



INTELLIGENCER PHOTOS BY BARRY ELLSWORTH

Andrea Bedor behind her 2006 Humanitarian Award. See insert, Bedor out from behind the award.



sojourns to other countries. She is part of a team of 12, which includes a nurse who, once there, does a health check, particularly for diabetes and blood pressure. Those conditions can affect sight, Bedor explained.

There are a number of steps leading to a person getting glasses. They include an optometrist who does the eye test. Bedor gets the glasses ready from a stockpile of ones she has sorted, disinfected and perfected from the Lions glasses before she leaves Belleville. If she can't find the right glasses for someone, she gets the correct ones made when she gets back home and then sends them to the recipient.

"I am the queen of the dispensary," she said, again with a big smile followed by laughter.

Fitting people with glasses and watching their eyes light up because they are then able to see well is a special moment for Bedor.

"I get the best job," she said. "There are many times I put glasses on people and they are seeing (clearly) for the first time. It's amazing."

Like the time she fitted glasses for an 80-year-old woman in Honduras. The woman

had arrived at 4 a.m. and she was finally taken care of at 5 p.m., smile beaming because of the improvement in her vision.

"You actually feel the tingle in your toes," Bedor said. Waiting like the Honduras woman did is unusual, since appointment "chits" are assigned to keep the wait to a minimum.

The trips are usually in the spring and fall and Bedor said she would increase the

frequency to full-time if she could afford it — everybody on the team is a volunteer and each individual is responsible the costs.

Pepper pot that Bedor is, it's no surprise to learn that she is the guiding force behind a vision fair to be held at the Ontario Science Fair in Toronto in September. The idea is to educate people to the role of opticians and eye safety. As well, Bedor said special glasses will be made so that visitors can see the effects of conditions such as glaucoma, cataracts and macular degeneration have on vision.

She expects it will open a lot of eyes.