



Visions

The gift of sight . . . Protect it, Save it, Restore it

June 2005

the newsletter of the
International Eye Care Fellowship of Rotarians

Volume 1, #4



CELEBRATE
ROTARY

100 Years

A Life of Service Enters Retirement

Dear Eyecare Fellowship members:

As we approach the end of our Centennial year and look forward to our Centennial Convention in Chicago, I want to take this opportunity to extend my deepest appreciation to our retiring IECFR Chairman, Dr. O. Doyle Dannenberg. Since 2000 Doyle has served as the Chair and Vice Chair of the Avoidable Blindness Task Force and then as the Chair of the new IECFR Fellowship. He is a committed, dedicated Rotarian who has continually exhibited "Service Above Self" in all that he does. He has been tireless in his work in the area of Avoidable Blindness and through his efforts our Task Force and our Fellowship have grown and been highly successful.

Doyle joined Rotary in 1948, and has not missed a Rotary meeting somewhere in the world every week since . . . that's more than 56 years of perfect attendance! He served his club as President in 1957-58, and as Governor of District 534 in 1973-74.

During the Chicago Convention, Doyle will celebrate his 80th birthday and as he reaches this milestone, he will now "retire" from active Rotary service and devote more time to his family and friends. On behalf of the entire membership of the IECFR and the many Rotarians and individuals Dr. Dannenberg has helped during his 56 years of Rotary service, we wish Doyle and June a "retirement" filled with the joy and happiness they so richly deserve.



With deepest gratitude,

PRIP Frank J. Devlyn
Honorary Chair, IECFR

Rotary's Centennial Initiatives on Avoidable Blindness

By Gabriel Minder, PhD

Abstract: To celebrate its Centennial in 2005, Rotary has enhanced its contribution toward preventing blindness worldwide, not only locally through the efforts of more than 31,000 Rotary Clubs, but also on a broader scale: namely, by increased usage of The Rotary Foundation's powerful Matching Grant mechanisms, by constant consultation with WHO in Geneva, and by close cooperation with experienced IAPB member organizations.

Several current Geneva-coordinated Rotary initiatives are described, which combat blindness in Africa, India, Mexico and South-East Asia at a combined cost of US \$2.7m. They help regional authorities to gradually take over responsibility in a comprehensive way and to ultimately eliminate blindness, in the spirit of *VISION 2020*. This Rotary contribution rests largely

(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

'Staying Young' - Serving in Rotary Keeps One Young	2
Schedule of Meetings in Chicago	2
An Excerpt from 'Trev's Topics'	3
Rotary's Centennial Initiatives on Avoidable Blindness	4
Rotary Matching Grants Help Along Pakistan/Afghanistan Border	6
Chairman Dannenberg Steps Down as IECFR Chairman	6



Be sure to check out all of the latest Fellowship news on the Eye Care Fellowship website!

<http://www.rotarianseyecarefellowship.org>

Serving in Rotary Keeps One Young

As we approach Rotary's Centennial Convention next month in Chicago and I enter my 9th decade, I am thankful for how Rotary has enriched my life and kept me "young at heart". In this final message for our IECFF Newsletter, I'd like to share with you an article on Staying Young.

"The art of staying young depends upon staying youthful on the *inside*, in mind, heart and spirit, in defiance of wrinkles and gray hairs on the *outside*. The Fountain of Youth is within you!

Staying young is an *inside* matter. Your body grows old, but your body is not you. "We do not count a man's years," wrote Emerson, "until he has nothing else to count."

Stay young by continuing to grow. You do not grow old, you become old by not growing.

Stay young by hanging on to your dreams. A philosopher writes: "There is not much to do but bury a man when the last of his dreams is dead."

Stay young by maintaining a cheerful attitude. Keep this verse from Proverbs in mind: "A merry

heart doeth good like medicine, but a broken spirit drieth up the bones."

Stay young by keeping your mind alive and alert. Scientists have found that the ability to think does not decline with advancing age; the only difference may be a slight decrease in the speed of thinking.

