# RHONDA EYES ALLIANCE

Working to Help the Less Fortunate See Clearly





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#### **RHONDA EYES ALLIANCE (REA)**

#### MISSION STATEMENT

REA is a group of dedicated health care professionals and volunteers committed to serving the Less Fortunate with Eye Care in the US and the Caribbean with most concern directed to the Island nation of Haiti having the most need in the western hemisphere.

#### **REA MISSION**

REA mission teams travel to impoverished areas to care for the eyes of the communities by providing exams, medications, eyeglasses and surgeries in collaboration with Local Doctors.

#### **REA Humanitarian Works are twofolds:**

**In South Florida:** REA performs Vision Screenings & Eyeglass Tune Up in South Florida at Community Events, Health Fairs, Festivals and Senior Facilities.

**In Haiti:** REA's mission has transitioned from short term missions to establishing a a full service Vision Center with Optical Laboratory that cares for the eyes of the Less Fortunates. The Vision Center provides comprehensive quality eye exams, eyeglasses, medications and cataract surgeries in collaboration with Haitian Doctors.

REA is also engaged in Training a group of local Haitians to become Optical Technicians.

REA's motto is to fully engage the local healthcare providers and community leaders to ensure the continuity of services.

#### **HISTORY**

REA's first mission To Haiti in 2007 was an eye opener when REA's volunteers travelled to the mountainous rural town of Kenskoff to provide eye care at the invitation of Catholic Priest Father Ocide of the organization "Afe Neg Kombit"

99% of the Patients served in that mission never had an eye exam before because they had no access to health care. All 185 patients served needed eye glasses and or medications to treat various infections.

From 2007 to present REA has established a presence and reputation in Haiti and has demonstrated the ability to successfully implement eye care mission services for the Less Fortunate.

In 2009, REA'a founders sent up a monthly eye care clinic in St Marc Haiti as a pilot program for one year. The result helped REA realize that we can execute more efficiently by staying in one location and transporting the patients from outlying rural areas. The town of Arcahaie was chosen as REA's base due to logistics and sound infrastructure. Having completed numerous missions in Arcahaie's L'Eglise de Dieu Reforme Hospital since 2008, the Hospital administrators have entrusted us with the necessary space in the hospital to establish the Vision Center with an Optical Laboratory to produce prescription eye glasses.

To date REA has served several thousands of documented patients from Plateau Central, Gonaive, Saint-Marc, Port-au-Prince and Arcahaie. We are proud to say that cataract surgeries performed by our collaborative surgeon Dr. Decastro now stand at 100% success rate.

In addition REA has developed a network of local healthcare professionals, school and church leaders and other volunteers that assist in the service delivery efforts.

These individuals and agencies assist in scheduling and transporting people to our facility.



Rhonda Eyes Alliance (REA) was founded by Pierre LeBlanc & Rhonda Veerasawmy LeBlanc. Pierre LeBlanc is a retired Avionics Technologist, Musician, Sound Engineer, Producer, Mortgage Broker, Philanthropist.

Rhonda Veerasawmy LeBlanc, is a veteran Optician / Entrepreneur for over 25 years licensed in the State of Florida.



and less fortunate in Haiti.

March 2014

#### **REA HAITI BOARD**

President : Rhonda Veerasawmy LeBlanc Vice President: Dr Pierre Yves DeCastro

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## "Vision, a God given vision to give Vision, changing the destiny of a brother or sister"...Pastor Sunny Swilley, March 21st, 2015, REA Annual Fundraiser

September 30, 2015

Dear Friends of REA,

This year's Annual Fundraiser was a Luncheon and opening prayer was done by Pastor Sunny Swilley. The above mentioned quote was part of her opening remarks. In planning this message, I pondered over her remarks and thought to myself, "that's a really big Vision".

In the stages of Life, one is conceived as an embryo, born an infant and grows into childhood.

REA has just surpassed it's 8th Birthday and I am happy to report that we are moving forward with many growth spurts.

