



NSUOCO students make mission trip to Honduras

(Tahlequah, Okla.)—Students of the Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry are again helping people in need of eye care through a mission with [Student Volunteer Optometric Service to Humanity](#).

The NSU SVOSH chapter recently completed its second mission to Roatan, Honduras. The trip was July 30 – August 6.

“In four days of clinic, this amazing team saw over 1,000 patients,” said Dr. Alissa Proctor, assistant professor of optometry at NSUOCO and faculty adviser for SVOSH. “They worked hard to double the number of patients seen in 2009. I am extremely proud of their efforts and the way they represented NSU in their service.”

The clinic team of 15 included students Molly Tebow, Sarah Boone, Jessica Colpitt, Lauren Frost, Kelsey Grounds, Megan Kirkpatrick, Sarah Mullinks, Aaron Reinert, Erin Ridder, Nat Wernick, Lindsey Bull, Ben Lundeen and Meimey Wong. Dr. Sarah Gallagher accompanied as faculty doctor and Jimmy Fort was staff optician.

Free eye exams and glasses were provided to the people of Roatan, who Gallagher described as an “overwhelmingly underserved population.” The optometry students worked eight-hour days in an outdoor clinic. Of the 1,005 patients treated, 280 were schoolchildren and 51 patients were referred to other physicians for further care.

“The clinic days were tiring but the students never complained,” Gallagher said. “There were over 1,300 pairs of prescription glasses, readers and sunglasses given out, along with countless prescription medications for eye diseases like glaucoma.”

While this mission was the second to Roatan, it was the first since SVOSH took a trip Dec. 12-19, 2010, to a remote area of Guatemala along the Sarstun River on the Belize border.

Short term plans call for alternating trips to Roatan and Sarstun. Many patients treated during the missions require ongoing care and SVOSH students have expressed a desire to provide follow-up treatments.

“That would allow us to visit many of the same people – perhaps not on a yearly basis but every other year – and we can serve two different communities but stay up to date with the patients,” said Bull. “Trust and confidence levels increase in patients when they visit doctors they know.”

SVOSH is a charitable organization dedicated to providing vision care to the less fortunate.

Gallagher said the SVOSH group handled every situation with professionalism and that those supporting the missions are making an outstanding investment in community service.

“The students’ selflessness and maturity throughout the entire trip was so admirable,” she said. “They represented the optometry college and the university with such a high level sophistication. Everyone in the NSU family and everyone who makes donations to help us can be proud of the work these students do.”

To find out how to make donations of eyeglasses or funds for the mission trips of the NSUOCO chapter of SVOSH, or for more information, call (918) 444-4000.

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A video of SVOSH students discussing their mission experiences can be seen on the [Optometry website](#).

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