

# • AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS TASK FORCE NEWSLETTER JULY 2000

**“NEXT TO LIFE ITSELF  
GOD’S MOST PRECIOUS  
GIFT IS SIGHT---PROTECT IT,  
SAVE IT, and RESTORE IT.”**

## **ABTF PROGRESS AS YEAR BEGINS!**

President Frank Devlyn with his inspiring theme of **Create Awareness and Take Action** has established our Avoidable Blindness Task Force with this statement: “A crucial issue demanding our attention is that of Avoidable Blindness. Having a background in optometry and the optical field, I have a special interest in the issue. It astounds me that 50 million people in our world today are blind. That figure would be staggering no matter what, but what makes it more so is that almost half of these people--20 million people--could have their sight restored with a simple cataract operation. To me this is unacceptable.” **Thus we have made cataract surgery the primary focus of action for Avoidable Blindness!**

## **Dr. Albert A. Alley - Project # 1**

ABTF Zone 32 Coordinator Dr. Albert A. Alley launched the first project with 100 surgeries in Argentina May 29 - June 3rd. **Surgeries included cataracts, corneal transplants, and strabismus procedures.**

## **Pilot Glasses Project In Peru**

Martin Singer of District 4450, Lima, Peru, working with Bing Han of District 5240 California and new Rotarian Harold Cowie of Calgary, Canada, are in the process of developing a pilot project to provide lenses provided by Bing Han, frames provided by Harold Cowie and the glasses fabricated by Martin Singer to meet the needs of needy people in Peru. Martin Singer proposed the idea for Rotary International and as Avoidable Blindness chairman for his club. This project will provide glasses specifically fabricated to the prescription of the recipient rather than using old donated glasses.

## **VOLUNTEER EYE CARE MISSIONS**

Rotarian Joseph E. Lavaux of Estes Valley Rotary Club, Colorado, USA will be leading a team of volunteers to Alajuela, Costa Rica for an optometric eye care project in February of 2001! For information contact him at <Lavaux@verinet.com>.

## **MATCHING GRANTS INFORMATION**

Duane Sterling, Manger of the Rotary Foundation has advised us that Matching Grants for Avoidable Blindness related projects should be sent to **Kristina McBride or Anne Gross.**

**Any grant that involves a match from The Rotary Foundation must be submitted on the appropriate TRF forms which can be provided by the staff indicated above.**

At this point there is no separate forms for Avoidable Blindness projects.

He further cautions that 80% or more of the forms received are incomplete in some way. Those completing the forms should become familiar with the forms and they should feel free to contact Kristina or Anne.

Duane stated: “We look forward to receiving MG applications.

## **WEB SITE FOR MORE GRANT INFORMATION**

**For more information on Foundation Grants go to this web site:**

<<http://www.rotary.org/programs/humanit/index.htm>>

We recommend this site to all Rotarians interested in obtaining matching grants for Avoidable Blindness.

## **SIGHT RESTORATION PROJECT D. 3170 INDIA**

Rotary D. 3170, India is seeking a matching grant to provide surgeries to restore sight to 3000 bilaterally cataract blinded poor, needy persons. They will provide operation facilities and doctors at no charge and will supply 1000 pairs of spectacles needed for reading at no charge. This is a great example of CREATING AWARENESS and TAKING ACTION.

## **GIFT OF SIGHT MISSION TO CAMBODIA**

Dr. Sanjiv Desai of Rotary Club of Jodhpur, India reports on participation along with Dr. Jack Aaron, Rotarian from Tucson, Arizona, USA. continued on page 2

**Visit ABTF Site at: <http://www.frankdevlyn.org/blindness>**

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Since 1995 the untiring efforts of the RC Singapore has resulted in an annual eye care project in Cambodia which features an Eye Camp where "high volume - high quality" surgery is performed, transfer of surgical skills and didactic lectures.

The project dubbed **the Gift of Sight Mission**, is organized with the cooperation of the RC of Phnom Penh, Cambodia and the National subcommittee for the Prevention and Control of Blindness (NSPCB), Ministry of Health, Cambodia. The credit for introducing ophthalmic microsurgery and intra-ocular lens implant surgery in Cambodia for the first time solely goes to the RC in Singapore, as also the continuing efforts to train local surgeons to adapt and change to this safe form of cataract surgery. The Sixth Gift of Sight Mission began on March 26, 2000 and lasted eight weeks.

Dr. Desai reports that Dr. Jack Aaron who is Chairman of the Rotary Vocational Fellowship of Ophthalmologists, joined him on April 3rd. They performed surgery together at Phnom Penh Ang Doung Hospital, the apex center for ophthalmology in Cambodia.

On April 6th they flew to Badtambang and visited the Badtambang Provincial Hospital where they arranged a staff meeting to explain the purpose of the Rotary Gift of Sight Mission.

Another Rotary volunteer, Dr. Rama Mohan Rao from India arrived on April 21st and remained until May 15th, the last day of the project.

As Chairman of the RI Avoidable Blindness Task Force, I congratulate and thank Rotarian Doctors Desai, Aaron, and Rao and all of the sponsoring Rotary Clubs. This is a great and continuing program of CREATING AWARENESS and TAKING ACTION.

## VICE-CHAIRMAN NEVILLE HACKETT

We regret that our Task Force Vice Chairman Neville Hackett has had some complications following personal eye surgery. Consequently we are asking Area Coordinators and Zone Coordinators accountable to Vice-Chairman Neville to handle questions and communications whenever practical.

Neville is anxious to continue and I ask you all to join me in prayer for a full and speedy restoration of health for Neville. He has a long and distinguished record of service to RIBI and Rotary International.

## SPEAKERS GIFT CERTIFICATE

A speaker's Certificate has been designed and will be available this week. It includes the Rotary Emblem, Title: AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS TASK FORCE, our theme

slogan and the following words:

"In appreciation to \_\_\_\_\_  
for your presentation to our club today, we have made a contribution to Rotary International's AVOIDABLE BLINDNESS TASK FORCE to restore sight to a needy cataract blinded person.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

and has President Devlyn's Theme Logo

For information e-mail <doyled@nctimes.net> or fax (760) 746-0204, or write O. Doyle Dannenberg, O. D., 340 Linwood Street, Escondido, CA. 92027-3714

## ROTARY CLUB OF SAN PEDRO D.5280 FIRST CLUB TO HONOR SPEAKERS WITH CERTIFICATE

Helene Pizzini, President of San Pedro Rotary Club in District 5280 in California, wanted to honor her club's speakers with a contribution to the Avoidable Blindness Task Force. Congratulations, Helene and San Pedro Club Rotarians for a great way to support President Frank's keen interest in Avoidable Blindness. The World Health Organization tells us we must increase the number of cataract surgeries performed annually or the world will be twice as blind by the year 20/20.

## VISION 2020--THE RIGHT TO SIGHT

The WHO organization states "Every 5 seconds one person in our world goes blind...and a child goes blind every minute."

**Vision 20/20: The Right To Sight is designed to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 20/20.** The Rotary International Avoidable Blindness Task Force through our programs hope we can be a part of the solution!

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For information or questions about any items please contact

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