



Ophthalmic Program



What's your plan for World Sight Day?

This resource is intended as a guide for St John facilitators to design activities specific to St John's ophthalmic program, and in recognition of World Sight Day.

World Sight Day is held on the second Thursday of October each year.

St John Ambulance Australia uses this annual event to promote fundraising for our Ophthalmic Program, and the importance of eye care and health.

St John State and Territory offices and divisions are encouraged to organise activities either for World Sight Day, or use the month of October to run fundraising events and organise activities for members.

SOME IDEAS ...

A most important sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is good eye care and health important?• Discuss how obtaining an education can lead to meaningful employment and a fulfilling life as members of the community.
Eye care and health (first aid)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate the kinds of injuries that could happen to the eye.• Practise first aid for eye injuries.• Look at different eye diseases. Discuss causes and outcomes of living with that disease.
Knowing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Palestine, Israel• Oecussi, East Timor• Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore different regions where St John provides eye care and health.• Use a global map to identify locations.• Discuss the geography, history, politics, population, language, religions and infrastructures of Palestine or Oecussi, and compared to Australia.
St John Ambulance	Give a short history of St John in medieval times, and St John Australia's ophthalmic program
The St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem	Discuss the SJEH, and what they do
Fund-raising	Organise a fund-raising event.
Case histories	Find case histories that describe an individual's story of eye impairment or disease. Plan activities around a personal story.
Speakers	Organise a speaker from an eye health care organisation to present.

RESOURCES

[www.stjohn.org.au/About us](http://www.stjohn.org.au/About%20us)

- Juniors - eye health activity workbook (PDF; used for the Juniors Interest badge)
- Youth - eye health workbook (PDF; used for the Youth Proficiency badge)
- First aid for eye injuries (PDF; commercial first aid booklet)
- St John History (two papers on the history of the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem)

There are also resources for use specific to the St John Eye Hospital Group:


- SJEHG PP 2018 - general (a PowerPoint file with 51 screens, showing images from the St John Eye Hospital)
- SJEHG - About (flyer)
- SJEHG - Mobile Outreach (flyer)

<https://www.stjohnneyehospital.org/>

The SJEHG website has excellent and varied information that can be used for learning activities: news, case studies, statistics, etc.

Activity worksheets 2011

Use the 2011 National Ophthalmic Week activity worksheets for 8–12 years, 13–15 years, and 16–17 years.



National Ophthalmic Week

St John Ambulance Australia

8–12yrs

St John—helping people in Palestine see

Did you know...

That Australia is a very lucky country. In Australia we can easily go to the supermarket and buy good food. We can have our eye and have hot and cold water. We can see the doctor or hospital when we are sick.

Life in some places of the world is much harder than in Australia. In Palestine, a place located in the Middle East, about 17 hours by plane, many people cannot go to the doctor or a hospital. This might be because the people do not have a lot of money to pay to see a doctor or because it is not safe to go outside of their homes due to fighting between the countries, Israel and Palestine.

Talking point

Imagine if you needed to see a doctor or go to the hospital when you needed to? What would you do if you were sick?

In Palestine, many children have health problems, especially with their eyes making it hard for them to see—they are called eye disease and there are many different types of eye problems. A lot of eye disease happens because of health problems: the diabetes and not being able to have healthy food. These problems are also made much worse by not being able to see a doctor or go to hospital easily.

Each year, St John Ambulance Australia raises money to support the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. This eye hospital has been around for hundreds of years and it now helps the people living in Palestine who can't pay to see an eye doctor or go to hospital. Nurses from the hospital even come to the homes of people who can't get to the hospital. This is why your help during Ophthalmic Week matters.

Ahmed's story

Meet Ahmed Elmaghr, Ahmed lives in the Gaza Strip in a refugee camp with his parents, two brothers and three sisters. His house is very small and crowded, and it only has two rooms. His father is not working, so there is no money to spend. Sometimes it's hard to have good food.

One day, Ahmed was out playing with his friends when a stone hit his right eye. After this, Ahmed started having problems seeing. Ahmed's father was worried about Ahmed because the other kids were teasing him at school because he couldn't do his school work and his dad didn't pay money well anymore. So his father took him to the local eye clinic to get what was wrong. The clinic doctor said that Ahmed had developed a cataract in his eye and he will talk about what cataracts are in his class. Ahmed then had an operation at the clinic to try and fix his eye, but it didn't work. It didn't look like Ahmed would be able to see properly again. This was very upsetting for Ahmed and his family.

