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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

Chairman Devlyn Writes to Pan American Ophthalmologists

Dear Friends:

During the XXIII Interamerican Course of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami, recently held in Florida, you had the opportunity of receiving a brief message given by Dr. Robert Welsh, an ophthalmologist who has dedicated a great part of his life to help our Latin American countries. Dr. Bob Welsh who is an active Rotarian, is also a top advising member of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force of Rotary International.

As immediate Past President 2000-2001 of Rotary International, I started the program carried out by this Avoidable Blindness Task Force, where we received funds from The Rotary Foundation to carry out approximately 100,000 cataract surgeries and besides another 100,000 funded by the Rotary Clubs and Districts without the help of The Rotary Foundation. Most Rotarians are aware that at present there are 18 million of persons who are totally blinded due to cataracts. Many of these persons can be found in our Latin American countries. It is very gratifying to see that so many ophthalmologists who are Rotarians are willing to provide their professional services in helping Rotarians and other groups who collaborate with the Avoidable Blindness programs worldwide.

Maybe at present, you are already participating directly with some institution in helping needy people, even so, I would like to invite you to contact some Rotary Clubs in your community so as to help

them be able to identify or detect who are the needy persons who in your opinion would require economic help for a cataract operation in your area. It is very important that the local Rotary Clubs receive your professional guidance so they might be able to detect blind persons who would be ideal candidates for our program, who live at present in some of our poorest communities.

I sincerely feel that with your help, we can only identify these blind persons due to cataracts but who have a good light perception so we can channel them to the closest ophthalmologic clinic so as to perform the necessary surgery or funding the necessary intraocular lens.

Alcon laboratories has informed us that they are willing to supply the necessary intraocular lens and viscolastic solution that would be necessary free of charge to foreign missions under our program. A copy of the text of their Humanitarian Services brochure follows this letter. Doctors outside the United States are requested to provide this same information to the Alcon representative for their area.

Most local Rotarians would be happy to participate by helping to transport the patients to the clinics, so as to have the necessary operation.

It is recommended that a photograph be taken before and after this operation, so as to give it to the persons who have participated with the necessary money to fund these programs, so they can see that their donation or contributions are being

Rotarians Using the Internet to Volunteer for Avoidable Blindness

The following name was submitted from the new "Volunteer" form on the ABTF website:

Rtn. Dr. Sumit Banerjee
RC of Burdwan South
District 3240, India
Ophthalmologist

Email: suranar@
hotmail.com
Tel: 91-342-540635
569272
FAX: 91-342-566092

Comments: 'I am very proud to help Avoidable Blindness Projects.'



Chairman Writes to Ophthalmologists (*Continued*)

used for a very worthy cause. There is nothing like a picture of a grateful person who can see again, with a smile on his face.

We hope that all the Rotary Clubs participating give recognition to the ophthalmologists who are donating their time and professional expertise in making these cataract operations possible, restoring in this way, the sight to so many needy persons. We also recommend that these events can be covered by the local media.

We hope that you can see all the benefits of helping us with this Avoidable Blindness program. In case you are interested, please inform us as to how many patients you could help to receive ophthalmologic attention. We are willing to help with a symbolic amount to cover

some of the basic expenses you would incur if you decide to help us in this very worthy humanitarian program.

We would like to know of the ophthalmologist who are willing to perform 10, 50 or 100 cataract operations. It is our desire that we operate only in one eye, and later, if the patient wants to operate the second eye, he should make his own arrangements directly with the surgeon.

On behalf of all the Avoidable Blindness Task Force team and all my fellow Rotarians, I thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Best regards,

Frank J. Devlyn,
President, 2000-2001
Rotary International

Alcon Medical Missions Program

Quoting from the Alcon Humanitarian Services brochure:

Medical Missions Program

For more than 38 years, our Medical Mission Program has remained an industry leader in support of ophthalmic foreign missions. Through donation of drugs and devices, Alcon assists eye care specialists who volunteer their time and skill to preserve and restore the vision of those in need.

To qualify for product donation from Foreign Mission Trips, please provide your written request in the following format.

1. DOCTOR'S NAME, address telephone number and U.S. shipping information. Include DEA number, State License number and Signature.
2. DESTINATION of your trip including city, country and facility.
3. LETTER OF INVITATION from the Ministry of Health of the hosting country. This protects you and assures Alcon products will not be delayed by customs in the destination country.
4. DEPARTURE DATE and length of stay. We want to be able to ship sup-

plies without excess shipping charges, but in time for you to adequately plan for your trip.

