



VISIONARY

Cornea Research Foundation of America - Bringing Vision to Future Generations



Person of Vision Award

December 2006

On Saturday evening, November 4, Dr. Francis W. Price, Jr. was given a standing ovation at the Eye Ball when he was recognized as the Person of Vision for 2006 by Prevent Blindness, Indiana. The award was created to recognize outstanding leadership, creativity and dedication to giving the gift of sight in the Indianapolis community and beyond.

The new Conrad Hilton was the venue for the gala event. Senior Pastor Clarence Moore gave a moving invocation before a gourmet dinner was served. The program began with a history of the award given by Pat Szuch, President; she then introduced Elaine Voci, Honorary Chair and Development Director at the Foundation, who spoke of the mission of the Foundation. Elaine introduced two of Dr. Price's patients who addressed the impact that he has had on their lives. Ed Jagiela, of Merrillville, Indiana, described the joy he has experienced since a successful cornea transplant restored his sight.



Dr. Francis Price, Jr. and Ed Jagiela

He was able to walk both daughters down the aisle on their wedding days, something he had feared might be impossible. Trischa Zorn spoke of how her life has changed since she received two iris implants. She has attended law school, graduated and passed the Indiana Bar this past June. She has also acquired a driver's license to the amazement of her family, and peers. Both individuals referred to Dr. Price as a "miracle worker."

Shortly after, it was time to bring Dr. Price to the stage. He began by thanking his wife, Marianne, for her inspiration along with his parents, Marianne's parents, and their son Patrick and his wife for their support of his lifework. He also gave some insights into the changes he foresees happening in the field of ophthalmology, including the prevention of nearsightedness in the next decade.

The crystal and silver award presented to Dr. Price is meant to symbolize his future-oriented research and his soaring aspirations to be of service to as many people as possible. It was an elegant evening for a very special person. Please give your congratulations to Dr. Price when you next see him.

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Sam's Club/Wal-Mart's Good Works Donates \$1,000

Based on a philosophy of operating globally and giving back locally, the Good Works program relies on its local associates to know which organizations are the most important to their hometowns and they are empowered to determine how the dollars will be spent.

We were delighted when Brian Fields, manager at the 86th Street Sam's Club in Indianapolis, selected the Cornea Research Foundation of America as recipient of a \$1,000 community grant. As you can see from the photo, our Development Director, Elaine Voci, was thrilled to accept a Big Check for that amount. (Although she had to give it back, she received a regular sized paper check in exchange.)



Elaine Voci accepting check for Good Works Program

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New Law Allows Tax-Free Gifts From IRAs

In August, President Bush signed into law a pension reform bill that includes several charitable giving incentives, including the IRA rollover provision. To those who qualify this represents a new way to make a charitable donation. The distribution to charity is applied in satisfaction of the IRA's owner's minimum required distribution for the year.

Previously, in order to give IRA funds to a charity, donors would have to withdraw funds from the IRA, pay the income tax and then take an itemized deduction for the gift. The new law permits the IRA distribution to charity to be excluded from income taxes. The donor's tax return will not reflect the amount as either income or deduction. (Please note that such donations will only be allowed during the 2006 and 2007 tax years.)

For your withdrawal from a traditional IRA to qualify for exclusion from gross income the following requirements must be met:

- A maximum of \$100,000 per donor a year may be given
- Charitable gifts must be completed by December 31, 2007
- The IRA owner must be at least 70-1/2 years old
- The gift must be made in an outright manner and not pass through the individual's hands
- Distributions to private foundations, donor advised funds or supporting organizations do not qualify

Please discuss this new giving opportunity with your tax or financial advisor, if applicable to your circumstances.

Update on Debi Bailey

Debi came to Indianapolis in July to see Dr. Price in the hopes of regaining her vision after suffering tragic injuries in 1972 that left her blind in one eye and with a damaged cloudy cornea in the other. With the help of her community and the Lions Club in Sarasota, Florida Debi flew to Indianapolis and had both a cornea transplant and an iris implant.

It's been 4 months since the surgery and we're delighted to tell you that she has been able to watch the sunset for the first time in over 30 years. She is seeing 20/40 and walked into our clinic without a hat or sunglasses. Debi reports feeling like a new woman and she even has a new hairstyle. She explained that over the years as her vision deteriorated, she lost awareness of her appearance, but now that she can see herself in the mirror, she decided to go for a new look. It is wonderful to experience her joy and the impact of her increased quality of life.

Calendar

September

European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons, London

Dr. Francis Price spoke several times about DSEK and about the use of the femtosecond laser-assisted "Top Hat" cornea transplant procedure.

Indiana Academy of Ophthalmology Annual Meeting,

Indianapolis, IN Dr. Francis Price received a Senior Achievement Award for 25 years of service to the field.

October: OSN (Ocular Surgery News) Symposium, NYC

Dr. Francis Price was a moderator regarding cornea-based refractive surgery.

Indiana University Medical School Northwest Campus,

Gary, Indiana Dr. Marianne Price gave a presentation on new cornea transplant techniques.