The Vision Clinic in Haiti is fully operational on a monthly basis with a goal for 100% sustainability by the end of its first year in February 2016.

Pierre & I have been taken under the wings of some experts of the eye care industry, this opportunity has led to creating a trade program in Haiti - Haiti Vison Care Technology (HVCT) which involves the training of 12 young Haitians to qualify as certified optical technicians.

HVCT is an on hands training program which is concurrent with the Vision Clinic and is working due to a year long commitment of Pierre and myself to travel and train at the monthly vision clinic. The plan is to have the first graduating class in July 2016.

The second ultimate goal is the Optical laboratory operating, cutting & edging the prescription lenses for the Vision Clinic as well as to be available to do the work for the local doctors in private practice.

In accomplishing of these 2 major goals, REA will show that all of us working together, help make the "Teaching A Man How to Fish!" concept a reality at work.

In South Florida, REA continues to serving through participating at Health Fairs & Community Events.

I could not finish without sharing some more exceptional news: that amidst a year long commitment to HVCT program & monthly Vision Clinic, REA Board Director Pierre Leblanc is looking forward to the CD Release of his latest musical project "Anthology 1991- 2016. Congratulations Pierre!

It takes each and everyone of us together to make the Helping People See Project transform the concept of Teaching A Man How to Fish to actually Work!

Please continue to support and share the info of REA, remembering there are no coincidences.

With God at the Helm, I must say that I had no clue 8 years ago that my direction in life would be part of changing the destiny of a brother or sister through Vision.

The Eye is the Light of the Body!

Respectfully,
Rhonda Veerasawmy LeBlanc
President / Optician

REA CONTACT INFORMATION
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#### all about eyes

#### FAQ's

#### **Eyewear & Ophthalmic Lenses**

#### Frames:

Most ophthalmic frames are made of various forms of plastic or metal material.

#### **Ophthalmic Lenses:**

Single vision lenses: used for either distance or near vision

**Bifocal Lenses:** used so that person can see at distance and read. Bifocal Lenses usually have a line to identify the reading area. There are some bifocals that the line is invisible.

**Trifocal Lenses:** are used so that the person can see at distance, at intermediate distance and up close. Trifocal Lenses usually have lines and the appearance of a half moon.

**Progressive Lenses:** an eyeglass lens having a smooth transition between parts with different focal lengths, correcting for vision at all distances. The progressive lenses has no lines.

There are several other lenses available in addition to ones listed: sun lenses, variable sunglass lenses; sports lenses, computer lenses occupational lenses.

#### **Eye Conditions**

#### Myopia or Nearsightedness

a condition where person can see close up and blurry at distance. in which the visual images come to a focus in front of the retina of the eye resulting especially in defective vision of distant objects.

#### Hyperopia or Farsightedness

a condition where person sees distance and blurry up close.

**Presbyopia farsightedness** caused by loss of elasticity of the lens of the eye, occurring typically in middle and old age.

**Astigmatism**...a condition where the person does not see clear and defined; a defect in the eye or in a lens caused by a deviation from spherical curvature, which results in distorted images, as light rays are prevented from meeting at a common focus.

#### **Eye Diseases**

Blepharitis: Inflammation of the eyelid.

Cataract: a medical condition in which the lens of the eye becomes progressively opaque, resulting in blurred vision.

Conjunctivitis: inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eye. Also called Pink Eye.

**Diabetic retinopathy** is a diabetes complication that affects eyes. It's caused by damage to the blood vessels of the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye (retina). At first, diabetic retinopathy may cause no symptoms or only mild vision problems.

