

## Foundation has an eye for needs: Molokai doctor leads group in providing eye care to South Pacific

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The eyes of the southern Pacific Rim have been getting better thanks to the Hawaiian Eye Foundation and Molokai's Dr. John Corboy.

The foundation, started in 1984, finances its philanthropic pursuits from the profits of Royal Hawaiian Eye annual medical meetings, held each January. It has since been involved in a variety of projects, all of which have the aim of bettering eye care.

"It was beginning to make a profit ... so I thought we could use the profits to do good works," Corboy said of the meeting.

These finances enabled Corboy and his faculty to begin visits to South Pacific countries.

The first visit was in 1982, when Corboy decided to go to the kingdom islands of Tonga.

"There was one eye doctor for the whole country, so I brought him up here and taught him," Corboy said, adding, "We bought him microscopes ... and we flew him up here for advanced training in my office."

Since then, there has been a turnover of two other generations of doctors from the same family, both of which came to Corboy for additional training.

"We just love Tonga," he said, noting that he and his team spend a couple of weeks in Tonga each year. The first week is usually dedicated to direct eye care.

"It's mostly ... delivering care one-on-one," Corboy said, noting, with clear emotion in his voice, that the line-up of people seeking eye care oftentimes wraps around the building.

The visiting patients are then triaged, depending on the given problem. Some, for instance, have cataracts while others have diabetes in the eyes, "because they're eating bad Western foods."

The second week in Tonga is reserved for traveling around the islands and delivering eyeglasses to the needy.

However, in addition to nurturing the relationship with Tonga, the Hawaiian Eye Foundation has taken on a number of other projects, including a current project of building an eye clinic in Fiji.

"We branched out from delivering care to small Pacific islands ... to training programs in Asia," he said.

This included the planning and execution of a first medical meeting, similar to Royal Hawaiian Eye annual medical meeting, in Vietnam in 2006. During the meeting, over 200 Vietnamese doctors had a chance to participate in the day-long lectures and wet labs, during which new techniques are demonstrated on animals.

"We let them practice using these techniques," he said, noting that many of the instruments were altogether new to the doctors.

In addition to the regular Tonga visits, building a clinic in Fiji and holding medical meetings in Vietnam, next of which is this June, the foundation also participates in many Hawaiian affairs, such as the upcoming Hawaii State Science and Engineering Fair, held this April in Honolulu.

"Something's going on in a lot of different areas," he said.

All of the projects are carried out by volunteer faculty and financed by donations. Those wishing to contribute to the causes are encouraged to contact Dr. Corboy at [jcorboy@aol.com](mailto:jcorboy@aol.com) or at 627-0825.