Educational Initiatives Special Issue

Dr. McKee visits Nepal on Surgical Mission Trip

One of the many goals of the Cornea Research Foundation is to improve education, access to quality eye care and ultimately give people back the use of their eyes throughout the world. This June, Price Vision Group surgeon Yuri McKee, MD spent two weeks at Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology (TIO) in Kathmandu, Nepal. His purpose was to teach advanced surgical techniques such as DMEK cornea transplants and glued intraocular lenses (IOLs) to Nepali surgeons. These techniques were a welcome addition to the TIO skill set as corneal and lens based problems present significant challenges in the local population.

Dr. McKee was fortunate to be able to help a six year old girl (top photo) with the first known case of congenital hereditary endothelial corneal dystrophy treated with DMEK. She was very thankful to be able to have this sight-saving surgery. This case will be reported in the professional medical literature jointly by Dr. McKee and the TIO surgeons.

While there, he gave numerous lectures and demonstrated live surgery to physicians at TIO (second photo). “In just two weeks the TIO surgeons learned the Glued IOL technique and were working toward mastering DMEK. This was a very productive trip that will take TIO to the next level of surgical expertise, said Dr. McKee. “It also opened the door for a continuing partnership between our institutions that may allow for future trips and possible exchange of corneal fellows. In addition, they will be writing a book chapter on cataract surgery in the developing countries for our upcoming surgical textbook,” he continued to explain. With him, he took donated surgical supplies worth $15,000 (bottom photo) to assist in providing these new surgeries.

While the majority of his long days were spent in surgery and teaching, Dr. McKee did take the opportunity to snap photos of the Himalayan mountain range including Mt. Everest and even hiked 25 miles in one day!

“I have been involved in overseas mission work since medical school. This has allowed me to travel to Mexico, North Korea and Papua New Guinea among others to provide medical care during humanitarian missions. This trip was special since I was going to an established hospital and teaching advanced techniques to the surgeons there. My goal in Nepal was not to simply show up for two weeks and operate on as many people as possible; instead I intended to teach surgical techniques and impart my skills to local surgeons who will continue to restore vision for years to come. These surgeons will in-turn train others, yielding a far greater positive effect than I could ever make as just one person. During my time in the Air Force we called this being a ‘Force Multiplier’; in other words, each person should work not to just add to the mission, but instead be a multiplier for mission success. For this most recent humanitarian outreach I can happily say: Mission Accomplished!”
**OUR MISSION: TO GIVE PEOPLE BACK THE USE OF THEIR EYES**

Nancy Noel to serve as Honorary Chair

**Cornea Research Luncheon, September 16th!**

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary milestone in 2013, we chose to host our luncheon at a very special venue honoring the extraordinary Indiana philanthropist, painter and visionary, Nancy Noel. The event will be held at The Sanctuary, a Victorian church originally build in the 1800’s on Main Street in Zionsville. The unique landmark is home to the remarkable collection of artwork by renowned artist, Nancy Noel.

The Luncheon, featuring the “Through Our Eyes” Art Auction with items from professional artists, grateful patients and the visually impaired will be accepting a limited number of pieces from artists. If you would like to donate an item, please contact us at 317-814-2993 for submission information.

In addition to Dr. Price’s research update, Nancy will be greeting guests to visit and explain and answer questions about her timeless paintings. **Seating is limited, contact Jessica to reserve your seat today at 317-814-2993.**

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**Cornea Classic raises more than $50,000!**

June 4th was a beautiful summer day to host the Cornea Classic—the annual golf event that raises funds to support our research programs. A near record 31 foursomes hit the links to raise awareness and funds for the Foundation. Dr. Price once again joined each foursome on a green to putt with them and show his appreciation of their support.

With the help of many, we reached the $50,000 fundraising goal and a great time was had by all who attended! The silent auction featured 75 items and raised nearly $6,000 alone!

We would like to thank the sponsors, participants, committee members, in-kind donors and volunteers, that donated and worked hard to host a great event and reach our target. We would like to recognize our golf chairman, Harry Scheid for his dedication and many years of service.