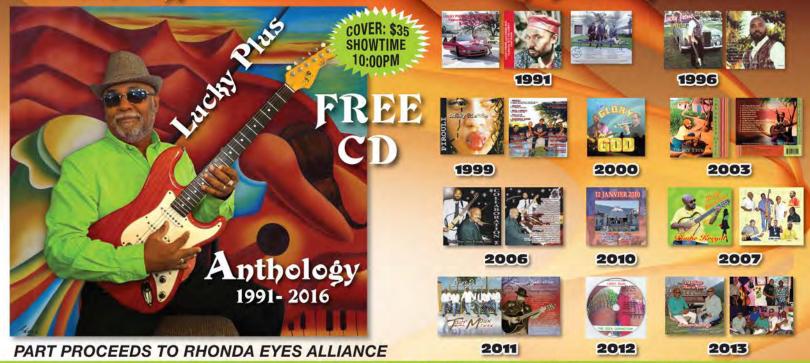
**Floaters** occur when the vitreous, a gel-like substance that fills about 80 percent of the eye and helps it maintain a round shape, slowly shrinks. As the vitreous shrinks, it becomes somewhat stringy, and the strands can cast tiny shadows on the retina. These are floaters.

Glaucoma: a condition of increased pressure within the eyeball, causing gradual loss of sight.

**Macular degeneration** is the leading cause of severe vision loss in people over age 60. It occurs when the small central portion of the retina, known as the macula, deteriorates. The retina is the light-sensing nerve tissue at the back of the eye.

### Congratulations to Lucky Pierre, REA Board Director

The CD Release Party & Lucky's Birthday Celebration "Anthology" 1991 - 2016 • Saturday: January 9, 2016



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- Dr. Harold Forrest
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- Philippe Jean Baptiste, RN
- Annette Overstreet & Jaffe Eye Institute
- Pierre, Denejour & Giles family donated 42-inch Flatscreen TV
- Kennenth Karp MD donated \$ \$
- Dr. Laurie Lesser donated hand-held equipment & \$ \$
- Nemours Maurice: helping transport hand-held equipment
- Purple Room Music: Video & Photo Production, You Tube Channel & Web site management
- Clara Coen from Chicago collects recycled eyeglasses all year. Thanks Clara for your commitment.
- Vanessa Havel
- L'Eglise de Dieu Reforme Hospital
- Best Choice Printing saves their old toners & ink cartridges to donate to REA's Recycle Project!
- REA thanks all of it supporters & donors for your continuous support. Excuse us if you do not see your name mentioned as we try our very best to recognize all of our supporters.

#### Can we add your name to this list?

Please visit www.rhondaeyesalliance.org to see our work and click DONATE to support this worthy cause. Contact Rhonda at 786-344-2157 rhondaeyes@aol.com or Herriot at 786-348-9351

#### PRE-PRESBYOPIA VS. PRESBYOPIA

Adults in the United States are divided into two opposing camps. No...not Jordan vs LeBron or boxers vs. briefs, but pre-presbyopia vs. presbyopia. Presbyopia is defined as the loss of elasticity in the crystal-line lens of the eye that normally accompanies aging. It generally begins sometime after age forty and continues to worsen until the middle of the sixth decade of life. The inability to read or focus on near objects is generally the first sign that one is developing presbyopia. Those who are far sighted appear to suffer more than their nearsighted counterparts because farsighted people slowly lose their ability to focus at both near and far objects. The nearsighted individual however, loses the ability to read only if he or she is wearing their distance correction. If the myope or nearsighted individual removes their distance glasses they will be able to read. Regardless, presbyopia is traumatic to those who are unaware of its impending arrival.

Along with the inability to focus, many individuals in this age group also develop dry eyes, nighttime glare, decreased color perception and cataracts. Some folk also develop more serious afflictions such as glaucoma and macular degeneration. We will discuss them briefly.

Dry eyes often presents with stinging, burning, redness, blurred vision and sometimes foreign body sensations. The symptoms can range from

a mild irritation to severe pain. It is the most common reason to cause patients to have an eye exam. If one is diagnosed with dry eyes, the first step is to alleviate the symptoms with lubricant eye drops. If the symptoms are not getting better by the next day then the patient should see a professional.

