



“Eye of the Lion”

Quarterly Report – April 2011

Lions Latest Initiative

Once again Lions of South Alabama are on the move to fulfill the challenge of Helen Keller for Lions to “Become Knights of the Blind”.

This latest initiative began over two years ago when Dr. Bert Eichold, Mobile County Health Officer, approached the Lions about joining forces with them by providing funding for eye equipment. This was first discussed with ALSCA but due to unforeseen circumstances, we have not been able to proceed down that avenue. Some traction was gained last summer with the Mobile Lions Club continuing to pursue this initiative. Contact was made with the Eyesight Foundation of Alabama and a plan was developed to attempt to bring them into the partnership.

The Mobile County Health Department moved forward with their launch of the Optometry Clinic with the hiring of Dr. Sara Small, OD. They secured equipment to launch a single lane service for children in December 2010. Dr. Eichold requested the Lions to provide funding to equip the second lane in order to expand the service to the unserved adult population in the area. The Lions Club of Mobile has designated \$5,000 to this cause. Lions, led by PDG Gus Gary, have submitted a grant application in the amount of \$20,000 to the Eye Sight Foundation of Alabama. They recently made a site visit wherein very positive feedback was received. Their decision should be reached in early April.

At that time, a grant will be submitted to LCIF to match the \$25,000. In order to meet the submission deadlines of LCIF, timing is crucial in order to make the July LCIF review date. If this grant is approved, we will have the required funding to make the purchases required to establish the second lane.

Kudos to the Lions Club of Mobile for their desire and continued efforts to see another

vision service provided to those in need in South Alabama.

Lion/USA Eye Research Board will be meeting at the Health Department on April 20th for their quarterly board meeting. We will tour the facility and see how the impact of Lions joining forces with other groups can reach so many more needs.

Happenings Around the Lab

Featured Dr. Robert Barrington

Dr. Barrington and Dr. Lausch are both excited about a new break through in research.

Corneal infections by herpes simplex virus type 1 (HSV-1) cause herpetic stromal keratitis, leading to profound visual impairment. Through support provided by the USA/ Lions Eye Research Institute, Drs. Robert Barrington and Dr. Robert Lausch have identified key immune cells that promote corneal damage at different stages of corneal infection. Importantly, through rigorous testing of different genetically manipulated mouse strains, they have identified a mutation that leads to late resolution of tissue

damage. The mutation is known to affect signaling in cells that may cause tissue damage late in infection. Using a newly developed flow cytometric technique, the scientists are currently investigating whether these cells are present and activated in the mutant mice. This new information may lead to direct therapeutic applications for HSV-1 corneal infections, as inhibitors to the signaling pathway could potentially be administered to prevent even non-mutant immune cells from causing stromal keratitis.

Way to go Doctors!

Did You Know

Did you know your eyes' lenses never stop growing? A little trivia for you.

Your Lens:

- The lens of the eye is one of the three parts of your body that never stops growing. Your hair and skin are the other two.
- The lens of the eye grows inward toward the center. The center of the lens consists of the oldest cells, while new cells are found along the outside where

- the best blood and oxygen supply exists.
- The lens has a very microscopic and delicate blood supply
 - All the bad habits of living-such as smoking, eating a high-fat diet, lack of sleep and exercise- will take their toll on your lenses

Women's Eye Health

With Women becoming a driving force in Lionism today, I would be remiss if I did not talk a little about the impact that Eye Disease have in our lives. Have you ever noticed how women hate to admit that they can't see or have to wear glasses? We are a vain society! But ----- two out of three people who are blind or visually impaired are women! This is so prevalent that there is a Women's Eye Health Task Force at the Schepens Eye Research Institute at Harvard Medical School. This is also a Lions sponsored program. You will hear more about Women's Eye Health in the next issue.

DONATIONS

Eye Research Institute is like any other organization, we need money to operate. We have pins for sale, as do all the other organizations. Our logo is on the pin and they are for a donation of \$25.00. We also have a banner patch and all clubs making a donation will receive the "patch" for their banner. Brochures are available as well and if you would like these for your club let us know. Please include Lions/USA Eye Research Institute in your budget for 2011-2012. Checks can be mailed to the address listed below.

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