5. SPONSOR of your trip. Must be a U.S. based, non-profit, charitable organization. (If you are not sponsored by a charitable organization, IRS regulations require you to report donations.
6. TAX ID NUMBER of the sponsoring organization. (Include copy of IRS letter designating as a charitable organization.)
7. NUMBER OF SURGICAL CASES you expect to perform and/or the number of patients you expect to see. This helps us provide adequate product (if available) to accomplish the objectives of your trip.
8. LIST OF ALCON PRODUCTS and quantities desired.
9. OTHER U.S. OPHTHALMOLOGIST(s) and OPTOMETRIST(s) traveling with your team.
10. LOCAL DOCTOR. Name(s) of the foreign doctor(s) with whom you will be working.

Sufficient Notice

Please allow at least one month's no-

Alcon Medical Missions Program (*Continued*)

tice of your mission trip. (Donations are provided on a first-come, first-served basis and our inventory is limited).

Write, fax or e-mail:

Alcon Laboratories, Inc. T7-18
Humanitarian Services
6201 South Freeway
Fort Worth, Texas 76134

Winona Edwards 81-551-4973
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Fax 817-551-9859
johnnie.herndon@alconlabs.com

Kim Brown 817-568-6644
Fax 817-551-9946
kim.brown@alconlabs.com

or call
800-222-8103 (option 2 or 3)

Vision Problems in the US; Symposium in DC

Alcon Laboratories presents: VISION PROBLEMS IN THE U.S. Symposium. More than two million Americans over the age of 40 are visually impaired. Blindness and vision impairment will place an increasingly heavy burden on the nation's population, on the economy and the health care system as baby boomers age in the coming decades. For more than 30 years, PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA has helped guide policy makers, researchers and other concerned professionals through the publication of Vision Problems in the U.S., a comprehensive resource for facts and figures on age-related vision loss in America.

On March 21, 2002, PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA will release the fourth edition of Vision Problems in the U.S. with the most up-to-date statistics available on the scope and burden of age-related eye diseases in our country. Through the generous support of the National Eye Institute, epidemiological researchers at Johns Hopkins University have compiled and analyzed the data that will be presented in this new edition of Vision Problems in the U.S. In conjunction with the release of the Vision Problems in the U.S. report, PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA will hold a symposium, sponsored by Alcon Laboratories, at the Washington Court Hotel in

Washington, D.C. to present findings on the scope and burden of age-related eye disease for the people of the United States.

At this symposium, leading ophthalmic researchers and public health officials will discuss data provided by the Vision Problems in the U.S. study on cataract, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration, including information on the social and economic burden of these eye diseases, risk factors, and the future of treatment and prevention. We urge you to attend the Vision Problems in the U.S. Symposium on March 21, 2002. You are also invited to a VIP cocktail reception, sponsored by Eli Lilly and Company, to be held the evening before on Capitol Hill. The symposium is made possible through the generous support of its title sponsor, Alcon Laboratories, as well as by the sponsorship of Eli Lilly and Company, Allergan, Bausch & Lomb and Novartis Ophthalmics, and additional funding provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For that reason, registration is complimentary, and seating is limited. Please register early!

The registration deadline for all events is Friday, February 15, 2002. For more information and to register online: www.usvisionproblems.org

PROGRESS REPORT:

**District 5340-4060
Project in the
Dominican Republic**

**Total surgeries
performed as of
December, 2001 = 579**

**We are making
continued progress
towards our goal of
1,000 cataract
surgeries!**



We are looking forward to a supplemental report from Medical Ministries International, possibly in the March newsletter.

Update from Area E Coordinator

I have just been in Russia, precisely in Moscow, where I was invited as speaker to the congress on Cataract surgery at Fyodorov's State Institute. I met many ophthalmologists, both Russian and from other states of Ex URSS, between them there was the President of Ophthalmological Society of Kirghizistan, two ophthalmologists from Kazakistan and some from Belo-russia.

Thanks to the aim of some Italian Companies I obtained the donation of some ZEISS surgical microscopes and of other instruments for cataract surgery.

These instruments will be delivered soon, and, next winter it is planned for me to go to these three countries mentioned above to take some eye surgery courses with the use of the instruments donated. Any aim about supplying of intraocular lenses would be very appreciated.



FABIO DOSSI
Area E Coordinator, ABTF

Have You Looked Into It?



