

August, 2001



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Rotary International 2001-2002

Avoidable Blindness

"Next to life itself, God's most precious gift is sight - Protect it, Save it, Restore it."

Task Force

A Message from the Chairman

Dear Avoidable Blindness Task Force Members:

I want to congratulate you for having been selected by President Richard D. King to serve on this important Task Force and also for having accepted this position. Here is what I envision during this Rotary year for the Avoidable Blindness Task Force:

- First of all, we should continue the great work that was started last year by so many dedicated Rotarians.
- Next we should comply with President Richard D. King's request regarding distribution of information on Avoidable Blindness.
- Finally, we should identify those with available resources to facilitate our Avoidable Blindness projects and then utilize this avenue to support Clubs and Districts in their efforts to achieve the 2001-2002 Presidential Citation and increase membership. R.I. Official Directory, Page O-23.

This year, our Task Force Assistant General Chairman is O. Doyle Dannenberg, OD. Dr. Dannenberg was the chair of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force last year and will have responsibility for the operational work of the Task Force this year. Please keep him informed of all of your activities by reporting directly to him. My job as the General Chairman of the Task Force will be to promote the efforts of the Task Force, endeavor to increase the funds in our Avoidable Blindness Pool and seek additional partners to support our activities this year.

To better understand what was accomplished by last year's Avoidable Blindness Task Force, I encourage you visit the 2000-2001 Task Force web site at the following address <http://www.frankdevlyn.org/blindness> Review the entire web site and look at the

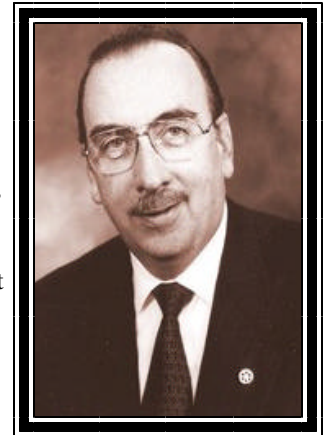
available resources. Read and analyze the year end reports from every part of the world that came in last year so you can have a better understanding of the work and purpose of the

Avoidable Blindness Task Force. There is much to be gained here and a great deal of the information has been transferred to the new Avoidable Blindness Task Force web site.

Harriett Schloer, who has served as my webmaster for the past two years, will be our Avoidable Blindness Task Force Webmaster this year. She is one of our most dedicated Rotarians and we are very fortunate to have her. If you feel there is something that should appear on our website, please inform Harriett who will be in close contact with Dr. Dannenberg and me. You can contact Harriett via email at in2dtp@empnet.com and when you do, be sure to identify yourself as a member of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force.

I will keep the Task Force General Coordinator, PRID Aaron Hyatt, and the Task Force Assistant General Coordinator, Past Rotary International Vice President, Louis Piconi, informed of our activities. I suggest that each of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force members contact last year's zone and area coordinators to gain as much knowledge from their experience as possible. It is important that you contact the DGs in your Zone or Area and convince them to promote and participate in Avoidable Blindness Projects. Try to use the resource persons mentioned in last year's

(continued on page 5)



ABTF Salutes PDG Dr. Milam Cotton for Free Humanitarian Work

PDG "Jake" Jacobus (D. 6840 2000-01) has reported on free eye surgery at the Southern Eye Center in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Last February Southern Eye Center gave the gift of sight to 12 people on February 16. For the eighth year, SEC offered free surgery to those who did not have insurance, Medicare or Medicaid or any other means of paying for their treatment.

Two of the doctors in the clinic are Rotarians and one DR. MILAM COTTEN is a Past Governor(1996-97). He has traveled to several countries to teach and perform surger-

ies; is a major gifts donor, a benefactor and all 18 members of his family are Paul Harris Fellows. He is a recipient of the Rotary Foundation for Meritorious Service and has served D. 6840 as Chairman of the District Permanent Fund and the District Avoidable Blindness Task Force Chairman.

We proudly salute Dr. Cotton and the SEC for restoring sight to more than 100 people in the past eight years. Thank you PDG "Jake" Jacobus for sharing this story of a dedicated Rotarian working for the cause of Avoidable Blindness.