Stay young by forcing your mind out of old ruts. Remember that beaten paths are for beaten men. See new places, read new books, try new hobbies. Increase the depth of your life.

Stay young by remaining flexible, adaptable and open-minded. Do not permit your mental arteries to harden.

Stay young by taking inspiration from the young in spirit who remained creatively active all their lives: Goethe completed Faust at 80; Titian painting masterpieces at 98; Toscanini conducting at 85; Justice Holmes writing Supreme Court decisions at 90; Edison busy in his laboratory at 84; Benjamin Franklin helping to frame the constitution at 80.

Stay young by doing good work.

Work for worthy causes in your city, nation and world.

Stay young by keeping your heart young. "If it can be done," wrote the poet Carl Sandburg, "it is not a bad practice for a man of many years to die with a boy heart."

Stay young by knowing that "they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint."

(Adapted from The Art of Living by Wilferd A. Peterson)

Rotarians, I believe we keep young as we "**CELEBRATE ROTARY**" and we do that by continuing to be involved in eye care, preventing blindness, restoring sight, hopes and dreams. As we care for the visual needs of our fellow man, we give new life and enable those we touch to realize their aspirations and enjoy God's creation—our world, their community, their family, and to share the wonder and miracle of life itself."

O. Doyle Dannenberg, O.D.
Chairman IECFR 2004-2005

An Excerpt from 'Trev's Topics'

During my Governorship, I told Frank Devlyn that I would like to become more involved in the Avoidable Blindness field and thus I and Rotary colleague Sam Das, a past President of the Rotary club of Guildford, an ophthalmic surgeon in his own right, set up a four year plan, to add to the work already carried out by the Guildford club, by building and equipping four more optical clinics in the surrounding villages near Calcutta and having done so, provide finance through the Foundation matching grant system, for 10,000 Cataract and lens replace-

ment operations to restore sight to celebrate our centennial year.

We also planned to invite young Indian ophthalmic surgeons to come to the U.K. for further experience in the ophthalmic surgical field, as part of the Rotary Group Study Exchange scheme and for a team organized by my colleague Sam Das to return a visiting U.K. team to Calcutta.

During the last four years, four more village hospitals have been built by Indian Rotary clubs, which have been fully equipped by matching grants set up by clubs in my District 1250. Two G.S.E. training visits

by Indian ophthalmic surgeons coming to the U.K. have taken place and my colleague Sam Das, has, as part of his annual leave to see his family, has visited and worked in, all four of these new clinics.

One problem we do not have is an adequate supply of customers. There are thousands upon thousands in the Calcutta area.

The Rotary club of Guildford have produced a poster (right) for me to show in Chicago, which I will show with pride.



The Calcutta Eye Project

The Rotary Club of Guildford, England
Rotary District 1250



A dancer as seen
by many in Calcutta

Before Rotary Action

provided the challenge
to turn darkness into light
with sight
through Rotarians &
The Rotary Foundation



After Rotary Action

In 1999 Sam Das, Rotarian Eye Surgeon and Past President of the Guildford Rotary Club, proposed a matching grant project with Clubs in Calcutta, India (District 3290) to provide modern equipment for eye surgery and laser treatment in a Calcutta Rotary Eye Hospital.

This was to be supported by voluntary service to train local surgeons by Sam Das.

Supported by PDG Neil McMahon (Dist. 1250) and PDG Shokhar Mehta (Dist. 3290)



a single vocation GSE team visit was arranged when five eye surgeons from Dist. 3290 spent more than a month in several U.K. hospitals learning modern techniques. This was repeated in 2003 when five other eye surgeons from Dist. 1090/3290 had training combined with a single vocation GSE visit to the UK.



Under the stewardship of PDG Trevor Powell (Dist.1250) more hospitals were created and equipped in four villages near Calcutta. Land and buildings were donated by local benefactors

including Rotarians; equipment was obtained through several Rotary Foundation matching grants involving Clubs on three continents. These five hospitals are now serving thousands of poor people, curing blindness at a cost of \$24 for each cataract and implant operation, but at no cost to the patient thanks to the support of Rotary.



