

VSP Recognizes Six Optometrists Committed to Putting People First

SACRAMENTO, Calif., March 18, 2004 - Whether it's helping the underprivileged, improving their local communities or advancing the profession of optometry, VSP's 2004 People First Award Winners have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to service.

The People First Awards recognize VSP network eye doctors who go beyond the call of duty in serving their patients, their communities and their profession. One of the six regional winners will be selected as the national award recipient later this year.

"We are honored to be associated with eye doctors who make significant contributions in improving the health of both their patients and their communities," said Roger J. Valine, President and CEO of VSP. "These six doctors are excellent role models for us all and VSP is proud to recognize them through the 2004 People First Awards."

Below are the recipients of the 2004 VSP People First Award, including a few brief highlights about their accomplishments.

- **Carol Marusich, O.D., M.S., F.C.O.V.D of Eugene, OR:** Dr. Marusich worked with the American Foundation for Vision Awareness to produce two videos and a CD to increase awareness of the need for early intervention and provide training for optometrists so that all children can receive an eye and vision assessment without charge during the first year of life. She provides comprehensive vision and eye health exams for patients with disabilities and special needs and also lectures internationally on the topics of infant vision, vision development, vision and eye health concerns of special populations.
- **Jack Hostetler, O.D. of Mesa, AZ:** Dr. Hostetler is a volunteer OD with the Blue Cross & Blue Shield Health Safari Van, which brings health care (including eye and vision care) to underprivileged children through schools and community centers in low-income areas. He has been recognized as the AzOA Optometrist of the Year in 1995 and 2000 and is the only Arizona OD to receive this distinction twice. Dr. Hostetler's leadership of AzOA's legislative team during a twelve-year period resulted in one of the premier legislative efforts in the country. Among the accomplishments during his tenure are the passage of HB 2014, which granted AZ optometrists the authority to treat with topical pharmaceutical agents, and the passage of SB 1084, which allowed oral pharmaceutical agents to be prescribed by AZ optometrists.
- **Daisy Chan, O.D., F.A.A.O. of Chicago, IL:** As an associate professor at the Illinois College of Optometry (ICO), Dr. Chan took a lead role in starting the Chinatown Project, a program that provides non-English speaking patients with free transportation, translation, eyecare and follow-up care services through the Illinois Eye Institute. She also personally established a clinic directly in Chinatown to better serve the local community, where the majority of patients examined are poor immigrants without health or vision insurance.
- **Kimberly Friedman, O.D. of Moorestown, NJ:** Among her many contributions to education, charitable causes and the community, Dr. Friedman serves as a volunteer vision consultant for the Bancroft School of NeuroHealth, where she works with children who have autism and neurological disabilities. She was one of the first ODs in New Jersey to volunteer with the Special Olympics and was instrumental in getting the program started in the state. Currently the President-elect of the New Jersey Society of Optometric Physicians, Dr. Friedman has also served for over ten years as Director of the Dr. Les Mintz Scholarship Foundation, a charity that awards scholarships to worthy optometry students.
- **Cathy Doty, O.D. of New Bern, NC:** In addition to chairing North Carolina State Optometric Society's Children's Vision Committee, Dr. Doty has provided eyecare for the last three years to Russian orphans who come to the U.S for a camp sponsored by Children's Hope Chest. In 2003, she traveled to Russia to bring care directly to the children at their orphanage. Among the other distinctions she has been awarded include the "Citizen of the Year" award by the Town of Trent Woods and the "Small Business Persons' of the Year" (with her spouse and optometric partner, Shawn Doty) by the Craven County Chamber of

Commerce 2000.

- **Ronald Solomon, O.D., F.A.A.O. of Colorado Springs, CO:** Dr. Solomon is heavily involved in his local community and within the optometric industry. He currently serves as President of several community groups, including the East Colorado Springs Kiwanis Club, the Pikes Peak Torch Club and the Temple Shalom Men's Club. Dr. Solomon is also the Chairman of the United Way Optometry Division and Eye Clinic Director for the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. He has also been honored with the AOA Distinguished Service Award.

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The six regional winners were selected among a pool of candidates nominated by office staff and other doctors from across the country. Each of the award winners receives a \$1,000 cash prize and a \$1,000 donation to the community-based charitable organization of their choice.

The 2004 People First award winners are all active in one or more professional optometric organizations and have been recognized both within these organizations and their communities for their contributions. For the People First Award, they were further evaluated in three areas.

- **Outstanding patient care:** Using innovative and exceptional techniques to create a genuine "People First" experience.
- **Community service:** "Putting People First" through a commitment to volunteer work in their communities.
- **Service to their profession:** Demonstrating leadership in the industry with a track record of giving back to the eyecare profession.

About VSP

VSP provides a variety of flexible eyecare benefit plans. With nearly 38 million members, one in eight people in the United States relies on VSP for eyecare health coverage. VSP's Sight for Students program has helped more than 215,000 low-income/uninsured children receive free eyecare services since its inception in 1997. For more information, visit us online at www.vsp.com.