

# SEE International 37 Years of Restoring Sight

By Kerry Methner / CASA



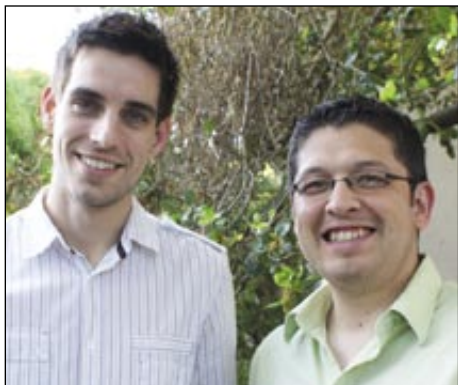
**Kim Welton**, Director of Programs, SEE International and **Scott Groff**, Chair, SEE International



**George Primbs**, MD, Board Member & Former Chair, SEE International with **Mervin Kerr**



**Hildy Orillac** with **Pat Dovas**



**Peter Solar**, Deputy Director of Programs, SEE International with **Luis Perez**, International Clinics Coordinator, SEE International



**George Dovas**, Senior Staff Accountant, SEE International and **Harry Brown**, MD, Founder, SEE International

**AFTER A SUCCESSFUL CONVENTION** where Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) staff spent time raising awareness of their program with eye surgeons from around the world, they adjourned back to their founder's home in Santa Barbara, Dr. Harry Brown, for a reception honoring an eye surgeon who has lead several of SEE's expeditions to restore sight through eye surgery.

Dr. Ruben Orillac has been an Affiliate partner of SEE International for 27 years, reaching out from his hometown of Panama City, Panama.

"Dr. Orillac led the first SEE International expedition to Panama 27 years ago," Harry Brown, MD, Founder, SEE International noted. "Over the years he has participated and led surgery clinics in Myanmar (Burma), Costa Rica, and Panama restoring sight to thousands of blind individuals setting an example for his colleagues in Latin America and beyond."

He and his wife, Hildy, a psychologist who teaches at a Panamanian university and practices family therapy were guests of Brown as they made their second visit to the Santa Barbara area.

Founded by Harry Brown, M.D., F.A.C.S. in 1974, SEE International volunteers, donors, and sponsors were responsible for restoring sight to 15,463 individuals around the globe in 2010.

"SEE International has enriched my life by being able to affect the lives of sight impaired men, women, and children around the world," explained Brown. "Restoring sight to a person who has been blind for five, ten, or 15 years and then experiencing their reaction to seeing grand children and loved ones after sight restoring surgery is a profound experience. It doesn't get much better than that."

During his fellowship in the early 1970s, Brown worked with eye surgeons in Africa and Asia. Excited by the experience of healing people who traveled great distances for sight-restoring surgery, he realized the need for an efficient and sustained link between volunteer professionals and blind persons throughout the developing world.

On August 24, 1974, with the help of William Crockett who served as the administrator for six years, Surgical Eye Expeditions International, Inc. was officially formed to connect eye surgeons to patients in developing counties. To date, SEE International has provided the gift of sight to more than 384,000 individuals worldwide.

So far, over 600 ophthalmologists from 75 countries belong to SEE International's global network of volunteers, working on up to 130 expeditions each year.

This amazing work is made possible by the generosity of a network of in-kind donors, including Alcon Labs, Allergan, Johnson & Johnson, and Bausch & Lomb, who donate most of the supplies that are used for the clinics and the generosity of individuals and foundations who contribute toward the remainder of the cost—less than \$100 per surgery.

Blindness is an underlying cause of poverty and hunger in developing countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that of the world's 37 million blind people, 90% live in developing countries; 80% of the cases are avoidable or treatable; and 48% are blind because of cataracts.

SEE International's primary focus is on cataract

surgery, one of the most cost-effective of all health interventions. Cataract blindness is readily curable. A volunteer SEE International surgeon can restore the sight of a person who has been blind with cataracts for five, ten, or even 20 years with a local anesthetic and a 30-minute surgery.

"SEE International surgical teams volunteer their time and pay their transportation costs for travel to work with their colleagues in developing countries. The host countries provide in country transportation, food, and lodging for the five or six days the team is doing surgery. Industry donates most of the consumable supplies for the surgeries. This is an example of collaboration of the highest order," Brown shared.

Since 1980, SEE also works to assist local people who do not have the means to obtain eye care through their Santa Barbara Vision Care Program. This effort provides comprehensive vision and glaucoma screenings, eyeglasses – courtesy of the Santa Barbara Eyeglass Factory – medications, and eye surgery at no cost to the patient.



**Hildy Orillac** and **Ruben Orillac**, MD, Guests of Honor; Host Ophthalmologist, Panama City, Panama

**SEE International** is a nonprofit, humanitarian organization that provides medical, surgical, and educational services by volunteer ophthalmic surgeons with the primary objective of restoring sight to disadvantaged blind individuals worldwide.

SEE is located at 6950 Hollister Ave., Suite 250. Reach them at (805) 963-3303 or visit: [www.seeintl.org](http://www.seeintl.org).



**Harry Brown**, MD, Founder, SEE International; **Hildy Orillac**; **Jeanne Martin**; and **Ruben Orillac**, MD, Host Ophthalmologist in Panama City, Panama



**Laurie Jacobson**, MD with **Douglas Jacobson**, MD, SB Vision Care, Ophthalmologist, SEE International



**Danielle Crowder** with **Lois** and **David Franks**, 20 year SEE Volunteers



**Barbara** and **Lee Wotherspoon**; **John Crowder**, MD, Medical Director & Board Member, SEE International; and **Gena Pratt**, Development and Public Relations Coordinator, SEE International