The project has been honoured by visits from RI Presidents Luis Vicente Gay and Frank Devlin. It also includes research facilities and childrens' clinics



This project by the
Rotary Club of Guildford:

- is bringing sight to thousands in Calcutta
- is bringing Rotary Clubs from the U.K., India, Canada, France and the USA together in a common purpose
- is exemplifying the ideals of Rotary and The Rotary Foundation
- is an example of Service above Self



What's Happening in Chicago?

Annual Business Meeting of the Fellowship

Monday, June 20 at 5:00 PM - Room N230—McCormick Place
Election of Officers and Vote on Fellowship By Laws

Avoidable Blindness Workshop

Monday, June 20, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM;
Room N230—McCormick Place

For agenda, list of speakers and complete details visit our web site

<http://www.rotarianseyecarefellowship.org>

Rotary's Centennial Initiatives on Avoidable Blindness (*continued*)

(Continued from page 1)

on IECFR, the International Eye-Care Fellowship of Rotarians, headed by the incoming Chairman of the Rotary Foundation, past RI President, Frank J. Devlyn.

Founded in Chicago in 1905, Rotary was the world's first organization of Service Clubs: it now consists of 1.2 million persons in 169 countries.

1. Introduction

Before retiring as an engineer and management consultant, my interest in vision and eye-care was already aroused 20 years ago by a brief encounter with the late Sir Francis Crick, the 1953 co-discoverer of DNA. After a lecture he had given in Geneva, he was asked by my young son what he was working on now in California: "Vision!" answered the Nobel Prize-winner, "The process of vision is so complex and admirable that I guess exploring it will easily fill the rest of my life!" It did indeed, in conjunction with a number of related domains.

2. An opportunity for Rotary

About 5 years ago, while serving as a Rotary representative to the UN in Geneva, I was made a member of the new Rotary Task Force on Avoidable Blindness by Frank J. Devlyn, then President of Rotary International and owner, CEO of the Devlyn Optical Group, a large chain of optical stores throughout Mexico and Latin America. This made me realise that Rotary, founded in 1905, was entering Century 21 in a pole position for addressing this humanitarian task, due to a very favourable combination of 4 factors :

2.1 The recent remarkable **advances in eye-surgery**, mainly in specialized centres of the developing world, such as Acapulco in Mexico and Hyderabad and Madurai in India;

2.2 The *Vision 2020* Plan

launched in 1999 by Dr Para, then President of IAPB, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, who is now an honorary member of my Rotary Club. This worldwide Plan is indeed an example second to none of efficient cooperation of all parties concerned towards a well-defined humanitarian goal;

2.3 The powerful new **networking effectiveness** offered by the Internet and enhanced by the Web invented in 1990 at CERN, Geneva by Tim Berners-Lee, a young Oxford scientist;

2.4 Last, not least, the fact that at present **Rotarians head the major Institutions** driving *Vision 2020*, namely IAPB (non-governmental), WHO/PB

"This worldwide Plan is indeed an example second to none of efficient cooperation of all parties concerned towards a well-defined humanitarian goal."

(intergovernmental) and IFOS, the ophthalmologists' International Federation.

3. Synergies

These four factors have produced considerable synergy in the last four years. Thus, as a Board member of the new International EyeCare Fellowship of Rotarians (IECFR), I find I can, although not a physician, contribute effectively as follows :

- Learn "from the horse's mouth", namely from the Prevention of

Blindness section of WHO, about the major eye-care problems and about the most **cost-effective solutions**

- Develop **fund-raising credibility**, both in Southern and in Western countries
- Thus obtain **high leverage** in funds granted by Rotary and non-Rotary sources and using Rotary's powerful Matching Grants mechanisms which combine the interests of many parties
- Use the means and experience of numerous dedicated, benevolent Rotarians to hold **eye-camps**. These address both low-vision and blindness by helping local health authorities to screen **entire urban and rural populations**.

