

VISIONARY

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Cornea Research Foundation of America

Summer 1996

Restoring Vision Through Research

Indiana Lions Eye Bank Awards Foundation \$100,000 for Research Study *Identifying Risk Factors for Corneal Graft Failure*

Francis W. Price, Jr., M.D., president of the Foundation, announced in June that the Board of Directors of the Indiana Lions Eye Bank had elected to provide \$100,000 in additional funding for the Foundation's ongoing research project on corneal transplants, **"Identifying Risk Factors for Corneal Graft Failure."**

The study is the only one of its kind in the U.S. and one of only three other similar studies in the world.

Foundation staff members have been collecting preoperative, surgical and followup data on all cornea transplant surgeries performed by Corneal Consultants of Indiana (CCI) since 1982.

CCI is one of only a few centers nationally to perform more than 400 transplants a year. Therefore, the Foundation is in an unique position to track information because of the large number of surgeries performed each year by the same physicians at a single center.

Analysis of data on the first 1,806 transplants performed resulted in the publication of five papers in professional ophthalmic journals, most recently in the *Journal of Refractive Surgery* in January 1996.

Previous graft failure was identified as the most significant risk factor for secondary failure, and the risk of failure decreased significantly with time.

Study findings also indicated that race, young age of patient, preoperative glaucoma and external or surface disease of the eye were other risk factors indicating need for more frequent followup.

The Foundation is preparing to analyze follow up data on these 1,806 eyes plus an additional 2,000 transplants. This may involve analysis of approximately 34,000 follow-up exams!

This ongoing research study will provide vital information for ophthalmologists, tissue banks and all of us who might one day face transplant surgery

to protect one of life's greatest gifts — the gift of sight.

The Indiana Lions Eye Bank has provided over \$400,000 for the funding of this study. With their invaluable support and that of our many loyal individual contributors, the Foundation is able to continue its important research.

Foundation Involved in Study of Clinical Trial of Laser Treatment of Myopia and Astigmatism

In July of 1996, the FDA granted full approval for an IDE (Investigational Device Exemptions) application submitted by Corneal Consultants of Indiana to investigate the use of the Keracor (Chiron) excimer laser for correction of moderate to high levels of myopia and/or astigmatism using the laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis (LASIK) procedure.

(continued on page 2)

Foundation Involved...

(continued from page 1...)

To our knowledge, this is the most comprehensive excimer laser study so far given full approval by the FDA.

Patients will be screened for eligibility. Eligible patients will be examined preoperatively to obtain a medical history and to establish a baseline for their ocular condition.

Following surgery, patients will undergo complete eye exams at regular intervals for approximately 18 months. The Foundation is responsible for overseeing the study.

If you are interested in learning more about the study, please call Dr. Kathy Kelley at 317-844-5530.

Will

When there is a will...
there is a way...

To help give the gift of sight
many of us take for granted

Since 1986 special gifts from many of the Foundation's loyal supporters have provided funds enabling the Foundation to maintain the country's largest collection of data on corneal transplant outcomes providing eye-care professionals around the world with vital information leading to increased transplant success rates.

As the average life expectancy projection continues to increase with people living well into their 70s and 80s, it is important that we continue our research so that future generations can be assured of the gift of vision for a lifetime.

So, remember the Foundation
when planning for your future.

Looking for Volunteers

We need your help. If you or anyone in your family would like to help the Foundation in its fundraising efforts and have a few hours a month to help, please contact the Foundation at 317-844-5610.

Thanks to the Gift of Corneal Tissue Vision is Restored to Thousands Each Year

Patient Profile 1996 – Debbie Rittenhouse

With the gift of corneal tissue, Debbie Rittenhouse is thrilled and thankful to be able once again to fully enjoy her busy life as a wife, mother of four and illustrator of children books.

Debbie Rittenhouse of Kendallville, Indiana, suffers from Terriens Marginal Degeneration. This syndrome causes a thinning of the cornea. Debbie, who noticed problems with her vision and thought a new prescription would fix her problem was surprised to learn that her problem was much more serious. Fortunately for Debbie she was referred to Dr. Price who recommended an immediate transplant because of concern about her condition.

Coincidentally, a year later because of a problem in Debbie's other eye that required surgery, Dr. Price determined that this cornea also was degenerating because of Terriens Marginal Degeneration. Another cornea transplant was performed; Debbie's vision was restored.

However, as do all transplant patients, she lives with the reality that her donor corneal graft could fail. For patients like Debbie, the Foundation's data base can track progress, identify possible causes and determine treatment that will protect her

vision. For the time being, she is busy back at the drawing board. Every day Debbie thanks God for the precious gift of life.

Because of her own experience, Debbie has learned of the importance of the gift of organ donation. She has literally taken the business of organ and tissue transplantation into her own hands. As an illustrator of children books, Debbie is spreading the word about the gift of organ/tissue donation. Her watercolors of children, which have been published in *The Funny Things Kids Say... Vol I & II*, have been on display in libraries around the state as a

With your contribution you can help protect one of life's greatest gifts — the gift of sight — for thousands of visually impaired people

*This book would be a wonderful gift for all who enjoy children. If you would like to purchase a copy of *Funny Things Kids Like to Say...*, please contact Sally Maggard at 317-844-5610.*

A copy is available for viewing in Suite 100, 9002 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN. Proceeds will benefit the Cornea Research Foundation of America. Copies sell for \$22.00 each plus shipping and handling.

project to increase awareness of the need for tissue and organ donations. In September 1996, her work will be on display at the Mishawaka Penn Library in Mishawaka, IN.

Estate Planning Seminar to be offered in early 1997

Did you know that most people, and that includes people from all walks of life, have not planned a will or an estate plan? By planning for the future, you not only protect your assets during your life time, but also you decrease the risk of the government distributing your assets at the time of your death if you do not have a will.

To provide an opportunity to encourage our patients to learn about ways that they can protect their family's assets and plan for the future without losing hard earned money to taxation, the Foundation is planning a free financial and estate planning seminar in early 1997 for patients who are interested in attending.

If you would be interested in attending this free seminar or have any questions, please call Sally Maggard at 317-844-5610.

Cornea Research Foundation of America Gift Clubs

Vision Club

Gifts Totaling up to \$99*

Century Club

Gifts Totaling \$100-\$250*

Iris Club

Gifts Totaling \$251-\$500*

Sight Club

Gifts Totaling \$501-\$1,000*

Cornea Club

Gifts Totaling \$1,001-\$2,500*

*per calendar year

We want to recognize everyone who contributed to the work of the Foundation in 1995. Each and every contributor is to be recognized for his/her selfless contribution, whether large or small, to preserving the gift of sight for all of us. Many of these people know firsthand just how precious the gift of sight is and want to help others maintain a quality of life that wouldn't be possible otherwise.

Contributors are listed on insert. If we have inadvertently omitted your name, please accept our apology and notify our office at 844-5610.



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