Nighttime glare is another common complaint of the over forty gang. The onset of nighttime glare may be a result of dry eyes but most often it is the result of early cataracts. Cataracts are the result of a buildup of calcium and other by products in the lens of the eye. The cataract scatters light entering the eye and causes a decrease in the amount of light reaching the retina. This decrease in light reaching the retina makes one perceive colors as being washed out and less vibrant as before. Often the decreased color perception is not noticed initially because the lens changes are slow and gradual. Treatment involves the eventual removal of the cataract which will alleviate the glare and improve the color

Glaucoma and Macular degeneration are diseases of the eye that can only be diagnosed by a thorough eye examination. Currently there are no known cures for these diseases. Early diagnoses however, will result in better long term outcomes because effective treatments are available for both conditions. Unfortunately, the onsets of both diseases are symptom free so one must have an eye examination to detect them early. Remember to have your eyes examined yearly.

Lenward McCalla, OD REA Board Director

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### REA Eye Care Magazine 2015 - 2016 USA Volunteer Testimony Page



BREAKFAST

Jean Willy Gerdes: 7/15/2015

I have known Rhonda and her husband Pierre for many years. They are a very caring couple. That is why it did not surprise me at all when they introduced me to their organization "Rhonda Eyes Alliance (REA)". This, in my opinion, is an extension of what has been in their hearts all along. I have been in the field of Communications as a career since I started performing on stage at the age of 10; whether it

is in front of a classroom, directing a visual production, or hosting REA's annual fundraiser, I could not conceive of working without my sight. This is the gift they have decided to provide to those that needed it the most here in this country, and abroad.

REA's tag line states "Working to help the impoverished see more clearly". I can only imagine the personal trauma on a person as he or she slowly begins to lose sight. As they began years ago with just a couple of people, their destiny became clear. Today, their traveling teams include healthcare professionals and volunteers who get to have life changing experiences through yearly missions to impoverished communities. With the help of many, and the various donations, they are now able to train local healthcare professionals, and have recently achieved the goal of opening a full eye care vision center in Haiti. REA is real, and is changing people's lives with providing care to the underprivileged. They do it from their hearts, and I support them fully as they go for the goal of eradicating world blindness by 2020. Thank you REA for being a shining example.





Roger Jean: 4 time REA US Volunteer for Summer Missions to Haiti

Since 2011, I have been a part of a mission that strives in making a difference in the way our brothers and sisters of Haiti care for their vision.

Someone might ask why I enjoy being a part of that mission?

My answer would be, dealing with a group of

dedicated people who everyday work diligently to better others, is the best motivation anyone could ever ask for.

REA is a God sent mission to Haiti.

I would encourage others to look into the work of REA , and if you are moved by what it does,

Please support and donate to the Cause. Vision is Life!

Help the Haitien People to live. The greatest gift I ever received is the joy of giving to others in need.

Yours truly. Roger Jean

#### Herriot Denejour



DINNER

**REA Director** 

My name is Herriot Denejour, I have been living in the U.S. For the past 16 years. I have been serving at Rhonda Eyes Alliance since 2007, the year it was founded. I have known Rhonda, REA president, since 1999. Prior to Rhonda Eyes Alliance, I have worked with Rhonda serving the community in several other organizations.

Serving others is like a hobby to me and I enjoy doing it. Growing up, I was blessed tremendously by so many that invested their time and funds in me. Now its my time to give back and to serve with REA is a blessing. I am able to make a difference in the lives of so many people in the U.S. community, and also in the ones living in the island of Haiti where I was born and raised. Being a part of this wonderful organization has brought so many opportunities in my life including my wife whom I have met during a meeting at REA.