Corneal blindness from injury, disease and vitamin deficiency afflicts over ten million persons worldwide — mostly young people — and is avoidable, treatable and even reversible in most cases. The long-term socio-economic debility of millions of mostly young victims doomed to a long lifetime of unnecessary sightlessness can be reversed in minutes by a corneal transplant of a donor's live tissue.

Matching Grant Application Venu Eye Institute

Governor Andrew M. Baum of District 7620 (Washington, DC & Central Maryland, USA) and President Praveen Jain of the Rotary Club of Delhi Regency, District 3010 (Delhi, U.T. India) have announced that an application for a matching grant from The Rotary Foundation to fund the Rotary Regency Gift of Sight Coordination and Processing Centre of the A. Edward Maumenee Eye Bank at Venu Eye Institute has been submitted to our Evanston headquarters. This competitive grant application for US\$100,000 will be acted upon by the entire Board of Trustees at its next full meeting in October/November. Ms. Robbyn Singer will handle this application as part of the Avoidable Blindness initiative.

Also participating in the project will be a professional partner, the International Federation of Eye and Tissue Banks (IFETB) of Baltimore, Maryland, USA, which has accepted responsibility for an additional US\$26,000 or more in contributed funds and technology and training services. IFETB is the major international certifying body for eye and tissue collection, coordination and processing. Although the Venu Eye Institute was established in 1980, the Institute would benefit greatly from a complete upgrade of equipment. This grant also would fund development of several new components, including specular microscopy evaluation of corneal tissue quality and the establishment of a dynamic new volunteer eye donation system that ultimately could involve every Rotary and Rotaract club in District 3010. These features will dramatically improve the quality of tissue recovery, testing, and distribution for transplantation to local eye surgeons.

The area to be served has a population of over 15 million persons in the Union Territory of Delhi and the states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh in north India. It is estimated that some 60,000 of the four million corneally blind persons in India are in the area served by District 3010.

Corneal occlusion ranks next to cataract as the second largest cause of blindness in the world today --- and most victims are under the age of 30. Even worse, a relatively simple half-hour operation, called a keratoplasty, can restore sight in most cases. But because of the dearth of public acceptance of eye donation at death, most victims in all but the most industrial nations of the world are doomed to a long lifetime of unnecessary corneal blindness.

We who serve Past RI President Frank Devlyn's Rotary Avoidable Blindness initiative have developed a comprehensive plan to overcome this obstacle and to make corneal tissue available to all who are in need. A volunteer Eye Donation Station programme can be promoted by each Rotary club in an affected area, supported on an ongoing basis by "sister clubs" in other countries.

The cost is minimal; the impact can be impressive if local Rotary clubs support public awareness of the eye donation need and recognition of tissue donors. Although this is the first such project between Districts 3010 and 7620, District 7620 is only continuing a tradition that began with its first eye bank matching grant project nine years ago in Turkiye. District 7620 leaders since has supported projects in India, Bangladesh and the Philippines, and has other project applications being prepared in those same countries as

Venu Eye Institute (*Continued*)

well as in several other countries at present, including Mexico, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lebanon, Nepal, Egypt and Turkiye. Help is being sought from other donor sponsor districts to assist in more projects, as District 7620 cannot carry this load alone.

Governors Andy and Suresh Jain, along with their respective sponsoring clubs of Towsonowne and Delhi Regency, believe this to be a most significant opportunity to be of service. They especially welcome the occasion to work together and strengthen the bridge of friendship developed by two GSE teams in the past decade, plus visits by PDGs

Rob Ketron and Tom Kwako to District 3010. The text pages of the application along with the submission cover letter is posted on the District 7620 web site at www.rotary7620.org/giftofsight and a link to directly access the application itself can be viewed at www.computerdummy.com/discussiongroups/ --- then click on the "Rotary Project Applications & Responses" link.

PDG BOB KETRON

District 7620

Email: interact@bigplanet.com

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Matching Grant Application Update

The following information applies to the approval of Avoidable Blindness Matching Grant applications for the 2000-2001 Rotary year:

From July 1, 2000 to July 20, 2001: A total of 557 Avoidable Blindness grants have been approved utilizing \$1,785,854 from the Avoidable Blindness Pools. The average grant award is \$3,567. These applications were processed via the "Fast Track" process which did not require an international sponsor.