November

Focus on Education, Indianapolis, IN

Dr. Francis Price gave a presentation on new surgical and pharmaceutical approaches to improve vision.

American Academy of Ophthalmology, Las Vegas, NV

Focus On Education Draws 140 Optometrists

The annual seminar was held at the Ritz Charles in Carmel, and effectively moderated by Kathy Kelley, O.D. of Price Vision Group. A lineup of wonderful speakers included Jim Thimons, O.D., Joseph Wakil, M.D. and our own Dr. Price. The event is a fund raiser for the Foundation and helps fulfill one of the four pillars of our mission: to provide ongoing education for physicians.

Foundation to Celebrate 20th Anniversary in 2008

With a mission to become a world center for clinical research and education specializing in corneal disease and corneal transplantation, Francis W. Price, Jr., M.D., established the Cornea Research Foundation of America as a 501 C3 in 1988.

The early years were marked by two noticeable occurrences: a dramatic increase in the number of corneal transplants being performed in America and an increased number of cataract surgeries. In fact, the majority of corneal transplants were being performed as the result of complications of cataract surgery.

These developments drew attention to the need for tracking the outcomes of corneal transplants more closely. No one group or individual was monitoring results at that time and so Dr. Price sought to fill the void and determine the risk factors most critical to graft failures. He joined with Ronald Marks, Ph.D., a biostatistician specializing in ophthalmology from the University of Florida. Together, they created a computer data base to store and track preoperative, surgical and postoperative statistics regarding transplants. Substantial start-up funding came from St. Vincent's Hospital in Indianapolis and a few years later, the Indiana Lions Eye Bank also generously contributed funding to maintain the data base.

As they say in Hollywood, the rest is history.

Looking Ahead

In 2008, we will commemorate our 20th anniversary, a significant milestone in the life of any organization. We are planning to host a series of special events in a year-long celebration. If you would like to help, we would appreciate it!

There are many ways for you to contribute. If you have an interest in getting directly involved, please contact Elaine Voci at elainevoci@cornea.org. For example, you can choose to...

- Volunteer to be one of ten people working on a Special Events Committee which will begin meeting in February 2007
- Volunteer to help at one of several community events being considered
- When donating to the Foundation, instruct us to apply it to the 2007 special events plan
- Got a good idea? Send in your suggestions for how we can celebrate the 20th anniversary
- Plan to attend the special events in 2008 with family and friends to help spread the word about the life-changing work of the Foundation
- Send Elaine your personal story of how you became connected to Dr. Price and the Foundation so we can share it with others in our newsletters and during the year's events

Special Events Committee Being Formed

It's one of our greatest fears: to lose our sight and not be able to enjoy a beautiful sunset, or see the faces of our loved ones. The Cornea Research Foundation of America reaches out to those with vision challenges to increase their options, discover new treatments and procedures, and give people back the use of their eyes.

The Foundation will form a Special Events Committee of people with good ideas and caring hearts in order to plan events for 2008 in which we will celebrate our 20th anniversary. The Committee will consist of ten members who will be actively involved and will meet every two months from February 2007- February 2008. Elaine Voci, Director of Development, will serve as the Committee Chair and provide guidance for projects. Our first major undertaking will be to plan a series of events and special activities to mark our 20th Anniversary.

We're looking for Committee members who are...

1. Passionate about our mission and have been personally touched by the work of Dr. Price and the Foundation either as a patient or as a friend or relative of a patient. The Committee is open to Price Vision Group and Foundation staff members, as well.
2. Able to attend most (at least 70%) of the afternoon meetings of 60 minutes each and actively contribute enthusiasm, ideas and be a team player.
3. Willing and able to carry information about our mission and events into their networks of family, friends, church, neighborhood and workplace to introduce us to new friends.

As a Committee member, you will receive the following benefits:

- Special recognition in VISIONARY, our quarterly newsletter
- A specially tailored educational lunch program with Marianne Price, Ph.D., Director of Education and Research, to keep you informed of research updates
- A special "thank you" luncheon with presentations by Dr. Francis W. Price, Jr., Marianne Price, Ph.D. and Elaine Voci, Ph.D., attended by our Board of Directors, to recognize your contributions and announce successful goals achieved during the one year commitment period.
- Satisfaction that comes from having been "used for a Higher Purpose" in which your time, talents and heart power are well spent on a caring mission that strives to give people back their sight.

Yes, I would enjoy serving on the first 20th Anniversary Special Events Committee. Please contact me:

Name _____
Telephone: _____
Address _____
City, State and Zip _____

I cannot serve on the Committee right now, but would like to make a donation in the amount of \$ _____.

I would like to make payment as follows:

Check enclosed (payable to Cornea Research Foundation of America)

Charge to my credit card Visa Mastercard AmerExpress

Name on card (please print) _____

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Please tell us how you would like to be recognized in printed materials such as Visionary, the CRFA newsletter:

I would prefer to remain anonymous

I would like to pay tribute with a gift of \$ _____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

If you would like the above person or family notified of your gift, please indicate whom you would like notified. (Gift amount is not mentioned)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Thank you for your support of the life-changing work of Dr. Price and the Cornea Research Foundation of America!

