORCESTER

NCW is a national residential school and college for young people aged 11 to 19 who are blind or vision impaired. As part of their work to become more equipped to support the wellbeing of students, a number of teaching and residential staff have recently undergone training to gain NCW Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) status, supported by the Spectacle Makers' Charity .

11 members of NCW staff have undergone the training and assessment process to complete a level 5 diploma and become TIS practitioners. They are now making plans to share this training more widely across NCW so that their whole school community can effectively deal with trauma and the impact on young people.



## NORTHERN BALLET

Northern Ballet is a dance company based in Leeds, West Yorkshire, England, with a strong repertoire in theatrical dance productions where the emphasis is on storytelling as well as classical ballet.

Pre-pandemic, they had supported the provision of touch tours, as well as live audio description. To continue access while theatres were closed, a grant from The Spectacle Makers' Charity made online audio descriptions possible for these and other works in the digital catalogue and access is now being rolled out to cinemas.

Watch an excerpt from one of their videos [here](#).





£5,050

"Monday Moves" adult dance  
classes

## ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

The Royal Opera House "Monday Moves" class is an opportunity for blind and partially sighted people to attend a specialised weekly dance session run by the Royal Ballet at the Royal Opera House. This project is part of their Creative Exchange programme which establishes partnerships with community groups. The programme is also committed to providing teacher training to external dance practitioners to equip them with the skills and confidence to work with visually impaired dancers.

# SENSE INTERNATIONAL

£5,000

training to support inclusive education for deafblind children in Kenya



Sense International is the only international non-governmental organisation dedicated to supporting people with deafblindness and their families around the world. The Spectacle Makers' Charity grant went towards an Inclusive Education project in Kenya which has enabled 309 children with deafblindness or complex disabilities to access education at home or in school.

At the heart of this project was the training and financial support of Learning Support Assistants, to facilitate this access to education. The training was delivered by the Kenyan Institute for Special Education, using a curriculum developed by them and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. Their ownership means it can now be a seamless transition for the Institute to continue this work themselves.

***"I have been going to the schools for assessment, but I often avoided the learners with disabilities since I did not know how to deal with them. Now I can comfortably walk into their classroom." – Training participant***



# ST JOHN EYE HOSPITAL

St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group is a centre of eye health excellence providing ophthalmic care of high quality to the people of the Holy Land irrespective of race, religion, social class or ability to pay. They perform over 6,500 surgeries each year.

Like many parts of the world, COVID-19 hit their ability to deliver services as well as their finances. The funding from the Spectacle Makers' Charity helped invest in resources to enable the surgery team to clear a backlog of hundreds of patients.

St John Eye Hospital CEO, Ahmad Ma'ali shared: "We would like to thank the Spectacle Makers' Charity for this generous donation which will go a long way to help our most vulnerable patients get access to the treatment they urgently need."



**£2,000**

towards helping to fulfil their  
post-COVID backlog of patients



A young boy with blonde hair is wearing a white and red VR headset. He is looking upwards and to the left. A woman with short grey hair, wearing glasses and a light blue face mask, is sitting next to him, looking at the headset. She is wearing a red jacket and a green lanyard. The background is a blue wall with some white and black circular patterns.

£2,521

purchase of 4 virtual reality headsets to equip young people for life experiences

***I really enjoy my Tech Hub lessons using the headsets and always ask at the end of my session what I will be viewing next week!***

## TRELOAR TRUST

Treloar's is a charity committed to improving the lives of young disabled people, enabling beneficiaries at Treloar's school, college and nursery and across the UK to live as independent and satisfying a life as possible. The generous funding received by The Spectacle Makers' Charity has enabled Treloar's to further enhance the provision of education by deploying visual reality headsets to enhance learning across the curriculum.

Leon (pictured above) is a keen learner and the use of the virtual reality headset has opened up a whole new dimension for him. His pace of learning has excelled when using the headset and he can retain a greater depth of learning. The use of these headsets has created much improved engagement in lessons, enabling experiences that are very close to reality. These include travel in space, in a rain forest and underwater!