A total of US \$2,485,336 has been received by the Foundation in DDF and cash contributions for the Avoidable Blindness Initiative. An additional US \$500,000 has been pledged from the estate of Paul and Jean Elder. This contribution brings the total to US \$2,985,336.

There are currently 321 pending Avoidable Blindness applications requesting approximately US \$1,275,873 from the AB Pools. In addition to the grants approved using funding from the pools in the 2000-2001 Rotary year, another 140 grants were approved using US \$1,211,059 in funding from the Matching Grant budget. These applications all had international sponsors and met the standard Matching Grant criteria.

Currently, the Foundation has on hand 142 pending applications requesting funds from the 2001-2002 Matching Grants budget for a total of US\$1,094,101.

Information provided by:

JAMES ROBINSON

*Supervisor, New Programs and Initiatives
Humanitarian Grants Programs Division
The Rotary Foundation*

Wisconsin Rotarian Makes Impact in India

For several years the Madison Rotary Club, assisted by others in Wisconsin, have helped one of our local members, Dr. Suresh R. Chandra, staff and operate traveling clinics in various parts of India. Dr. Chandra is a distinguished ophthalmologist, a professor at the University of Wisconsin Medical School, and a devoted Rotarian. He's of Indian ethnicity and pledged to assist the huge cataract and glaucoma burdens of the nation.

I believe he's returning to India later this year - our Madison Rotary Club (numbering 500+) has heard several reports, with slides, of his ventures, and several members have accompanied him. I know Dr. Chandra wants

to expand and improve the program. He's a delightful fellow who wants Rotary to expand the concern with avoidable blindness.

Should you wish to contact him, you may do so at:

U.W. Medical School
Dept. of Ophthalmology
600 Highland Ave, Room f4-342
Madison, WI 53792

Email: clpaulso@facstaff.wisc.edu

Website: <http://wieyernd.ophth.wisc.edu>

PDG GORDON B. BALDWIN

Law School

University of Wisconsin-Madison

608-263-2077

Why Support Gift of Sight Projects?

Because Gift of Sight Guarantees Projects that:

- ***Focus*** on the needs of the most worthy and least capable of paying
- ***Serve*** a significant number of people in need
- ***Build*** an ongoing health service infrastructure
- ***Provide*** permanent value to the indigenous community
- ***Support*** local health & medical resources
- ***Involve*** indigenous local community leadership involvement

Letter From the Steering Committee

Dear Avoidable Blindness Task Force leadership team:

It may seem an over extension of our efforts to suggest to such an expert group of Rotary leaders as yourselves how you can be even more effective during this Rotary year in your goal to reduce blindness worldwide. We take this opportunity, however, to have you all be aware of **challenges that you should seek to overcome**. Some examples of such are the following:

1. While Rotary International considers your task force as merely a resource for those who seek help, we feel that **you must be proactive if you wish to accomplish anything** worth while. Organize projects. Involve Rotary Volunteers. Include Rotarians who may not be eye doctors in your efforts.
2. When you organize an eye camp, be certain to include local eye doctors in your project in every step of the way. **Plan a continuing education seminar** either before or after the event to have visiting Rotarians exchange ideas for eye care with those who will be left to care for the patients after the foreigners leave. It is extremely important that local doctors feel a part of your team effort if you will have success.
3. If it be possible, **consider leaving special equipment for local eye doctors** to use after you leave. Have the local eye doctors use the equipment while the Rotary team is present so they will have no trouble with it when the visitors leave.
4. Think of the long term. **Make education of the local eye doctors a principle goal** of your efforts. Rotarians cannot operate every cataract on every poor person in the world. If Rotary were so lucky to do so in one year, there would be an equal number of cataracts the following year to do for all of our teams. If we truly want to have a powerful impact we must train competent people to do the job when Rotary leaves.
5. Seek ways to **stimulate eye clinics in developing lands that will then teach their own citizens** to be outstanding eye doctors. There is an eye hospital in Coimbatore, India that is an ideal place to have promising eye doctors from Africa study as residents. They can take their entire surgical team to learn about out-

reach programs, the business of ophthalmology as well as the fine techniques of surgical acumen. These new trainees would then return to Africa to be the professors in their own lands.

