



# Visions



SERVICE Above Self

*“The gift of sight . . . Protect it, Save it, Restore it”*

November 2005 Volume 2, #1

## The Newsletter of the International Eye Care Fellowship of Rotarians

### A Message From Our Chairman

Dear Eyecare Fellowship members:

Greetings and a warm welcome to all my fellow Rotarians from around the world who share a common interest in blindness prevention wherever it exists. I am pleased and privileged to serve as chair of the Fellowship for the coming two years and look forward to working and communicating with all of you as we continue to grow interest in the Fellowship and provide opportunities to create awareness and take action.

At our Fellowship’s annual meeting in Chicago, as part of Rotary’s 100-year Anniversary convention, it was clear that you have elected an incredibly knowledgeable and committed Board that has a passion and zeal for blindness prevention and will serve you well in the years ahead. With the guidance of your Board, and with the support of our Fellowship, I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

One of the first items we addressed in Chicago was to approve the **Fellowship By-laws** which included organizing our efforts on a geographical basis and by types of activities, so they fit into the **Vision 2020** collaborative structure. This collaborative structure supports a common goal in a variety of ways including providing eye care services to individual patients, training a variety of national eye care professionals, developing infrastructure such as establishing eye clinics and hospitals, mobile eye care services and developing training programs and preventing blindness from occurring through public health programs.

Rotarians are a diverse group of people, with a variety of skills, interests, and expertise. The variety of services needed to eliminate needless blindness offers us many choices in the type of projects we can pursue. To maximize our effectiveness, our projects and activities ideally would work in harmony with Vision 2020 and serve one of the following objectives:

- **Increase awareness of blindness** as a major

public health issue

- **Control the major causes of blindness:** Cataract (47.8%), Glaucoma (12.3%), Age-related Macular Degeneration (8.7%), Corneal Opacities (5.1%), Diabetic Retinopathy (4.8%), Childhood Blindness (3.9%), Trachoma (3.6%), Onchocerciasis (0.8%), Only about ½ the cases of childhood blindness are avoidable, the other causes can potentially be prevented and/or treated.
- **Create a foundation of well-trained local eye care workers**, including ophthalmologists and other eye care personnel, to provide appropriate eye care
- **Create adequate eye care facilities**, particularly in underserved areas



Rotarians already have a proud legacy in blindness prevention; for example five hundred thousand sight-saving surgical procedures have already been performed. As we work to identify needs and projects in the areas above, our International EyeCare Fellowship of Rotarians will continue to play a leading role in preventing blindness worldwide.

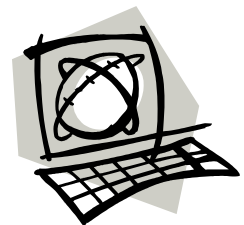
I welcome your thoughts and advice as my term begins. Together we can create awareness and take action and in doing so save the sight of millions

Yours in Rotary Service,

Ken D. Tuck, MD,  
Chairman—Eye Care Fellowship

### Inside This Issue

<i>Using the ABDAR to Help Fund Matching Grants</i>	2
<i>World Blindness Outreach</i>	3
<i>American Academy of Ophthalmology Honors</i>	4
<i>Register with the EVR to Become an Eye Care</i>	5
<i>RotaVision International—Another Eye Care</i>	5
<i>Hong Kong Interactors Raise Funds for Orbis</i>	6
<i>Rotarians Make it Easier to Maintain Gift of Sight</i>	6



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

# Using the AB-DAF to Help Fund Matching Grants

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is an explanation of how donations to the Avoidable Blindness Donor Advised Fund [ABDAF] can be leveraged many times over when coupled with TRF Matching Grant dollars. This explanation came from Todd Lindley—D6060 Foundation Chair and Grants Chair—in response to an inquiry from another Rotarian.)*

“As you likely know, blindness due to cataracts in the poor population is very common in many countries. It is most common among the older population but occurs at some level from birth throughout life due to many different reasons. For the expert ophthalmologist with the proper equipment it is a fairly routine surgical procedure to remove the cataract involved lens and replace it with a new intraocular lens. Very often, the patient not only can see again, but often has a very high quality of vision. Amazingly, while this procedure often costs from \$3,000 - \$6,000 here in the US, it is often performed by volunteer ophthalmologists in third world countries at a cost of less than \$30, sometimes for as little as \$22 or even less.