### Congratulations to REA for their 8 Years in the Misison Field!



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### REA Eye Care Magazine 2015 - 2016 Haiti Volunteer Testimony Page



Reagan Cetoute: Translator \* Lead Trainee Rhonda Eyes Alliance (REA), a name that makes me excited and proud to be a part of. REA has been good to the Haitian communities for several years, and the people trust the organization and wait for them to come to care for their eyes. When I am in the streets of Arcahaie and my neighbors ask me when is the next clinic? I feel so proud to represent the REA

Vision Clinic. Since 2010, I have been working spent with this team, I have gained much maturity, skill, more incentive to work. There are no words to explain that the work of REA makes a difference in eye care, educative training for young Haitians and teaching us how to save our lives by learning how to fish and not waiting for a fish. For me, REA is more than an organization, from 2010 - 2015 ..5 years of hard work, where the REA haitian volunteer was, is and will always strengthen ourselves. During these years, the objective of REA remains faithful to the Haitian people.I hope one day REA find partners for help accomplish this beautiful dream, this beautiful mission..may God help us ..thank you,



#### Jonas Jean

Translator \* Trainee Supervisor

My name is Jonas Jean, I am the Administrator of the Hospital Reforme, I met Rhonda's team in 2010, I was observing carefully their plan was, after my observation I got myself involved with REA as a real volunteer, because I could feel that they have a big lovely heart for the Haitian people the way they save and help.

One of the biggest testimony that I can tell, there is a sixty year old man named "Frè Cé" (Celsius Pierre) from our community, he was blind both eyes because of bad cataracts. After he received the surgery he cried like Batimé in the Bible: "I can see, I can see... Praise the Lord, thank you Manman Rhonda," No one could keep him from worshiping God and thanks to Rhonda, that was the biggest day in Frè Cé 's life.

I would like this eye clinic to cover all of Haiti to help the impoverished to see more clearly, because too many Haitians lost their eyes, the many people being blind because they don't have big money to check their eyes even once. I feel lucky to be part of the team, since the first time I've met the team til this very second, I will always be with REA. I can say with assurance: "If it is to be! It is up to me!

Jonas Jean Administrator Hospital Reforme.



#### Wislande Joseph

Ophthalmic Technician \* Lead Trainee I'm a certified ophthalmic tech, I was trained in Ecuador and certified with JCAHPO in the USA .I always love to give my time to serve others, REA had given me the oportunity to do so, for me it a big blessing, an adventure of knowledge, getting to know other people's story and to be able to help them, In Haiti sight

is the way of life, if you can't see, life is going to be ten times harder. REA is making big impacts on people's life, those life stories have made big impacts on me, feel good and right to humble my self to help Haiti. I have been a volunteer with REA since 2011 but now I'm more involved in their monthly clinic .They are doing an excellent work in the town of Saint Ard ,Arcahaie, at L'Eglise de Dieu Reforme Hospital, the training program of optical assistant is very important on clinic to help the volunteers. Every month we have more and more patients because of the good quality of the service.

I had witnessed a lot, there was once a 36 years old guy that was a high myopic and he had never wear glasses before , he told me he used to ride motorcycles and drive cars. I will never forget the smile on his face and gave me more energy to continue doing mission works because there is a lot of patients like him that doesn't have money to pay a private clinic, they only find this opportunity through mission works

By doing mission works with REA I get to learn new optical skill and I learn that a service of quality is very important in mission, because rich or poor they deserve a good treatment.

Sincerely, Wislande Joseph



I started working with Rhonda & Pierre in St Marc at Belle Lunette Optical in 2008. REA went to another level in Arcahaie, helping to care for the eyes of the Less Fortunates. The organization work has become indispensable to the people Arcahaie, L'Artibonite, and the whole region all the way to Saint-Michel in the Central Department.

As a Doctor I feel blessed to have the opportunity to serve the population with REA.

