



VISIONARY

Cornea Research Foundation of America - Bringing Vision to Future Generations



Globalization of the Foundation

March 2006

When Dr. Francis W. Price, Jr., began the Cornea Research Foundation of America in 1988, he was motivated by the desire to do something no one else was doing at the time: to follow the survival rate of grafts on a large scale over the long-term. He succeeded, and today the Foundation houses the largest database in the Western Hemisphere of more than 4,000 corneal transplants. The Foundation's mission, to be a world-class research and educational organization dedicated to the preservation and restoration of vision, put its roots down in Indiana and in the United States.

Then the Internet arrived. Our increased ability to communicate globally through e-mail and our website has given the Foundation a presence in the international community and accelerated its work in three major ways:



From left to right: Dr. Madan Upadhyay, World Health Organization; Dr. Francis Price; Dr. Sanduk Ruit, Tilganga Eye Clinic; Dr. Keshab Adhikari, Nepal Eye Hospital

Global Information Exchange

Each week, requests for information come from individuals, physicians, and research scientists who live in places as far flung as Australia, Singapore, and Europe. On average, our website receives 855 visitors and 7,900 "hits" per month. (Hits are images or files downloaded from the site.) Likewise, we seek information from researchers located in different parts of the world. In the click of a mouse, requests can be made across time and space and answers received within minutes.

Invitations to Collaborate

Dr. Price and his wife, Marianne Price, Ph.D., have presented their findings at global conferences in Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Nepal, and India. This increased visibility has created opportunities for conversations that might not otherwise have taken place. An example occurred when Dr. Gabriel Simone from Madrid met Drs. Price at a European meeting. As a result, we were chosen to be one of only ten study sites in the world (one of six in the U.S.) for the gold glaucoma device he patented, and Dr. Price was the first in the United States to implant the shunt in early January. Both Drs. Price are increasingly being invited to give talks at multiple international meetings but are reluctant to be away from home on a continual basis.

Patient Empowerment

Another impact of globalization relates to the first two items. Patients are no longer restricted by distance in receiving medical care; they can travel easily to many parts of the country, the Hemisphere, and, indeed, the globe, if they choose to. Patients talk to one another on chat lines, sharing opinions about which doctors are the "best." For example, patients are learning about the new cornea-sparing transplant procedure and identifying Dr. Price as having performed the largest number. They outdistance their local physicians who may not even know about the new procedure yet. In many instances, it is the patients who inform the doctors, a clear reversal of the way things were before the Internet shrank the world.

The Internet has leveled the playing field for information; access to medical information was once confined to the medical/scientific community. Today, lay people can directly inform themselves about medical conditions that impact them and their families. To that end, the Foundation receives numerous requests for information or assistance from people all over the world who want help in understanding their options when dealing with a vision challenge. As Dr. Price said at a recent Board meeting, "The world is changing at such an accelerated pace that a momentum is building, and the Foundation is a part of the process. We are poised for significant breakthroughs in the next ten years that we can barely imagine today."

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Visionary Now Available In Audio Version

If you, or someone you know, are unable to read the *Visionary* without magnifying glasses, you will be pleased to know that the newsletter is available on tape. Just stop at the front desk of Price Vision Group, or send an email to info@cornea.org to request a copy of the latest audio issue.

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OUR MISSION & HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

Mission Statement

To be a world-class research and educational organization dedicated to the preservation and restoration of vision.

What We Do

Our mission can be summarized by this acronym: **RISE**.

R stands for Research – We do a minimum of 12 research projects a year; see our website for an updated list of projects.

I stands for Innovation – Dr. Price is a talented entrepreneur who has already been awarded several patents; he is always seeking the best and the newest ways to provide the highest quality vision care.

S stands for Service to Humanity – A servant leader, Dr. Price approaches his work as a God-given gift that he is stewarding on behalf of patients all over the world who will benefit from his expertise, surgical skills, and research.

E stands for Education – The Foundation sponsors an annual Focus on Education series for optometrists in Indiana, and monthly Advanced Cornea Courses in which surgeons from around the world are taught the latest techniques and procedures being pioneered.



9th ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

When we caught up with Harry Scheid, Chairman of the Golf Committee at CRFA, he was busily preparing for the 9th Annual Golf Classic to be held on June 13, 2006 at Bent Tree Golf Club in Westfield, Indiana. "I'm looking for golfers interested in having a great day of golf for a Higher Purpose: supporting the Research Foundation's work on corneal conditions like keratoconus and Fuch's Dystrophy." Harry offered, "If you can't spend the day with us, we need prizes for the Silent Auction, sponsors for the event, and donations of any size are welcome."

About the Event

Registration is at 11:30 a.m. followed by box lunches, a putting contest and a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. There will be a silent auction and valuable merchandise certificates awarded to the four leading foursomes, the longest drive, a hole in one, and/or closest to the pin. The day will close with a catered evening banquet and a presentation by Dr. Francis Price.

Ways to Participate

- Titanium - \$5,000 Title Sponsorship on all event materials, lunch sponsorship, two teams of four golfers, and two hole sponsorships.
- Platinum - \$2,500 Secondary Sponsorship on all event materials, two teams of four golfers, and one hole sponsorship.
- Gold - \$1,000 recognition of sponsorship on all event materials and one team of four golfers.
- Silver - \$500 includes beer cart sponsorship.
- Bronze - \$250 which includes hole sponsorship
- Cost per foursome without sponsorship is \$700; cost for individuals is \$175. To register, contact Clorissa Quillin at (317) 814- 2996.



FROM THE RESEARCH CORNER



Marianne Price, Ph.D.