So, you can see that simply buying \$25,000 worth of cataract surgery supplies can help give "Rotary's Gift of Sight" to anywhere

from 800 to over 1,100 poor blind people. However, the real miracle occurs when that money is donated to the Avoidable Blindness Donor Advised Fund (ABDAF). Now, that money is used to add to funds from other Rotary Clubs and Districts around the world as they write Rotary Foundation Matching Grant applications. Very often, \$2,000 from the ABDAF is approved to be given to Matching Grant projects funding cataract surgeries. Additionally, our Rotary Foundation provides a 50% match to the ABDAF contribution, so that another \$1,000 is added to the project.

For example, my District 6060 has written an eye surgery matching grant application this year in partnership with a district in India, another district in Missouri, one in Illinois and one in Kentucky. Also the ABDAF has contributed \$2,000 to our project. The donations from each district and the ABDAF have been matched by our Rotary Foundation to become a total of \$44,000 which will help 2,000 poor blind people in India District 3160 see again.

In this way, the \$25,000 donation to the Avoidable Blindness Donor Advised Fund can enhance projects being managed by Rotarians in many countries, perhaps as many as 12 or 13 different projects like the one I described. These projects

could fund a few hundred or several thousand eye surgeries. This could lead to 26,000 blind people or more being able to open their eyes and see again. Being able to see their grandkids for the first time. Being able to see to cook for themselves and clean their dwellings. For the young people, being able to see to learn to read and write and receive an education.

So, a donation to the Avoidable Blindness Donor Advised Fund will be multiplied by being added to donations from other Rotarians, Rotary Clubs, Rotary Districts and matching funds from our Rotary Foundation to help Rotarians help ten or twenty times as many people as the money could do by itself. It is truly a miracle.”

It is also good to remember that while India, due to its living conditions and nutrition of its poor population has a huge number of surgeries being done, we are also funding eye surgeries in many other countries, such as Argentina, Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, and Thailand. There is great need in Africa, Mexico, South America and many other places.”

*(EDITORS NOTE: For more information on how to give a direct contribution to the AB-DAF contact The Rotary Foundation.)*

## Web Sites With AB-DAF Funded Projects

For examples of some of the Eye Care projects that have been funded with the help of the AB-DAF, you can visit the follow web links on the D-6060 web site.

<http://www.rotary6060.org/mg54719-eye-surgeries.htm>

<http://www.rotary6060.org/mg54719-eye-surgeries.htm>

<http://www.rotary6060.org/mg58012-eyes-D3160.htm>

<http://www.rotary6060.org/mg50830-gulbarganorth.htm>

These links will also be found on the Eye Care Fellowship web site. If you are aware of a web site displaying similar eye care projects, please contact the Eye Care Fellowship webmaster at [in2dtp@empnet.com](mailto:in2dtp@empnet.com)

Plan now to attend the 2006 RI Convention in Malmo / Copenhagen. The IECFR will have a booth and will also hold its annual meeting. Watch the Fellowship web site for complete convention information and save some time to help out in the booth.





## World Blindness Outreach (WBO)



By Dr. Albert Alley, MD

I was recently contacted by Dr. Ken Tuck, who is serving as the Chairman of the International Eyecare Fellowship of Rotarians to write an article about my experiences in the field of avoidable blindness. I was pleased to learn that Ken Tuck is serving in this capacity because as a past president of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, he is certainly very qualified to promote Rotary's efforts to alleviate blindness around the world.

My experience in the field of avoidable blindness internationally began in 1989, when I was the incoming President of the Lebanon Rotary club attended my first international convention in Philadelphia. At that convention I met the incoming President of the Rochester, Michigan Rotary Club. He informed me that his club was sponsoring an eye surgical mission to the Philippines, where the team members would be operating on indigent patients with cataracts. Finding out that I was an ophthalmologist, he invited me to participate in that mission.

I served as an eye surgeon on that mission and it turned out to be a life changing experience for me. The mission was a real eye opener for me because I became exposed to the great needs that exist in much of the developing world in dealing with blindness.

In doing some research I found out some startling facts. There are over 40 million people blind in the world. The incidence of blindness, however is not equally dispersed. The incidence of blindness is ten times greater in the developing countries in the world than the developed countries such as the United States. The major causes of blindness are also quite different

in the developing countries of the world. The leading causes of blindness there are diseases such as Xerophthalmia, Trachoma, Onchocerciasis, (which we don't see in this country), and by far the leading cause is cataracts which can be cured with a 30 minute operation. The real tragedy is that if the current state of medical knowledge could be brought to bare where needed, as much as 80% of this blindness could be prevented or surgically treated.

