



“Eye of the Lion”

Quarterly Report – August 2010

What is Lions/USA Eye Research?

Due to the redistricting in Alabama and this being a new year and we have new faces, we feel that it is necessary to tell you how Lions/USA Eye research come into being. Many of you already know this, but think about the many Lions who are coming into our District now that have never heard of Eye Research.

The Year 1990 brought about a great change in Lions around the world. Lions Clubs International announced an aggressive global blindness prevention program called “Sight First”. Since that time, vision has been restored to millions around the world. In the same year a handful of Lions from south Alabama met weekly to determine how they could participate in this wonderful project. The Lions/USA Eye

Research Institute was born, with many hours spent getting permission to use the name “Lions” and “USA” in the title, working on By-Laws, becoming incorporated for tax purposes, promoting the institute at the conventions and raising funds, to investing in an endowment, spending the income for eye research. There are no salaries and very little expense.

The Eye Research Institute is an official District 34C project being approved at the District Convention in 1991 as District “N” and approved in 2009 as “C”. This doesn’t mean that the whole state should not be involved. Lions all over Alabama contribute to Alabama Sight in Birmingham. Our methods are different but our goals are the same – “To eradicate blindness”. We need Alabama Lions Sight to take care of eye problems that have already occurred and we need Eye Research to find a means of prevention.

Since 1990, we have:

1. Raised over \$716,000 and spent only the interest on principal funds
2. Awarded more than \$161,000 (interest earned on endowed funds) to our scientists

3. Purchased \$248,00 of state-of-the art research equipment
4. Our endowment funds have a combined balance of \$466,000 as of the end of June

Our goal is to prevent blindness; at this time we have four scientists working on vision research projects. We hope that you and your club will consider supporting this worthwhile venture.

Happenings Around the Lab

Featured Dr. John Oakes

Dr. John Oakes, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, is studying how infections of the eye surface with the human pathogen herpes simplex virus can lead to a red, swollen and painful eye and eventual vision loss. It is known that there are many herpes virus strains circulating in the human population. Interestingly, these virus strains vary greatly in their capacity to cause eye disease. Thus, one individual may contact a virulent herpes virus strain that causes severe eye disease while another individual may become infected with a non-

virulent virus strain that causes little or no eye disease. In collaboration with Dr. Robert Lausch, Dr. Oakes is using the recently developed field of viral genomics to compare the nucleotide sequences of virulent and non-virulent herpes simplex virus genomes in order to identify the specific genes responsible for the capacity of virulent virus strains to initiate the severe form of eye disease that leads to vision loss. This work will help identify future targets for anti-viral drugs that can be used to treat the pain and inflammation associated with herpes simplex virus eye infections.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of Lions/USA Eye Research is comprised of a representative from each Lions Clubs in Mobile and Baldwin Counties, District Governor 34C, Vice District Governors 34C, Sight Chairman District 34C, all members of the executive committee, Director of Ophthalmic Research, USA; one individual from USA Public Relations Department. There are no members; however all persons interested in the study, treatment and prevention of blindness will be welcomed to

any program sponsored by the Corporation in pursuit of its stated purposes.

Officers are:

President – *Lion Dennis Tucker*
Mobile Lions Club

Secretary – *POC Linda Ziglar*
Gulf Shores Club

Meetings are held quarterly at different locations around Mobile and Baldwin Counties.



As in all organizations, there is always a need for money and Eye Research is no different. Many of you have had the opportunity to see first hand what Lions' money can do. If you have not toured this facility, now is the time. It is very interesting and I think that every Lion/Lion Club should see how their money is being used. Not only do we purchase equipment but "mice" also. Expensive Mice, I might add! No, we can't catch those in the barn! These are special!!!!

Eye Research also has a pin 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. We have brochures and DVDs available and if you would like these for your club let us know. Please include Lions/USA Eye Research in your budget for 2010-2011. Checks can be mailed to the address listed below.

<p><i>Lions/University of South Alabama Eye Research Institute, Inc. 3800 Airport Boulevard Suite #203 Mobile, Alabama 36608 Phone – 251-344-0880</i></p>



These Doctors not only do Eye Research but they are members of the University Lions Club. This club was not chartered (1993) as a campus club but they sure are a dedicated club. They have faculty, staff and some students as members. A very successful club that has great community involvement.



Helen Keller

"Girl at the Well"

The unveiling of a bronze 7-year-old Helen Keller took place in the US Capitol on October 07, 2009. This is the first statue honoring a disabled person and also the only one of a child to be placed in this collection. What an honor for Alabama and Lions around the world to have one of our own in this coveted collection! The statue depicts Helen at her home in Tuscumbia, Alabama as her teacher, Anne Sullivan, spelled out the word "water" in her hand while pumping water over her other hand. We are very fortunate to have the statue

visiting Mobile. As each of you know, Helen Keller, at Lions International Convention in 1925, challenged the Lions to become "Knights For The Blind". What a wonderful opportunity for us in south Alabama to celebrate this event.

Celebrate with Helen

Lions/USA Eye Research Institute would like to invite you to a special event on September 12, 2010 at the Mobile Museum of Art Langan Park, 4850 Museum Drive. Event begins at 2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. and will include: viewing of the statue wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres and venues of Helen Keller's "The Miracle Worker" portrayed by drama students. Cost for the event is \$50/person. Tickets will be sold in advance and may be purchased by contacting those listed below:

Ferrell Anders – 251-344-0880

Linda Ziglar – 251-504-0056

Judy Miller – 251-460-6420

Make plans now to spend Sunday afternoon, September 12th at the park with Helen, Lions and friends.