

# Just Happened to Be in Vrindavan: How a Visit Unveiled a Life-Changing Mission



*Ankima Jain\**

Sometimes life leads us to extraordinary stories that touch our hearts and inspire us to contribute to something greater. That's precisely what happened to me during a visit to Vrindavan, where I became acquainted with the remarkable "Gift of Sight" initiative.

Founded in 2011, this project has been a beacon of hope and transformation for many underprivileged communities in North India. Last year alone, it facilitated 3,038 cataract surgeries, adding to a total of over 10,000 surgeries while distributing more than 50,000 pairs of eyeglasses. This incredible mission, led by Mr. Yogesh Bhatia, Founder and Director of the Friends For Cause Foundation (FFCF), has touched countless lives and provided people with a new lease on life.

**FRIENDS FOR CAUSE FOUNDATION, CANADA & GANDHI EYE HOSPITAL, ALIGARH (INDIA)**

**GIFT A SIGHT PROJECT - 2017    आँखों का उपहार-2017**

Lecture by : **YOGESH BHATIA** (Director) FRIENDS FOR CAUSE FOUNDATION, CANADA  
 समाज के सभी वृद्ध एवं असहाय भाई, बहनों के हितार्थ जो अपना मोतियाबिन्द ऑपरेशन स्वयं नहीं करा सकते

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In 2023, the initiative expanded its reach to 14 locations, including Moga, Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Lakhimpur in Uttar Pradesh, with particular attention to Vrindavan and Mathura. This effort is a collaboration between Lt. Col. Nitin Bhatia Memorial Trust and Dr. Shroff Charity Eye Hospital, achieving remarkable outcomes through strategic planning and spiritual devotion.

During my time with the project, I had the pleasure of meeting Yogesh Bhatia's daughter, Tanmai, who is deeply involved in the mission. Despite her young age, she embodies the family's commitment to service, prioritizing the mission over material needs. Her insights about compassion, ethics, and spirituality deeply resonated with me, highlighting the transformative power of selfless work.

The "Gift of Sight" was born from a deep personal loss—the tragic passing of Lt. Col. Nitin Bhatia in a helicopter crash. In their grief, Yogesh and his mother, Sudarshan, channeled their pain into helping others, initially funding the project themselves. The NRI community soon joined this noble cause, with supporters from Vancouver, Toronto, Austin, Seattle, and Houston fueling its growth.

Remarkably, the Friends For Cause Foundation operates solely on voluntary contributions from the NRI community, without any governmental support. Their

work has provided free cataract surgeries and eyeglasses to thousands, significantly impacting India's impoverished elderly population affected by cataract blindness.

Yogesh's family is an integral part of this ambitious endeavor. His sisters, Nidhi, Hem Wasdve, and Bindu Chakravarty, alongside their children, have all dedicated themselves to the cause. Each family member, including Bindu—a professor and cancer survivor—has contributed significantly, expanding the initiative to include surgeries for other eye conditions like glaucoma.

A new chapter unfolds this year with the "Vision on Wheels" initiative, bringing eye care directly to remote areas. This will broaden their reach, making eye care services accessible to those in need.

The project has garnered admiration from medical professionals across India. Dr. Umang Mathur, CEO of Dr. Shroff Hospital, praised Yogesh for his personal dedication, and Dr. Paramjeet Ji has been a dedicated partner since 2017. Other key supporters like Amit Sipani, Harpreet Johar, and Mandeep Arora have helped shape the foundation's impact, planning for future expansion of the initiative beyond India.

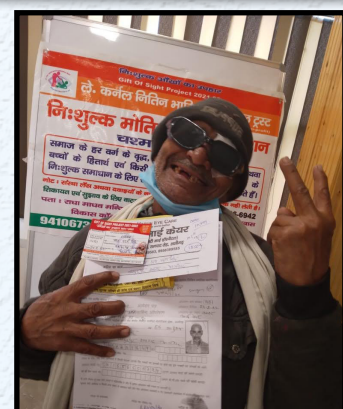
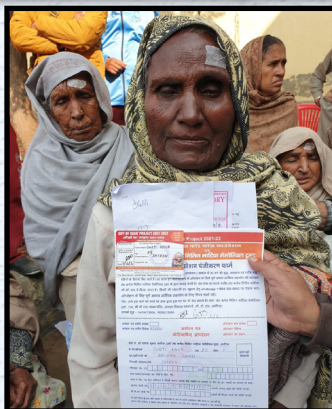
Harpreet Johar, initially drawn by FFCF's no-profit model, is now fully committed to their mission after witnessing its powerful impact. Similarly, Amit and Neeraj Kumar have become proponents of sharing FFCF's transformative work, driven by both professional admiration and personal conviction.

In witnessing this profound dedication, it becomes evident that personal tragedy can transform into a force for global good. "Serving others brings profound satisfaction and happiness," Yogesh often reminds us, a sentiment that resonates through every surgery and pair of glasses given.

For those interested in supporting the "Gift of Sight" initiative, donations can be made through the Friends For Cause Foundation. You can also follow Yogesh Bhatia's journey on Facebook by searching for Yogesh.Vancouver.

Feel free to reach out to me, Ankima, at [ankima.jain@gmail.com](mailto:ankima.jain@gmail.com) or 214.683.8551, or contact Yogesh directly at [yogivancouver@gmail.com](mailto:yogivancouver@gmail.com) or 604-366-6942, to learn more about how you can contribute to this life-changing mission. Every contribution, big or small, makes a significant difference in someone's life.

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Pictures: Yogesh Bhatia, Canada