FROM THE RESEARCH CORNER



Marianne Price, Ph.D.

We have very exciting news! The new cornea-sparing transplant technique, known as DSEK, is rapidly gaining widespread acceptance around the country and the world. Dr. Price and the Foundation have worked diligently for the past 3 years to fine tune this technique and report information on how it compares with standard full-thickness grafts. We have also conducted monthly courses to train surgeons from around the world in how to successfully perform it. These efforts are revolutionizing corneal transplantation. Some Eye Banks now report that 45% of their corneas are being used for DSEK. This represents an amazing increase from last year when fewer than 3% of grafts were done this way. We are witnessing a truly historic change.

Whereas visual recovery and suture removal usually took at least a year with the traditional transplant technique, DSEK doesn't require any sutures and excellent vision can be recovered in as little as a week. Previously, many patients would postpone having a traditional transplant because they did not want to endure the activity restrictions and prolonged recovery period. Now those who qualify for DSEK are choosing to have it done before their visual problems become so disabling. This is not only improving many people's lives, but it is also increasing the demand for donor corneas. Please partner with us in our quest to restore vision by encouraging your friends and family members to consider becoming an organ donor!

Words From the Heart

This letter is from a grateful corneal transplant recipient to the donor family whose loved one had made a decision to be an organ donor. If you have not yet considered being an organ donor, we urge you to learn more about this simple process. As you can see from Lorraine's letter, it is a wonderful, selfless gift to receive that uniquely bonds donors and recipients.

As I write this letter, my emotions are in extreme conflict. I feel a deep sadness for you as I know what it means, what you have lost, for the cornea I received to have been donated. There are no words that I can say that will fill that empty chair at your table, or stop the ache in your heart. Only time, your love for one another, and your peace with God will heal these wounds. I know only too well as I have experienced this sadness, too.

I am grateful for your loved one's willingness to make this wonderful gift possible and I am overjoyed at receiving one of the most precious gifts I have ever been given: the gift of sight. I have an inherited degenerative eye disease called Fuchs' Dystrophy and my life was so compromised because of it. The fear of blindness and incapacitation was a daily occurrence. As a strong-willed, independent woman, having to give up so much as a result of this disease was very difficult. Then, while searching the Internet, I found a site, Fuchs' Friends, and through them found Dr. Price who pioneered the DSEK procedure.

...I had surgery and, thanks to your loved one, sight was restored in my left eye. I promise you that I will take the very best care of what I have been given. I just want you to know that I am thinking of you and am saddened by your loss, and I understand the value of the gift I have been given. I will always care for it appropriately. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

In deepest appreciation,
Lorraine Lahr Conway

Foundation Receives Finalist Award from I.U.

The accomplishments of the Foundation qualified for a finalist award at the 2nd Annual Indiana University Entrepreneurial Awards of Distinction in the Social Entrepreneurship category.

On October 19, 2006 at the Indianapolis Roof Ballroom a celebration dinner was hosted by I.U. to recognize the achievements of a selected group of not for profits. Each organization was called to the stage and presented with a beautiful clear obelisk with a blue insignia. Going forward, the Foundation will be invited to participate in I.U.'s "Fireside chats" with the University President and other finalists to stay abreast of entrepreneurial activities within the State of Indiana, and to provide input on new developments.

Fuchs' Genetics Study Continues to Seek Volunteers

If you or a family have been diagnosed with Fuchs' Dystrophy and have had a corneal transplant, you may be eligible to participate in a research study looking at the genetics of the disease. For more information, please contact Sara Dugdale, Research Nurse, at 317- 814-2994.



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ASK THE DOCTOR



Dr. Francis Price, Jr.

In each newsletter, Dr. Price answers questions that patients have written him, or asked him about in person during an appointment. If you have a question you would like Dr. Price to answer, please forward it to elainevoci@cornea.org. This month there are three related questions:

Q: Is it safe for me to have the flu shot after a corneal transplant? Does it increase the risk of rejection?

A: Yes, you can have a flu shot but you should also take anti-rejection drops for at least two weeks ~~before~~ ^{after}. I recommend that you contact your doctor and discuss these plans so that s/he can advise you as to what would be best. We usually have our patients take Pred Forte 4 times a day for 2 weeks.

There have been some cases of rejections reported after flu shots - and of people who still got the flu - and this may be due to the stimulation of their immune system.

Q: After I received a transplant and returned home to my regular doctor, the staff always wanted to test the pressure on my eyes. Is that safe to do on a transplant?

A: Yes, and it is necessary after a transplant because anti-rejection drops can increase the pressure in the eyes of some patients.

Q: If I begin to experience rejection of my transplant, what should I do to minimize the damage, for example, should I get to an emergency room?

A: I recommend that you see your local eye doctor as soon as possible. They won't know what to do or what to look for in the ER.