After returning from the Philippines, myself and another Rotarian from Rochester, Michigan, and several other people wanted to do more to deal with this problem. So we formed a non-profit organization, World Blindness Outreach, in order to enable us to mobilize more resources to deal better with the problem of avoidable blindness. World Blindness Outreach since that time has partnered with Rotary in sending teams of eye surgeons and other medical personnel to developing areas of the world, where our team members perform surgery, and train local medical doctors. Since our beginning in 1990 we have partnered with Rotary in sending out 50 teams to over 20 countries around the world. Our teams have performed over 6,000 eye operations, trained scores of doctors and other medical personnel in modern techniques of surgery, and also left behind hundreds of thousands of dollars of equipment and supplies for local doctors to continue providing services. We frequently are able to obtain matching grants and aide from The Rotary Foundation to help defray some of the costs.

This past October I had the privilege to accompany Rotarians from District 7500 in New Jersey to Recife, Brazil, and witness a remarkable Rotary achievement. Several years ago the Rotary Club in Recife, and District 7500 in New Jersey, in

partnership with the Altino Ventura Foundation in Brazil, developed a mobile surgical bus through the largest matching grant ever issued by the Rotary Foundation for \$250,000. The bus is continually on the move, traveling to underserved areas where surgery is performed on needy patients. Several thousand patients have already had their sight restored on the bus. It was a thrill for me to perform surgery in this modern eye surgery theatre created on this full sized bus.

This coming year, World Blindness Outreach and Rotary are partnering on missions to Panama in February, Ethiopia in March, Mexico in May, Dominican Republic in July, Ecuador in October, and in the planning stage is a mission to Cambodia either the end of 2006 or early 2007.

World Blindness Outreach is now in a position to aide Rotary Districts and clubs here in the United States and around the world, who wish to undertake avoidable blindness projects, particularly those projects where surgery is planned for cataract and other eye diseases. We are able to send teams of ophthalmic professionals to those countries, or give advise on how to implement these programs. More information can be learned by visiting the web site at [www.worldblindnessoutreach.com](http://www.worldblindnessoutreach.com).

Because of the passion of Past RI President Frank Devlin for Rotary becoming involved in the worldwide effort to alleviate blindness, hundreds of thousands of people have benefited. He has been an outstanding leader and motivator, and his involvement is appreciated by all of us who have been working in this field for years.

Respectfully Submitted  
Albert A. Alley, M.D.

# American Academy of Ophthalmology Honors Rotary

Rotary International's support of avoidable blindness initiatives worldwide has received recognition from the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Frank J. Devlyn, chair of The Rotary Foundation Trustees, received the AAO's 2005 Special Recognition Award on behalf of Rotary on 16 October 2005 at the organization's annual meeting in Chicago.

"It is gratifying to know that Rotary's many projects involving eye care and avoidable blindness are recognized by this prestigious group of eye care physicians," says Devlyn. "The threat of blindness is something every one of us can relate to, because we all know what a precious gift the sense of sight is."

The academy cites Rotary's increased involvement in collaborative sight-restoring projects, which provide free eye care to residents of underprivileged communities, as the main reason for the award. These include an initiative, cosponsored with the academy's foundation, to bring highly talented ophthalmologists from developing countries to the United States on a two-week educational, cultural, and social immersion program. More than 40 eye doctors from 27 countries have so far benefited from the effort.

At least 300 Rotarians were among the more than 25,000 attendees at the meeting, according to Devlyn. Rotarian eye care professionals came from more than 10 different countries. "We found this out because the International Eye Care Fellowship of Rotarians set up a stand that Rotarians and prospective Rotarians visited," he explains. "The stand is a new concept. It is good public relations being there and talking to people who come by to see our display of avoidable blindness projects."

Ken Tuck, the fellowship's chair and a past AAO president, says that Rotary and the Academy have played complementary roles in the fight against avoidable blindness, including efforts to provide more



Members of the International Eye Care Fellowship of Rotarians at the AAO meeting included (from left) Pat Devlyn, PDG Rob Ketron, and PDG Dick Galitz. Photo by Alyce Henson / Rotary International

*"It is gratifying to know that Rotary's many projects involving eye care and avoidable blindness are recognized by this prestigious group of eye care physicians."*

*TRF Chair, Frank Devlyn*

medical and surgical care as well as enhancing the training and education of local eye care professionals so they can better serve their patients. Several senior leaders of the Academy, including some past presidents, are Rotarians, he says.

"We [eye care professionals] are deeply grateful to all groups that are committed to carrying out avoidable blindness projects," says Tuck. "Given the very positive response that the eye care fellowship has received to date, we are eager for more Rotarians to join us as we look to increase awareness and take action in the fight against avoidable blindness."