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**Foundation Staff**

Executive Director
Marianne O. Price, Ph.D.
Development Director
Jessica Dingledy
Research Coordinators
Clorissa Quillin
Kelly Fairchild
Tiffany Schendel
Lauren Gunderson
Jalee Miller
Amanda Scanameo
How We’re Making an Impact with your Support

Breaking Research News by Marianne O. Price, Ph.D.

Education is key to our mission of giving people back the use of their eyes. We have tailored specific educational initiatives for patients, for optometrists, and for eye surgeons around the world.

**For patients,** we provide materials explaining different eye conditions and the latest treatment options. We present quarterly updates in our Visionary newsletter, and patients can find much more extensive information on our website. Recently we’ve added short videos, in which patients share stories about the vision challenges they’ve faced and how they overcame them. Sometimes patients would like to get advice from someone who has dealt with similar challenges, so we started a **Cornea Forum** ([www.corneaforum.org](http://www.corneaforum.org)), which allows patients to connect online, while our doctors can help answer questions.

**For optometrists,** we host the **Focus on Education** seminar annually. Each year several hundred participants learn about the latest developments in eye care and earn the continuing medical education credits required by their licensing board.

**For eye surgeons,** we share the latest advances in four key ways—through **talks, publications, videos, and hands-on courses.** Giving talks at meetings is a great way to reach a lot of people. We receive many invitations to speak, and last year alone we gave over 30 presentations at meetings in North and South America, Europe and Asia.

We also publish our findings in peer-reviewed medical journals at a rate of about one per month. Peer-review means that several experts in the field are invited to scrutinize your work to determine if your methods were valid and your results are worthy of publication. Having your findings accepted by a peer-reviewed journal is an important seal of approval.

To keep surgeons apprised of new techniques, we share surgical videos on YouTube, and we were honored to produce a master surgeon video series for the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s EyeNet website.

Finally, to help eye surgeons become proficient with new techniques, we host one- and two-day hands-on courses at our facility in Indianapolis. Visiting surgeons receive step-by-step instructions, practice on eyes donated for research purposes, and join Dr. Price in the operating room to see exactly how he performs each technique. Over 600 cornea surgeons from 27 countries have attended our cornea transplant courses (see maps).

Support from donors like you allows us to continue these educational initiatives, which have helped transform the way cornea transplants and other eye surgeries are performed around the world.

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**Welcome New Staff!**

Last issue, we excitedly announced that **Kelly Fairchild** and **Lauren Gunderson**, two clinical research coordinators will be heading off to medical school this fall (pictured to the right at their “White Coat Ceremony” going away party). In preparation, we have hired **Tiffany Schendel**, a recent Marian University graduate to replace Kelly and **Amanda Scanameo**, a current Marian student, to serve as Lauren’s replacement.

“Joining the Foundation has been a great experience thus far. I enjoy working closely with patients to assist with cross-linking procedures,” said Tiffany. Amanda added, “I’m so excited to have the opportunity to learn about ophthalmology in a research setting. In addition to finding our studies fascinating, I have really enjoyed interacting with patients!”

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**Good Luck!**

L-R: Amanda and Tiffany

L-R: Kelly and Lauren
Ask Your Doctor  By Dr. Francis Price, Jr.

Dr. Price, I am planning to have a DMEK cornea transplant with you later this year. I've heard many great things and feel confident in my decision. However, since I am located on the west coast, how do I best determine who I should see for follow up? I read on your Forum, www.corneaforum.org, that many patients get follow up care from their local doctors. How do I determine if my local doctor is qualified to track my transplant’s healing progress?

Q:

A: Our team of doctors at Price Vision Group are used to working with doctors all across the United States, and even internationally. If your eye doctor performs surgery they should have no trouble, and if your doctor does not personally perform surgery but routinely follows patients who have had surgeries like cataract surgery they should be fine. Any doctors doing follow up care can contact our team of doctors for assistance with your care and to answer questions. We also have standard treatment protocols for each of the surgeries we perform that can be followed by your doctors with guidelines on how medications should be used and how often exams should be performed.

The Foundation is hosting a luncheon on September 16th where I will be providing a detailed research update in Zionsville, Indiana which is located about 15 minutes from our office. I urge anyone interested in learning more about our initiatives to consider attending. You can reserve a ticket by calling 317-814-2993. We hope to see you there.

Thank you for your continued interest and support!
All donations to the Foundation are tax-deductible and support our sight-restoring research.