**£2,500**

-funding for a website for  
information relating to  
retinoblastoma

## VISION 2020 LINKS RB-NET

The VISION 2020 LINKS Program establishes and fosters needs-based partnerships that “provide training and support to develop the expertise of eye specialists overseas and enable them to prevent more people going blind.”

Retinoblastoma (Rb) is the most common and most devastating eye cancer that affects children worldwide. There are 8,000 new cases every year and if diagnosis is delayed or treatment is not available the child will die. In high-income countries, with specialised Rb centres, almost all children will survive, and most eyes do not have to be removed. This transition from fatal to curable disease has not been realized in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), particularly in Africa, where mortality is typically around 70%. The website funded by the Spectacle Makers' Charity will enable networking between colleagues worldwide to improve outcomes.





£3,850

toward purchasing of new  
generators for their optical  
services in Sierra Leone

## VISION AID OVERSEAS

The Spectacle Makers' Charity provided funding for three generators to equip centres in Sierra Leone providing optical aid services. They will make the preparation of patients' spectacles easy and patients will receive spectacles on the same day from the VC workshop thus reducing patient waiting time for new spectacles, which is vital especially when patients are travelling long distances.

***"The generator will ensure that we serve our clients better and on time, manage our resources and equipment well and a great fulfilment to staff for work well done daily."***

Emerica King – Country Director for VAO Sierra Leone:



# WORLD JEWISH RELIEF

World Jewish Relief are the British Jewish community's international humanitarian agency. empowering people in poverty across Eastern Europe, regardless of their faith, to live with dignity, self-reliance and hope.

Since Russia's military invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022, many people have been evacuated. Sadly, the most vulnerable are unable to leave their homes, let alone move across the country to find somewhere safe. World Jewish Relief homecare workers have continued to provide vital services where possible. This includes their Optical and Hearing Project which thanks to the Spectacle Makers' Charity provided glasses for 147 older people and 24 optical surgeries.



***"Thank you so much to the Spectacle Makers' Charity and their donors for making me see a colourful world again" Nadezhda, beneficiary (pictured)***

# BURSARY AWARDS

***"A career in optics has always been something I was fascinated by. I was a violin teacher in schools for 20 years but over the last five had been considering changing careers to something more 'useful' where I was helping people. It wasn't until the COVID-19 lockdown, which made my teaching career unviable, that I realised I could be brave enough to retrain and follow a new dream."***

*Katherine, 2021/22 bursary award winner, who is retraining to enter the optical profession.*

In the last 6 years, we have supported 96 students (19 in 2021/22) embarking on training as orthoptists, dispensing opticians & optometrists. The scheme is competitive and students must be enrolled and participating fully in a recognised course at Level 4 or above in the UK, intended to lead directly to a career in eye health. From 2022 the scheme is also open to clinical and lab technicians and ophthalmic nurses studying on full time courses at Level 4 or above.



## £19,000

in bursaries for early career professionals starting their training

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

Michael Gilhooley and Guy Negretti were recipients of professional development awards this year.

Both are ophthalmologists, developing their careers in very different fields.

**Michael Gilhooley** received a grant to travel to the North American Neuro-ophthalmology Society (NANOS) annual meeting in the USA. His research looks at inherited optic neuropathies which lead to sight loss in early adulthood due to death of the retinal ganglion cells (RGCs) in the eye. Neuro-ophthalmology, while hugely important to patients with sight loss, is not a large field so this was a rare opportunity to exchange knowledge.

**Guy Negretti** received £1,000 to help with the costs of taking up a fellowship in the Ocular Oncology Service at Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, USA. Real-life experience is essential in this specialism and develops over many years. Both his time in clinic and the research he was able to pursue as part of an international team in the US will benefit Guy's future career in this very specialist area of ophthalmology.



## £2,000

enabling ophthalmologists in training to take fellowships outside the UK and disseminate vision science research





# THANK YOU

The Spectacle Makers' Charity. Apothecaries' Hall, Black Friars Lane, London, EC4V 6EL

Email: [charity@spectaclemakers.com](mailto:charity@spectaclemakers.com)

Website: <https://www.spectaclemakers.com/>



We are registered charity in England and Wales number 1186122.