THE AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS MANUAL OF INFORMATION 2001-2002

is available for
download on the task
force Website

Great Projects Coming from District 7390

In January of this year, two teams from district 7390 were sent out on Avoidable Blindness programs. The one team sponsored by the Rotary Club of York East went to Ghana, Africa. The team performed forty five eye operations on patients with cataracts, as well as prescribed over two hundred pairs of glasses

The second team, which was sponsored by the Lebanon Rotary Club, con-

ducted a mission to Nicaragua. One hundred eye operations were performed. This included patients with cataracts, as well as children with strabismus. Approximately one hundred and fifty pairs of glasses were prescribed. Also, a blindness rehabilitation program to counsel and aide blind people, as well as their families was initiated.

Rotarian Works to Make Low Vision Devices Available

Rotarian Ramesh Sathe, District 3130, has taken lot of interest in ABTF programs, specifically in the area of Low Cost Low Vision Devices. His attention was attracted by the stunning information that-- "80% of legally blind people can perform their day to day activity, if a proper visual device is made available to them." Considering the financial capacity of a common person from India or any other developing country, he realized the need to produce low vision devices at a low cost.

A registered charitable trust was formed under the name "Vijaya Memorial Trust." The approach was formulated to give basic Low vision service where it was needed most. The development of various LV devices and a subsequent demonstration at Arvind Eye Hospital, Madurai, created a new opportunity – An

invitation to attend the "Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on Low Vision." This workshop was convened within the framework of "Vision 2020—the Right to Sight" (a global initiative that aims to eliminate avoidable blindness by 2020). Correspondence with Dr. Pararajesgaram and Dr. S. Resinkoff of the World Health Organisation also gave encouragement for their efforts.

In summary, it was stressed that there is a great and urgent need to expand access to low vision care, and it was emphasized that the feasibility of establishing low vision care would depend on the use of appropriate technology for the production of low vision devices.

Rotarian Sathe and the Vijaya Memorial Trust are interested in executing projects in establishing Optical and Low vision service centres. They have a fairly

Low Vision Devices (*Continued*)

large capacity for production of glass and plastic magnifiers and a trained force of volunteers. They have registered a charitable trust for giving special service to visually impaired persons and through this they can undertake service projects

He has created a small booklet as well as a Power Point presentation that explains the concept of basic "Low Vision Service." Both are available directly from the Avoidable Blindness Task Force Website by accessing the 'Download'

page.

Any individual or organization can contact them directly for further information:

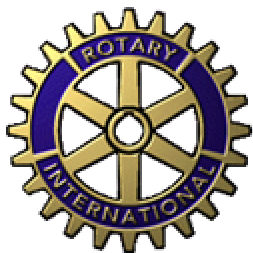
Ramesh Sathe
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**Looking
for
Something
New on
the Web?**

Here is a great page with information from the National Eye Institute:

<http://www.healthyvision2010.org/>



**www.rotarytask
forces.org/
avoidable_blindness**

A Rotary Past President Tells Us Peace Comes From Sharing Love With Our Fellow Man!

CERTAINLY NOT on the battlefield
Where men and nations refuse to yield.

Certainly not on the streets of trade
Where men are seeking financial aid.

Certainly not in mere idleness
Where men grow weary from restlessness.

And surely not in mad social whirl
Where life is a constant dizzy swirl.

Certainly not in just empty talk
With useless words recorded in chalk.

But peace may be found when sought by man
With worthy purpose and honest plan,

When happiness comes from man's own heart
And he is willing to share a part.

Man must be willing to pass greed by
And not seek power with an evil eye.

He cannot be envious and carry hate
If he seeks peace at his neighbor's gate.

Yes, peace can be found in the heart of man
When he is willing to use God's plan.

But a selfish world filled with deceit
Cannot be saved by man in retreat.

From Rotary International President 1924-25 Everett Wentworth Hill's book entitled HE WHO SEEKS GOLD.

Author's note: "I have sought peace in many ports of life and always came home empty-handed until I found that peace is happiness which comes from sharing LOVE with his fellowman.

This thought from Past R.I. President Hill seemed most appropriate with the terrorist threat present in our world and with President Elect Bhichai Rattakul's new theme for the year ahead: "SOW SEEDS OF LOVE".

O. DOYLE DANNENBERG, O.D.
Asst. Gen. Chairman Avoidable Blindness
Task Force 2001-2002

