

# LIONS IN SIGHT EYEGLASS RECYCLE CENTRE

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LIONS OF USA AND JAMSHEDPUR



November 2007 Lions In Sight, Lions International eyeglass recycle center for the western United States, sent two teams of Optometrists and technicians to India to conduct temporary eye clinics to provide free vision care to the underprivileged. One team set up in Mumbai and the other set up in Jamshedpur. The last village visited in Jamshedpur was the turning point as about 300 villagers, some of whom had walked 10 plus miles, could not be served due to a lack of time and resources. Two Lions on the Jamshedpur team, Ted Fichter and Khush Bodhan approached the Chief Operations Officer of LIS, PID Bill Iannaccone for his guidance and approval to set up a permanent clinic in Jamshedpur. After an enthusiastic approval from both he and the Board, the machinery was set in motion to set up a permanent clinic. Any member of the public would be able to come to the clinic, get a free eye exam and get a pair of eyeglasses free of charge. Thus the Indo-American Lions project was set in motion to open the 59th permanent clinic of LIS.

To set up of the clinic, funds were needed for equipment and the operation of the clinic. Lion Khush Bodhan approached his friend in Mumbai who pledged a total of Rs. 10 lacs from the Kothari Foundation. Lions Fichter and Bodhan, with the assistance of a group of Indian golfers in the United States (NAAGA Golf Club) and other Lions, set up Golf Tournaments with some of the proceeds going to the Jamshedpur clinic. A total of approximately Rs. 18 lacs was therefore available for the Jamshedpur clinic. All of this was carefully planned and approved by the Board of LIS.

In an extraordinary example of Indo-American teamwork, all issues regarding setting up of the new permanent clinic were resolved. There was tremendous support from the Indian

Lions namely, PID A P Singh, PDGs Sudipto Mukherjee and Rajnish Kumar, and the Lions of Jamshedpur North, District 322A.

The equipment and eyeglasses had to be shipped from the United States to India with minimum payment of customs duty. This is where PID A P Singh showed true leadership as he was able to work with Lion Kamal Mantri of Kolkata Lions Club for getting the goods into the country with all obstacles being overcome in a timely and fiscally responsible manner.

The location of the clinic was of paramount importance and LC Jamshedpur North came up with an ideal location - their very own building in the heart of the poor of Jamshedpur. Lion Sudipto Mukherjee and his wife and DG Nalini Mukherjee deserve credit for making this possible.

The clinic involved two days' training for the operation clinic, and then two days of hands-on experience of actually running it. The role played by the Lions of Jamshedpur North was admirable. A core group of approximately nine Lions enthusiastically learned the fine art of running a clinic and, in fact, on the last day, the American Lions were observers as the Indian Lions took over and ran the clinic.

The essence of Lionsism is to serve those that are not as fortunate as others. It is heartwarming that Lions from India and the United States worked as one to serve the visually impaired.