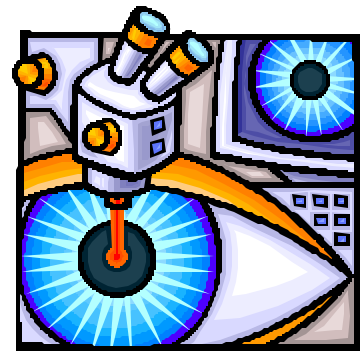
6. **Be missionaries for the cause of avoidable blindness.** Prepare exhibits for your Zone Institutes and District Conferences. Do not become frustrated that the entire Rotary world does not support your dreams. Be happy to have just a few converts at any one meeting. Your entire task force will soon start a sea of change.
7. Remember that **“Mankind is Our Business”** and help comes but one step at a time. Do not stop working for your goal of good sight for all.

As Area Coordinators, working under the guidance of your chairmen, you have a great responsibility to motivate your Zone Coordinators. Translate the materials you receive from your leaders for each of your language groups. Meet with your Zone Coordinators at your Zone Institutes. Communicate with your RI Directors to have them give you time to make a report and to discuss your goals with other interested Rotarians in your part of the Rotary world. **Be creative. Be Proactive. Make things happen.** Never lose site of your goal for bringing sight to those in need that they will have a more fruitful life for their families.

Yours in Rotary Service,

Jonathan B. Majiyagbe, PRID
Chairman, Executive Steering Committee

William P. Cadwallader, Jr., PRID
Vice-chair, Executive Steering Committee



“Make education of the local eye doctors a principle goal; If we truly want to have a powerful impact we must train competent people to do the job when Rotary leaves.”

A Message from the Chairman (*Continued*)

Task Force year end reports.

As a member of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force, you will need to find ways to associate with different eye care professionals and to keep abreast of their activities. You need to be aware of all congresses, conventions or reunions of various ophthalmologic groups that could benefit our Task Force. It is important that as a member of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force you arrange with these various organizations to give a talk or other type of presentation at their various organization events. I also recommend that each of our Task Force members make these different groups aware of the tremendous possibilities and opportunities they have by coming together with Rotary International and the Avoidable Blindness Task Force on projects that could be handled jointly.

At each of these events, I recommend that you prepare a simple table-top display and promotional materials to explain the work of Rotary and the Avoidable Blindness Task Force. This display does not have to be elaborate. You need to be creative and innovative in accomplishing this. It does not have to be elaborate. It only needs to tell our story to be effective. This will of course be at not cost to Rotary.

I recently spoke to all the optometrists in the United States and to Ophthalmologists at the Pan American Congress at their annual conventions. I told them that these Avoidable Blindness Projects offer opportunities and possibilities for them to promote different Avoidable Blindness projects. I also invited them to consider becoming Rotarians as many are not currently members.

Your appointment as a member of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force provides an excellent opportunity for you to invite outstanding individuals that you come in contact with to become Rotarians. As part of your display be sure to include handout material on Rotary and Rotary membership which you can obtain from Rotary International. Much of this material is provided at no charge.

Each one of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force members has to be innovative and find opportunities everywhere to speak outside of the Rotary Clubs and Districts to talk to these eye care professional and get them involved to serve as a catalysts to get the Rotary Clubs involved.

An ophthalmologist with an eye clinic can do tremendous good getting Rotarians in-

involved, because they have a passion for doing something about Avoidable Blindness.

I also hope that you understand the importance in every local area, every community and region, to try to find a community or regional alliance with eye care and avoidable blindness groups or associations.

Operation Eye Sight in Canada is a great organization that will match the money given by Rotary Clubs. Rotarians in Canada know about this organization. We have set up a link to this organization on our new Task Force web site.

Sight Saver is outstanding in Great Britain and Ireland. They've proven themselves by working closely with Rotary Clubs on several projects. We have also set up a link to this organization on the web site.

CBMI-Vision 20/20 Foundation is giving US\$1 million to The Rotary Foundation. The Rotary Foundation is finding ways to work with them. We should find ways to promote their different projects. Basically, every member of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force should find out what these projects are and inform clubs on how to use these funds for AB projects. Matching Grants using these funds should be approved quickly (on the fast track) because money is available.

It is important that every Task Force member contact the DGs in their Zone or Area and convince them to promote Avoidable Blindness Projects. Try to use the resource persons mentioned in last year's A.B. Task Force year end reports

Good luck and Let's Create Awareness and Take Action about all aspects of Avoidable Blindness because "Mankind is our Business" and through our efforts we can be part of "Rotary's Global Quest" to increase membership. Let's make President Rick King and the R.I. Board proud of what we are doing.