4. International projects

This synergy can be exemplified by projects which we help to coordinate from the Geneva area:

- 4.1 At the end of 2004, Indian and Western Rotarians jointly announced their intention to fund 100'000 IOL eye surgeries in India. This large-scale exercise is now gathering momentum as Rotary approaches its June 2005 Centennial Convention in Chicago. At a unit surgery price of US \$22, which does not cover technical and administrative overheads, several Matching Grants are being set up with the Rotary Foundation (USA) for about US \$2.2m, supplied approximately as follows: 5% by Rotary Europe (Belgium, France, Portugal and the UK); 10 % by Rotary India, 35% from the USA (including the Rotary Foundation) and 50% from Canada (mainly Operation Eyesight Universal, Calgary) where this initiative originated.

Rotary's Centennial Initiatives on Avoidable Blindness (*continued*)

4.2 In Africa, namely in Ghana and Tanzania, the funding of surgeries is based on bi-lateral agreements between African and Swiss Clubs supported by local NGOs (about US \$140'000), the Rotary Foundation, institutional donors like Raiffeisen Bank and experienced partners like CBM.

4.3 In India, Mexico and Nepal, surgery equipment and mobile ophthalmologic units for Rotary and non-Rotary eye-hospitals are supplied by Belgian, French and Swiss Clubs through Matching Grants with the Rotary Foundation and the Red Cross (about US \$300'000).

4.4 In Cambodia, Sri Lanka and in Southeast India, eye-camps take place or are planned with the help of French, Indian, Singaporean and US eye specialists, supported by Rotary- and non-Rotary sources, as IRIS (UK) and the Indian ARAVIND Eye System (about US \$60'000).

4.5 By cooperating with the ICO/IFOS Zurich Office for ophthalmologic Fellowships, Rotary wants to support the postgraduate training of young physicians from developing countries, not only in Western Hospitals, but increasingly also at Centres of Excellence in Southern countries.

5. Holistic approach

The benefits of above holistic approach can be outlined as follows :

5.1 All Rotary actions entail a strong involvement of local health authorities, the aim being to gradually transfer to them most responsibilities, in the framework of *Vision 2020*. Thus, several States in

India and Mexico, each with a population as large as a European country's but many more health problems to solve, have now decided to become cataract-free by 2010, since curable cataracts are responsible for well over half the cases of impaired vision and blindness. Afterwards, further objectives will be defined.

5.2 Impressive networks for eye-care are being set up around the major Eye Hospitals, mainly in Southern India. Thus, medical questions such as the correlation existing between cataract and macula-deterioration, can also be addressed by large-scale schemes monitoring entire populations.

5.3 Hospital quality is being en-

Learn more about this and other Eye Care projects and presentations at the Avoidable Blindness Workshop during the Chicago Convention. See Page 2 for Details.

hanced, e.g. by Operation Eyesight, of Canada, which insists on matching the costs only for those surgeries taking place at hospitals willing to undergo qualification by an internationally recognized authority, such as the LV Prasad Eye Institute in Hyderabad, India.

6. Acknowledgements

As it is the case for Rotary's much larger Initiative to eradicate Polio, dozens of Clubs and hundreds of Rotarians deserve to be

thanked for the time and money they spend against low-vision and blindness of poor people.

I am particularly indebted for the progress of the mentioned projects in the last few months to : Rotarians R. Paul (Canada), S. Brown and T. Lindley (USA), F. Devlyn (Mexico), P. Dalton, S. Das and T. Powell (UK), Ph. Caron (Belgium), J. Villeval and J. Viste (France), F. Naumann (Germany), J. Amaral and D. Gomes (Portugal), J. Peyer, K. Tritten and H. Wiederkehr (Switzerland), and J. Tan (Singapore).

