

Fairfield HOST Lions Club Guest Speaker and Volunteer Pilot talks about Orbis International and their “Flying Eye Hospital”

By Community Contributor

3-4 minutes



The Fairfield HOST Lions Club was honored to have Carl Hakenen as their Guest Speaker on Wednesday February 14th.

Mr. Hakenen is a veteran of the U. S. Air Force and a retired Pilot from United Airlines.

After retirement Mr. Hakenen volunteered at Orbis International piloting several variations of the “Flying Eye Hospital” over the years to countries all over the world.

Orbis International is a non-profit non-governmental organization (NGO) based out of the United States and does not receive government funding but relies on corporate and private donations.

It focuses on the prevention and treatment of blindness in developing countries around the world.

The charity over the years has trained over 10,000 doctors, conducted more than 15 Million eye exams and performed around 350,000 eye surgeries.

Currently Orbis is flying a Boeing MD-10 Wide Body airliner donated by FedEx that has been converted into a working Flying Eye Hospital and Training Center. The Flying Eye Hospital is built on an MD-10-30 freighter aircraft that utilizes a modular design concept.

It flies to developing countries to provide training for doctors and nurses, as well as delivering sight-saving surgeries, delivering state of the art medical equipment and repairing damaged and broken equipment for the local hospitals and clinics.

The Flying Eye Hospital is the world’s only airplane with a fully functioning state-of-the-art eye hospital that includes Classrooms, Laser Treatments, Operation Rooms, Robotic Surgery, Observation and Recovery areas on board.

The aircraft is also fully self-sustained providing its own power, Heating/AC, water, etc.

The Flying Eye Hospital is a unique tool that brings dedicated eye care professionals from across the world to developing countries to provide two to three weeks of training and state of the art surgical demonstrations.

ORBIS volunteer doctors impart to local doctors, nurses, biomedical engineers and technicians the skills necessary to provide high-quality eye care to their communities that will prevent and treat avoidable causes of blindness such as cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

Tragically, there are 39 million blind people worldwide; 80% of cases are preventable and treatable. Ninety percent of these people live in developing countries where there is a severe lack of proper medical care.

Since 1982, ORBIS has conducted programs in more than 85 countries, impacting more than 15 million lives.

There are many fantastic videos on YouTube that can also be viewed.

For more information please go to: www.orbis.org