In recent months, we've become increasingly aware of the far-reaching effects of our research to improve cornea transplant techniques and outcomes. For several years, Dr. Price and the Foundation have worked to perfect a new cornea-sparing transplant technique that benefits patients because it provides faster visual recovery, reduces complications, and leaves the eye stronger and more resistant to injury. During our recent visit to India and Nepal, we've come to appreciate the potential it has to greatly impact eye care in the developing world.

In India, 80 corneal specialists from across the country attended Dr. Price's presentation on the new cornea-sparing transplant and watched as he performed live surgeries. He also taught the new technique to 40 doctors in Nepal and trained corneal specialists at the Tilganga Eye Center in Kathmandu, where approximately 500 patients come each day to be treated for eye problems.

In developing countries, poor roads and the absence of reliable transportation make it difficult for patients in outlying areas to see a doctor for follow-up after surgery or to get prompt care in an emergency. Some have to walk for several days to reach a clinic. A major advantage of the new cornea-sparing transplant we are pioneering is that it has fewer complications and, thus, requires fewer follow-up visits than a traditional full-thickness transplant. A traditional transplant is held in place with numerous sutures, which can become loose or get infected, causing it to fail. Corneal ulcers can also develop because patients lose feeling in the eye's surface for some time after surgery. In contrast, the new transplant retains normal corneal sensation and can be done without sutures. This eliminates many problems requiring prompt care after a transplant, especially in villages where follow-up may not be possible in an emergency.

Many people in developing countries have cloudy corneas because they've had cataracts removed using older techniques. In part because of our research efforts, these patients now have a chance to have their vision restored with a cornea-sparing transplant.

Candles to Celebrate Sight

The Foundation is offering a fragrant blue candle as a fundraiser to symbolize its light-filled mission to restore sight in those with visual disorders. Warm Glow in Centerville, Indiana, made the color and long-lasting fragrance especially for us. We feel grateful to sell their high-quality, hand-dipped candles on behalf of the Foundation.

Donation of \$16 each, or two for \$28, is suggested. When our book, *Celebration of Light*, is released this spring it will be available single copy or in a special gift box packaged with one of these completely scented, slow burning candles to make a meaningful gift that supports a worthy cause.

To order candles, please contact Elaine Voci, Development Director, at 317-814-2993, or simply use the enclosed donation envelope to indicate your order with your check, and drop it in the mail. Kindly add \$3.00 to cover mailing and your candle(s) will be shipped within 48 hours. Candles are perfect gifts for birthdays, graduations, and for friends and family members.

Artemis-2 Update

In December, a year-end letter was sent to patients by the Foundation's Development Director describing the need for financial help to purchase a special piece of research equipment called the Artemis-2. They responded enthusiastically and sent checks in handwritten letters describing their desire to help. THANK YOU SO MUCH! Donations are still coming in, but thanks to patients, the Indiana Lions Eye Bank, and VisionShare we raised \$60,000. We have submitted two grant proposals for the remaining funds needed. The equipment has been delivered, and the research study is underway.

Speaking to all those who have donated, Marianne Price, Ph.D., Director of Research & Education for the Foundation, said, "On behalf of the Foundation and the hundreds of people who will be served by this remarkable equipment, thank you for this tremendous show of support."

Words from the heart

Dear Dr. Price,

There are no words adequate enough to express my gratitude to you for restoring my vision with the DSEK transplants in each of my eyes. It is an amazing miracle to be able to see clearly so soon after the surgery. Now, at last, I can finish the manuscripts I had started writing before the Fuchs' Dystrophy affected my vision too drastically to read what I had written.

I am deeply grateful to you for your dedicated skill and personal compassion. Your clear explanations and your supportive staff made me comfortable with every step of this restorative adventure. It was a privilege to be able to participate in the training of other ophthalmologists in the techniques you have developed. May you continue to be successful in all you do as you heal and restore vision for each patient blessed by your skill.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Ellen Brashares, Beech Grove, Indiana



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ASK THE DOCTOR



Dr. Francis Price, Jr.

Q: How has ophthalmology changed in the past year?

A: The biggest advances are occurring with the aid of technology. After 25 years of little change in corneal transplants, new techniques are dramatically altering the expectations and results of transplant surgery. During 2005, we saw the growing acceptance of endothelial keratoplasty, a technique that replaces only the diseased endothelial cell layer of the cornea with thin partial-thickness posterior grafts from donor corneas. More than 50 surgeons in the U.S., and an increasing number internationally, are now routinely performing the surgery. Their innovations and modifications will rapidly improve the visual results and safety of the procedures.

The predominant type of posterior grafting surgery being performed is Descemet's stripping with endothelial keratoplasty (DSEK) which allows patients to regain vision of 20/40 or better within three months of surgery. Early problems with donor tissue detachment now seem to have been solved, and some surgeons perform the procedures with only topical anesthesia.

Last year we saw the first use of femtosecond lasers, instead of metal trephines, for penetrating keratoplasty. Whatever surgical incision design we can dream up, these lasers have the capability to execute. Such incisions are stronger and can be custom designed for each patient. We performed the first laser-assisted, contoured corneal transplant in the world here at Price Vision Group. Technology is bringing a new era of vision care and treatment possibilities. It's an exciting time!

EVENTS

DECEMBER 2005: Tilganga Eye Center, Nepal and All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India: Dr. Price taught new transplant techniques to Indian and Nepali surgeons. Zurich, Switzerland: Cross-Linking Congress. Dr. Price and Marianne Price, Ph.D. attended the meeting and connected with global colleagues.

MARCH 26, 2006 - Open House held at Price Vision Group offices; presentation by Dr. Price on New Treatments for Corneal Conditions