

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Kim Krajewski
SEE International
(805) 963-3303
kim@seeintl.org



International Humanitarian Organization's Work Comes Alive in Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara, Calif., May 27, 2008 — Perhaps you've noticed the new blue and white flags going up all over State Street? They're a visual reminder of the important work done by Santa Barbara's own locally based international organization, Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International. The organization has been around for over 30 years, yet many in the local community do not know how remarkable their efforts have been throughout the world. SEE International provides sight restoring surgeries in over 75 countries for children and adults living in rural and impoverished communities.

During May 27 - June 3, 2008 you'll see their special banners and logo along State Street reminding us that sight is a precious thing. During that week alone, SEE surgeons will be traveling to Peru, Colombia, Mexico, Vietnam and Zimbabwe, performing an estimated 330 sight restoring surgeries.

The SEE International flag depicts a blue background with the organization's logo and the word SEE. SEE International's unique logo is based on the design of the rod of Aesculapius, the god of medicine and healing. Situated atop the staff is the symbol of an eye with the ideogram of the planet Earth inside it, reflecting SEE International's mission to provide sight restoring surgeries worldwide.

A leader in international humanitarian ophthalmology, SEE is one of only a handful of international nonprofits in the Santa Barbara area. Their local program, the ***Santa Barbara Vision Care Program***, provides free diagnostic screenings, and as approved, free surgeries for low-income and uninsured residents of Santa Barbara County. The ***Santa Barbara Vision Care Program*** is made possible, in part, through the generosity of the area's local eye care partners, such as Mr. Rick Feldman and the Santa Barbara Eyeglass Factory, and the free services of many of Santa Barbara's community eye physicians and surgeons.

The World Health Organization estimates that 37 million people in the world are suffering with blindness and 90% live in the poorest countries where their ability to access the care needed is severely limited. Consequently, unnecessary suffering prevails. Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness and can be cured through a minor procedure, using local anesthesia, increasing the quality of life for so many.

Through the time and services provided free of charge by eyes surgeons around the country, and the added financial support from donors and equipment/supplies provided, SEE International is able to provide cataract surgery free of charge to its patients. Last year alone, SEE International surgeons performed 9,308 surgeries. To date, 360,000 individuals have been treated worldwide.

Founded in 1974, Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit humanitarian organization that utilizes volunteer ophthalmic surgeons to provide sight-restoring surgery to disadvantaged blind individuals worldwide. To learn more about SEE International please visit www.seeintl.org or reach us at (805) 963-3303.

###