As for India, which population-wise largely exceeds all above countries combined, I acknowledge the valuable help of: Rotarians P. Raval, R. Kumar and A. Suresh (Bangalore), M. Sawhney (Delhi), A.V. Acharr (Hyderabad), S. Jose (Kerala), R. Guru (Mysore) and S. Movva (Vajayawada),

7. Conclusion

Rotary's current involvement in Avoidable Blindness and Low-Vision is confirming at a large international scale the effectiveness of combining

- qualitative approaches such as the careful selection of hospitals, eye-surgeons and up-to-date but not too complex equipment with highly leveraged fund-raising
- and the strong involvement of local health authorities and NGOs (both local and international).

Thus, well-organised eye-camps allow to identify the needs of hitherto often neglected populations (mainly rural), followed by thousands of IOL cataract eye-surgeries, which bring mankind closer to its aim to gradually eliminate blindness.

Rotary Matching Grants help along Pakistan/Afghanistan Border

by Mohammad Usman Khan

The adjacent photograph was taken at an eye camp that was finished approximately one year ago. The length of the Pakistan/Afghanistan border is approximately 1500 kilometers. The weather conditions in these areas are dusty and dry which creates a lot of eye diseases. Many refugee camps on the border are living in a drastic conditions.

Approximately 2500 patients in different Camps were diagnosed by a team of ophthalmologists, providing free medicine along with low vision glasses. Cataract patients were transferred to a hospital for surgery. Approximately 1000 cataract patients were provided surgery services.



Committee members, patients and doctors pose for a photograph at one of the eye camps

Dr. Dannenburg to retire as Chairman of the IECFR

Dear IECFR Fellowship Members:

As we travel down the Road of Life, God gives us many blessings. Among the many He has given to me include a love for Rotary and the privilege of serving our wonderful organization for over 56 years. As we Celebrate Rotary at our Centennial Convention in Chicago, I will celebrate my 80th birthday and have decided that it is now time for me to devote more time to my family and friends. Therefore, I shall be stepping down as Chairman of the ICEFR effective July 1, 2005.

As our honorary Chairman, PRIP Frank J. Devlyn assumes the Chairmanship of The Rotary Foundation, I am reminded that my first Rotary International assignment was in 1966-67 when then President Richard Evans appointed me to an Advisory Committee to The Rotary Foundation. Since then, it has been my privilege to serve nearly every RI President in some capacity. For this amazing opportunity I shall always be grateful.

In leading the Avoidable Blindness Task Force as well as this fellowship, I have not done it alone and I have many people to thank. First of all, I would like to express my deep appreciation to our Honorary Chair, **Frank Devlyn** and our Vice Chair, **Dr. Ken D. Tuck** for all of their help, support and encouragement during the past five years. Our Task Force and our Fellowship have benefited greatly from their knowledge and experience. Our Treasurer, **Lori Bende**, has spent countless hours setting up our fellowship as a non-profit organization and maintaining our finances. Her service has been invaluable and I am grateful for her diligence and her professionalism in insuring that we met all of our requirements. Our fellowship Secretary, **Harriett Schloer**, has been a long time friend and most valuable supporter of the Task Force and the IECFR. She is always there to do whatever is needed: from producing hand out materials for meetings, to staffing our IECFR booth at RI Conventions, Zone meetings, and district

conferences; to handling all of our membership details to designing and maintaining our IECFR web site. She is a priceless gem! Her daughter **Kelly Schloer**, editor of this Newsletter, has very capably assisted our Eye Care Fellowship with these newsletters, always efficiently and superbly done. In paying tribute to her and her Mother, I would describe her as "A chip off a valuable block". My deepest gratitude and thanks to each and every one of these dedicated Rotarians. I say "thank you" for what you have done for Rotary, for me and the IECFR

To all of our fellowship members, I also say "thank you" and ask each of you to continue to "Create Awareness and Take Action" in the work of Avoidable Blindness, as we "Celebrate Rotary" and begin our second century of "Service Above Self". Always remember that "**Next to life itself, God's most precious gift is sight . . . Protect it, Save it, Restore it**". God bless you all.

*Yours in Rotary Service,
O. Doyle Dannenburg, O.D.*