May God bless Mrs Rhonda and her husband Mr. LeBlanc who is a pillar in the organization

**Dr Céron Laguerre** 



### TEAMWORK & 8 YEARS IN THE FIELD!







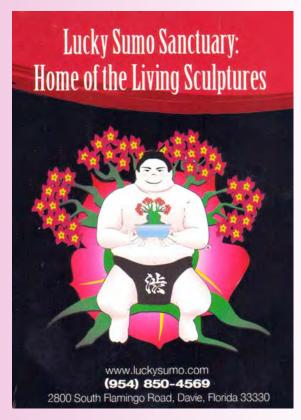


















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### Spending Time with Jesus

Life is filed with endless distractions that keep us forever busy with very little time to focus on our spirituality.

We live among people who glorify busyness, and time has become a dictator that controls our lives. We have bought into the illusion that more is better so we have: more meetings, more programs, more activities, and more jobs. Some of us who know Him as Savior and Lord tend to march to the beat of the world.

In the Gospel of Luke 10:38-42 Jesus was visiting the home of Martha and Mary. Martha was busy cleaning and cooking and getting things ready for their time with Jesus, while Mary sat listening at the feet of Jesus. Martha was so upset that her sister did not care to help her and she complained to Jesus to tell her sister to help her.

His answer:" Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken from her."

So God is calling us to come away with Him for a while, and put the world on hold.

There is a very popular song by Christian Artist, Israel Haughton: "To Worship You." The first few words: Away, away from the noise, alone with you

Away, away to hear your voice and meet with you Nothing else matters, my one desire is:

To worship you I live, to worship you I live, I live to worship you......

Most of us put Him on hold, anyway explaining that someday we will find time to focus on Him. We say things like, my life is a mess, I am not ready yet, I have to get right before coming to Jesus, not realizing that Jesus is the one who gets us right. But the longer we push Him into the background of our lives, the harder it is to find Him.

He has called us to follow Him on a lonely path, making time alone with Him our highest priority and deepest joy. It is a pathway that is largely unappreciated and often despised. Nonetheless, as Jesus told Martha, we have chosen the better thing, which will never be taken away from us. Furthermore, as we walk close to Him, He can bless others through us. He is inviting us to come to Him for life.

Psalms 16:11(American King James version) says: "You will show me the path of life, in your presence is fullness of joy, and at your right hand there are pleasures for ever more."

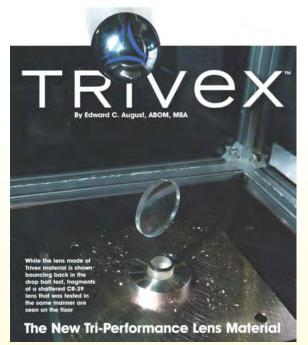
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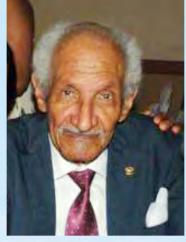


**ELAINE C. MOOTOO** Feb. 20, 1927 - October 6, 2013

### Rememberance In Memory of

Elaine Mootoo & Leslie Melville, Godparents of REA'a co-founder Rhonda are remembered as two of many life changers in Rhonda's formative years growing up In Guyana. Be Free! Watching & Guiding Rhonda Eyes Alliance.

Jeff Compas and Phenold Aladin were REA Haiti Volunteers who actively participated in several of REA Missions. May Jeff & Phenold's Light shine on the Haiti Vision Care Technology Trainees that they will continue working for a sustainable Vision Clinic.



LESLIE D. MELVILLE April 16, 1925 - Feb. 8, 2015



STERLIN JEFF COMPAS Nov 13, 1989 - Jan 28, 2015

Goast Man by Leslie D. Melville Free! I must be free!

A new spirit's afire within me From whence it comes I know not.

Free! I must be free!

Hush! A voice calls It calls from afar From the deep south. He says his name is Kaie His people once taught to fear me Now welcomes me. He calls me brother.

He speaks of lush green lands Like the virgin's womb Awaits the seed Rolling pastures of endless grass Beauty and splendor unsurpassed.

Mountains, thousands of feet high That rise to vanish beyond the sky Towering trees, meandering streams Weaving a pattern through an Alicean dream.