According to Tuck, the experience that the eye care fellowship has gained in setting up booths at the Academy's annual meetings could be applied more widely within Rotary. "It offers a great model for other Rotary fellowships to promote their activities

at relevant large professional meetings" he says.

*Article from the Rotary Web Site  
"A Peak Experience"*

It was a "Peak Rotary Experience" for me to be in charge of the booth for the International Eye Care Fellowship of Rotarians at the AAO Convention in Chicago, IL, from October 15-18 of this year!!! Why? because it gave me the opportunity to see our three PDG's Rob Ketron, Fred Otto and Richard Galitz, plus, our chairman, Dr. Kenneth D. Tuck, past president of the AAO, and PRIP and chairman of The Rotary Foundation, Frank Devlyn, get the favorable attention of the more than 30,000 ophthalmologists in attendance at the convention.

Our presence at the convention awakened the interest of the attendees in the work of Rotary in the field of eye care and gave them the opportunity to learn about our many eye care projects. Many of them became convinced that they should join Rotary and then become members of I.E.C.F.R. fellowship. They were able to see how, if they are sincere about their dreams of making a really big difference in their professional lives, making history and be worthy role models for solidarity and responsible ophthalmologists, Rotary can make it happen for them. Rotarians Dick, Frank, Fred, Ken and Rob certainly aroused in the ophthalmologists a deep, burning desire to "come aboard"!!!

It was also very gratifying for me to see that, thanks to the credibility of Rotary, so many ophthalmologists are convinced that Rotary and the I.E.C.F.R. is a worthy investment of their time, energy and financial resources. ROTARY and the I.E.C.F.R. are organizations for exceptional professional and / or business leaders!!! Consequently, I am very proud and I consider myself very lucky to be a Rotarian and, also, an active member of I.E.C.F.R.

*Patrick E. Devlyn*

# Register with the EVR to Become an EyeCare Volunteer

The new, online EyeCare Volunteer Registry (EVR) at [www.eyecarevolunteer.org](http://www.eyecarevolunteer.org), matches ophthalmologists and other eye care professionals who are interested in volunteering in developing nations, with volunteer sites that need their assistance.

## EyeCare Professionals:

If you are interested in volunteering internationally, registration in the EVR will allow you to search for the right opportunity.

- You will find information on suitable volunteer sites. You may then contact organizations directly if you choose.
- Registered organizations and institutions may contact you when they are searching the EVR for volunteers.
- The information you provide is secure, the privacy of your contact information (name, address, telephone, etc.) is assured. You decide whether or not to provide it to organizations and institutions.

If you would like to become an international

EyeCare Volunteer, go to

[www.eyecarevolunteer.org](http://www.eyecarevolunteer.org) and register.

## Institutions and Organizations:

If you need the assistance of EyeCare Volunteers, registration in the EVR will allow you to search for suitable eye care professionals.

- The EVR can help eye care professionals learn about your organization. By registering in the EVR, individuals with the appropriate skills and interests are directed to you - they obtain information about the volunteer sites and opportunities you offer.
- The EVR can help you locate ophthalmologists and other eye care professionals: You can search the Registry for a specific type of individual volunteer and find information about professionals who match your specifications. You will learn about their particular skills and interests and how to contact them.

If you need the assistance of EyeCare Volunteers, go to [www.eyecarevolunteer.org](http://www.eyecarevolunteer.org) and register.

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## RotaVision International . . . Another Eye Care Partner

RotaVision International<sup>®</sup> was conceived by T. Otis Paul, MD in 1996. As a pediatric ophthalmologist and a member of the San Francisco Rotary Club, he had traveled to several foreign countries and noted the need of the ophthalmologists in those areas to be better skilled in strabismus surgery. Since that time, he has made over forty trips overseas, at his own expense, to teach strabismus surgery and pediatric ophthalmology to physicians in Armenia, Russia, Lithuania, Nicaragua, China, Nepal, Macedonia and Vietnam, to name only a few. Other ophthalmologists from the United States have also gone on these missions including Melvin Bert, MD, Robert Sargeant, MD and August Reeder, MD.