Someone said to Ahmed's father that he should take Ahmed to the St John Eye Hospital because you do not need to pay there and they have helped many people. So Ahmed's father took Ahmed to the St John Eye Hospital to see the diabetes and nurses there. Ahmed was told he needed to have an operation straight away. St John's eye doctors said that the cataract that was stopping him from seeing clearly and replaced it with a special lens that would help Ahmed see properly.

Talking point

Can you imagine what Ahmed's life is like? How is it different to yours?

Talking point

How do you think Ahmed felt about having money donated to his eye problem?

The operation was a great success! Ahmed can now play with his friends and read and write well at school. Ahmed and his family are very grateful for the help that St John gave them. The St John Eye Hospital has changed Ahmed's life.



National Ophthalmic Week

St John Ambulance Australia

13–15yrs

St John—helping people in Palestine see

Did you know...

That over 900 years ago St John established a hospital in Jerusalem? Jerusalem is the capital of Israel which is located in the Middle East. This hospital still operates today just south of Jerusalem and is known as the St John Eye Hospital. The health professionals that work at the hospital work hard at helping the people of Palestine with the widespread problem of eye disease. They are the only provider of crucial eye care in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Fact ...

The rate of blindness is 10 times higher in Palestine than in any other developed country such as Australia.

About occupied Palestine

Palestine is located right next to Israel. Palestine is an area that has experienced a lot of fighting and violence for hundreds of years. Conflict still happens there today, with fighting often breaking out between Palestine and Israel.

As a result of the conflict, there is a lot of poverty and hardship, and access to specialist health care like nurses, doctors and specialist health professionals is not easy to come by. Not only do people there not have the money to access health care, it is dangerous to travel in the area due to the armed conflict.

In Palestine, many children experience serious eye complications such as glaucoma, cataracts and trauma-related injuries, from a young age. A lot of eye disease in Palestine is a result of poor health such as diabetes and poor diet. These problems are also made worse by not being able to access health care when it is needed.

Discussion point

What do you know about the Middle East? What do you think the environment is like there? How do you think people access food and water in a desert environment?

How does St John Ambulance Australia help?

Each year, St John in Australia raises money to support the important work of the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. The funds from St John in Australia go towards funding outreach nurses who visit people in their communities, bringing health care to people in need. This hospital is the only charitable provider of crucial eye care in the occupied Palestinian territory, treating tens of thousands of patients each year. This is why your help during Ophthalmic Week matters.



National Ophthalmic Week

St John Ambulance Australia

16–17yrs

St John—helping people in Palestine see

Did you know...

That in 1882, an eye hospital was established just outside of Jerusalem? It aimed to help the people of Palestine with the widespread problem of eye disease. Eye care south of Jerusalem and is known as the St John Eye Hospital. They are the only provider of crucial eye care in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Fact ...

The rate of blindness is 10 times higher in Palestine than in any other developed country, such as Australia.

About Palestine

Palestine is an area that has experienced a lot of conflict and violence over several hundred years. Conflict still exists today, with hostilities or fighting frequently breaking out between Palestine and Israel. As a result of conflict there is much poverty in this area of Palestine and access to specialist health care is very limited. What health care is available is often quite difficult to get to.

In Palestine, people experiencing the effects of diabetes is currently at a pandemic level (pandemic refers to an outbreak of disease that is spread over a wide geographical area, such as a whole country). Many children experience serious eye complications such as glaucoma, cataracts and trauma-related injuries, from a young age. Scientists tell us that poor health and chronic disease (like diabetes) has direct links to eye disease. Poor health outcomes are common in Palestine due to significant poverty in much of the population. Many Palestinian people also cannot move about freely in Palestine due to armed conflict, and as a result cannot access specialist health care.

Could you imagine if you had an eye problem, not being able to get to a doctor to be provided with care for the condition?

Research conducted in Palestine

Research conducted in Palestine has shown that recovering from an eye condition significantly improves the economic status of families — being able to work and earn an income means more money for a family and the effects of poverty can be alleviated. This also means that health care becomes easier to access.

Fact ...

If every St John Cadet and Junior donated just \$2, we could raise over \$5,000 to aid St John's Eye Hospital in Jerusalem in its important work.

How do we help?

Each year, St John Ambulance Australia raises money to support the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. The funds go towards funding outreach nurses who visit people in their communities. This hospital is the only charitable provider of crucial eye care in the occupied Palestinian territory and treats tens of thousands of patients each year. This is why your help during Ophthalmic Week matters.