All the best,



Frank J. Devlyn
Task Force General Chair

"Your appointment as a member of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force provides an excellent opportunity for you to invite outstanding individuals that you come in contact with to become Rotarians."

Chairman Frank Devlyn and Assistant Chairman Doyle Dannenberg welcomed all ABTF members for 2001-2002 with the statement: "We look forward to the opportunity to continue to meet the needs of the blind and visually handicapped."

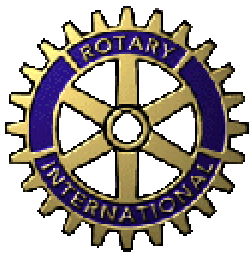
Past R.I. President Cliff Dochterman gave us the theme: "REAL HAPPINESS IS HELPING OTHERS". Our 2001-2002 President Rick King has challenged us with "MANKIND IS OUR BUSINESS". Thus as we serve mankind this message on "Happiness" seemed appropriate!

- You can't pursue happiness and catch it. Happiness comes upon you unaware while you are helping others. The philosophy of happiness is pointed expressed in the old Hindu proverb which reads: "Help thy brother's boat across, and lo, thine own has reached the shore".
- Happiness is like perfume; you can't spray it on others without getting some on yourself."
- Happiness does not depend upon a full pocketbook, but upon a mind full of rich thoughts and a heart full of rich emotions.
- Happiness does not depend upon what happens outside of you; it is measured by the spirit in which you meet the problems of life.
- Happiness is a state of mind. Lincoln once said: "We are as happy as we make up our minds to be.
- Happiness doesn't come from doing what we like to do but from liking what we have to do.
- Happiness comes from putting our hearts in our work and doing it with joy and enthusiasm.
- Happiness does not come from doing easy work but from the afterglow of satisfaction that comes after the achievement of a difficult task that demanded our best.
- Happiness grows out of harmonious relationships with others, based on attitudes of good will, tolerance, understanding and love.
- Happiness is found in little things: a baby's smile, a letter from a friend, the song of a bird, a light in the window.
- Happiness comes from keeping constructively busy; creative hobbies are the key to happy leisure hours & retirement years.
- The master secret of happiness is to meet the challenge of each new day with the serene faith that: "All things work together for good to them that love God." (*Copied from the Art of Living by Wilferd A. Peterson*)

I wish for all Rotarians real happiness as we serve the needy blind around the world because "MANKIND IS OUR BUSINESS"!

O. DOYLE DANNENBERG

Assistant General Chairman ABTF



www.rotarytaskforces.org

Chips Implanted In Eye to Restore Vision

Illinois doctors implanted three microscopic chips in the eyes of men suffering from retinal damage in the second phase of a study aimed at reversing blindness. The chips are powered by solar cells that convert light into electrical impulses. Ophthalmologist Alan Chow, who led the surgical team, said results will not be available for several months.

Message From Area B Coordinator

Greetings and best wishes from Dr. Umesh Megur, Area B Coordinator for Avoidable Blindness Task Force of Rotary International.

Avoidable Blindness Task Force Chairman, Frank Devlyn has suggested to make use of regular Matching Grant Procedure for supporting projects. In this regard I am requesting you to look in to the possibility of sponsoring Matching Grant Projects for Avoidable Blindness for our area through any District or Clubs coming under you. We need following things.

1. Eye Operation Theater Equipment
2. Consumables for IOL Cataract surgery
3. Mobile Ophthalmic Van for transportation of patients
4. Spectacles for school children and Elderly persons
5. Eye Testing equipment like Refractometers, Scanning Machines etc

I am an Ophthalmologist and have an invitation from R I District 9130 and

9140 of Nigeria for conducting IOL Cataract Operations there. We are also looking for support for this great International Service Project.

The project cost could be varied according to the funds available. Many Matching Grant Projects of last year are pending for sanction this year. Hence, it is important to apply for a Matching Grant this year as early as possible. I can send the details after hearing from.

Together, let us alleviate Blindness because Mankind is Our Business.

Regards,

DR UMESH MEGUR
Governor 1997-98
R I District 3160

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