



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **APPLETON EYE SURGEON TAKES PART IN ORBIS 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT UNITED NATIONS**

*Dr. Vrabec Travels the World Performing Eye Surgeries and Training Local Doctors*

**APPLETON, WISCONSIN (March 2, 2007)** –For the past 16 years, Dr. Michael Vrabec, M.D., has traveled the world using his skills and knowledge as a trained eye surgeon to help restore the sight of countless patients. As a faculty member of ORBIS International, Vrabec has traveled to countries such as Bangladesh, Syria, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Morocco, Armenia, Lithuania, Poland and Paraguay. According to the World Health Organization, 37 million people worldwide are blind—28 million unnecessarily.

Yesterday ORBIS International, a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving sight worldwide, celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Dr. Vrabec attended the celebration at the United Nations in New York City, where the featured speaker was His Excellency Girma Wolde-Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia who addressed government and business leaders on the growing crisis of avoidable blindness. In Ethiopia alone, over one million people are blind, more than 2.7 million have low vision, and no less than 10 million are afflicted by active trachoma and 1.2 million by blinding trachoma, a highly contagious disease now rampant throughout the country.

To mark the occasion, the world famous tower lights of the Empire State Building were turned off for 28 minutes to remember the 28 million people around the world who are unnecessarily blind. Before the lights went out at 20:20 (8:20 p.m. ET), the Tower shined blue and white in tribute to ORBIS. Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York proclaimed March 1 “ORBIS Day”. Throughout the month of March and all across the world, ORBIS hopes



to make more people aware that 75 percent of those suffering can be cured. Here is a link to the PSA that debuted yesterday in Times Square: <http://www.prnewswire.com/mnr/orbis/26607/>

According to Dr. Vrabec, "I am proud to be part of the ORBIS anniversary celebration in New York City. I joined the organization in 1990 and have many special memories working with medical teams and patients. All of the surgeries I have performed take place on the Flying Eye Hospital where we help train local doctors on the latest procedures. Each trip lasts for three weeks with the first week spent screening 100 to 200 patients for a specific procedure. Generally, we perform cataract surgeries and corneal transplants. Before we can operate on a patient, they must meet the following criteria—are blind in both eyes, can benefit from the surgery, will be a good teaching case for the area doctors and does not have the financial means to pay for the surgery." Vrabec is planning a trip to Cambodia in fall 2007.

#### **About Valley Eye**

For decades, Valley Eye Associates has been the premier choice for total vision healthcare in Northeast Wisconsin. The group specializes in a wide range of surgical and non-surgical treatments that include corneal transplantation, refractive surgery, cataract surgery, diabetic eye disease, macular degeneration and glaucoma. For more information or to make an appointment with one of the physicians visit [www.valleyeye.com](http://www.valleyeye.com) or call (920) 734-4361; toll-free 1-800-344-4443.

#### **About Orbis International**

Since 1982, Orbis volunteers and staff have restored the vision and transformed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in 85 countries. ORBIS has been building local capacity to provide eye care in those countries by training more than 120,000 eye care professionals aboard the ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital, in local hospitals and through long-term blindness prevention programs in Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, India and Viet Nam, and regional programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. Untold millions of blind people have received the gift of sight as a result of the training ORBIS has provided. To learn how you can help make a difference visit [www.orbis.org](http://www.orbis.org).

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