My name is Coast Man For on to two centuries A wall was my refuge From the sea water before me And the flood waters behind me.

Yes! I am Coast Man But for two generations What was once my refuge Has become my prison. The wall has swallowed me.

Like Jonah am L Prisoner of a wall That is sometimes stone And off-times clay Yet I could not break free. It possessed my very soul.

The wall is now old and dark It is cracked and filled with many leaks It no longer protects me It just possesses me.



PHENOLD ALADIN JUNE 3, 1980 - MAY 8, 2015

Sand glittering like stars That beckon men from near and far Earth rich with fragments of a golden sun New frontiers to be challenged New glories to be won.

Come! Come! he beckons. Me! Coast Man Prisoner of a wall Entombed with the stench of sweat And blood and rotting souls Haunted by the crie of the long forgotten.

Free! I must be free!

A seething rage erupts inside me

I wrench my shackles loose My prison walls come tumbling with a crash. Free! I am free! And now with my head held high My eyes affixed on horizons far Guided by the light of a twinkling star I move south to the land of Kaie.





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Apostle Duane Swilley, As a young boy, every weekend of my life my father conducted a marriage and family seminar. I traveled and ministered with my family through college and learned a great deal in the process. In those formative years, I saw that regardless of the culture or country I was in there was an incredible need for marriages to be restored and families to be healed. And so, 40 years ago I continued the legacy in my family of empowering marriages and families around the world. Three principles that would help your marriage or family would be the following:

- 1. It's not whose to blame, it's what's the solution. In your marriage and family your focus is on what can we learn and implement where we'll never revisit this type of problem again. You will soon develop a bulletproof marriage or family.
- 2. Settle all issues in a peaceful resolution before you go to sleep every night. This allows a healthy environment to be in your family and everyday has a fresh, new beginning without any unresolved issues.
- 3. If you want a good marriage or family, make it your priority. God first, marriage second, family third, then everything else. If you really want to know what you value, check your calendar and your check book. In my books Dream Family and Dream Marriage there are practical steps that will enable your family to become the dream family or dream marriage you've always wanted. In the dream family there is a weekly plan for a whole year where with God's help, your family will be reinvented. In the dream Marriage there are 17 chapters full of priceless principles that will take your marriage to a higher level than you ever thought possible.

I want to thank Rhonda and Rhonda's Eye Alliance for being part of my family. I affectionately call her my little sister and I am so proud of her and the thousands of lives and families she has touched with the powerful gifts God has blessed her with.





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congratulate REA for its dedicated services as a non-profit organization. Your vision screening, eyeglass cleanings and tune-up in elderly homes, churches & health fairs are a blessing to us and the community. We bless God for your ministry.

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Every one should have an annual eye exam!

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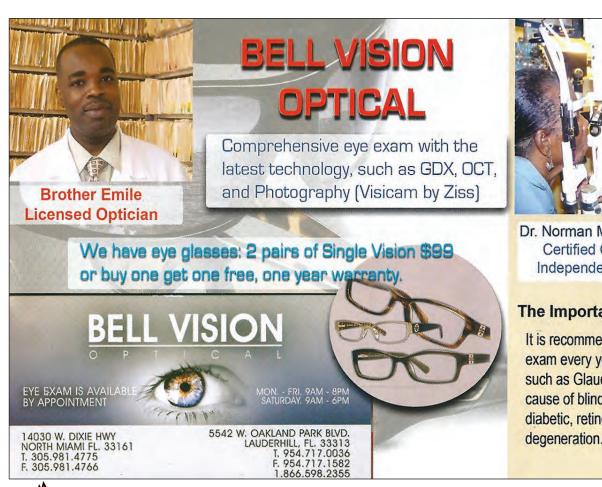
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#### The Importance of an Eye Exam

It is recommended to have an eye exam every year due to eye diseases, such as Glaucoma, which is a silent cause of blindness. Plus cataract, diabetic, retinopathy, and macula degeneration.

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