A typical mission occurs after a formal letter has been received by the hosting country and usually starts by the team arriving on a Friday or Saturday in order to adjust to the new time zone. A team usually consists of one or two ophthalmologists, a Rotary member who works with the local Rotary club and an ophthalmic technician who is fluent in the language of the country being visited. The week of the mission starts early on Monday by examining the children who have been prescreened by the local ophthalmologists for possible surgery. The numbers vary from as few as twenty to as many as fifty on any given mission. After being examined and the cases discussed through the translator, the children are scheduled for surgery on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings with the afternoons reserved for seeing the post-op patients and giving lectures on pediatric and neuroophthalmology to the group of ophthalmologists

who have traveled to the location for the week of education. Some ophthalmologists travel as far as over 5,000 miles (as in Russia) to attend the week of surgeries and lectures. Friday morning is spent seeing post-ops and the afternoon used for lectures and Q&A on issues of interest to the local MD's that may not have been covered in the lectures.

RotaVision has also raised thousands of dollars in order to purchase surgical instruments, anesthesia machines and other equipment help these developing countries perform the surgeries demonstrated. Thus far in 2005, two Texas Hold'Um Poker tournaments have raised over \$5,000 for RotaVision in order to purchase equipment. Also, matching grants have been obtained through the Rotary Foundation in order to build eye clinics and surgical suites in certain countries, the most recent being in a remote area of Nicaragua.

Presently, Dr. Paul and Dr. Reeder have an invitation to go to Ho Chi Min City (formerly Saigon) at the end of January 2006 and Dr. Reeder has been invited to travel to Ghana in the Fall 2006. Both physicians will also probably be mounting a mission to somewhere in Eastern Europe in June 2006 in conjunction with the RI Convention in Copenhagen/Malmo.

If you are interested in more information, or would like to join one of their missions, please contact Dr. Reeder or Dr. Paul through their professional office in San Francisco. Their phone number is 415-923-3086.

# Hong Kong Interactors Raise Funds for Orbis Projects

While the audience at the Joint School Charity Variety Show in Hong Kong enjoyed performances by prominent pop singers and amateur talent contests, behind the scenes a group of dedicated Interactors worked hard to make the event possible.

The evening of entertainment raised US\$9,500 for Orbis International, an organization that works to treat and prevent blindness.

Held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre on 28 March, the show included well-known local singers Endy Chow and Deep Ng, who thrilled the crowd of 1,400. In addition, students from around Hong Kong showed off their own talents in a series of competitions, including a fashion show featuring student-designed, environmentally friendly clothing. The winning entry used trash – including egg crates and pop cans – to create a whimsical, futuristic outfit.

Long before the lights went up, however, the show's young organizers displayed their own talents.



Members of the Interact clubs of Wah Yan College and Marymount Secondary School served as co-organizers. Student groups from several other schools also helped. Wah Yan College Interactors Nicholas Ho and Lik Hang Gu were among the organizers.

"The whole production of the show is so vast that it requires a lot of help from different schools," says Gu, who managed ticket sales. "We all worked like a family."

Ho specialized in negotiating. He pulled in sponsorship deals, secured the venue, and hired a production house to stage the event professionally.

"I got the chance to interact with the real world at this early age, to understand what it's like to be working in such a fast-paced environment," Ho says. "And the good thing is, the real world treated me like an adult instead of a student. It feels kinda cool."

*From the Rotary Web Site*

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# Rotarians make it Easier to Maintain Gift of Sight

By AMY ABERN—Herald Tribune  
[amy.abern@heraldtribune.com](mailto:amy.abern@heraldtribune.com)

Selva Sunderavel, service chairman for District 6960 of Rotary International, knows better than most the importance of preventative care when it comes to his eyes. He's had surgery for glaucoma and cataracts, and he said the testing, procedures and follow-up didn't involve much pain and resulted in less than a day's inconvenience.

Sunderavel sits on the board of the International Eye Care Fellowship of Rotarians and helped coordinate and launch the organization's free seminar "Avoidable Blindness" that took place on Saturday at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County.

"People can just walk in, they don't need to set up an appointment," said Sunderavel. "One of



the biggest causes of blindness is neglecting eye care. We're hoping people will take advantage of this program to get their eyes checked. If there are problems, it's best to find out early."

The clinic offered free eye screenings going on throughout the day beginning at 9 a.m. Beginning at 10 a.m. there were presentations given by eye specialists David M. Klein, M.D., F.A.C.S., eye physician and surgeon; Tad R. Kosanovich, O.D., P.A., optometrist; Keye Wong, M.D., F.A.C.S., retina vitreous surgeon; and Jim Tietsworth, M.D., F.A.C.S., clinical assistant professor of ophthalmology at the University of South Florida.

The International Eye Care Fellowship of Rotarians will collect new and used eyeglasses to donate to the Rotary clubs in Ecuador.