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General Chairman
PRIP Frank J. Devlyn
 Email: devlynf@devlyn.com.mx
 FAX: 52-5-2624120

Assistant General Chairman
O. Doyle Dannenberg, O.D.
 Email: doyled@nctimes.net
 FAX: 1-760-746-0204

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Rotary International 2001-2002

Avoidable Blindness

"Next to life itself, God's most precious gift is sight - Protect it, Save it, Restore it."

Task Force

Freedom From Cataract Blindness

The estimates of worldwide blindness are disturbing and the fact remains that the number of needlessly blind people in the world continues to increase. Cataracts accounts for nearly 70 % of all blind people in the world. Control of Cataract blindness will remain only surgical. Unfortunately, India has 1/4th of the world's blind (10 Million people).

Many cataract blind people living in backward areas of the developing world are unaware that they can be helped. Cataract blind may have limited or no access to the available specialised service because of geographical and social isolation. The majority of them are elderly people who are unable to travel to distant hospitals. Cost of medical care is very high, hence the poor people find it beyond their capacity. Increasing population in developing countries is a major factor for the increase in blindness.

Cataract Removal by Phaco Emulsification Method

This is the latest technique in the cure of cataracts. In this method the cataract is first broken into parts which are removed with the help of Ultra-sound probe by suction and then the Intra-ocular lens is inserted. The cut is as small as 3 mm com-

pared to 12 mm of conventional cataract surgery. There are several advantages to this method; the small incision heals faster, rest period required is less, less redness & inflammation, glasses can be procured within a week's time etc. This is a great boon to poor patients who earn on a day-to-day basis and can not afford to rest more.

Avoidable Blindness being a Thrust Area, Rotary District 3050 had taken up many cataract projects for the benefit of



Dr. Rathod with operated patients

poor patients during the last Rotary Year under the leadership of its Governor, Dr. Sashank Rathod. Dr. Rathod himself is a leading Ophthalmologist & Laserologist in the city of Ahmedabad and he, to his credit, has carried out thousands (more than 6000) of free cata-

ract operations in rural areas for poor patients by Phaco Emulsification technique at his well-equipped clinic.

Different clubs in different areas of the District have taken up the Avoidable Blindness projects during the year 2000-01. A total of 15 Clubs are working tremendously for the implementation of the projects, which are supported by the Avoidable Blindness Pool of The Rotary Foundation as well as few clubs from outside India. (Continued on page 3)

Avoidable Blindness Grant on way to Evanston

The following is a letter from Todd Lindley, Assistant Governor District 6060, to Dr. Umesh Shivappa Megur of District 3160 regarding a matching grant application:

I met with District 6060 Governor Bill Schuck today for the signing of your matching grant. As you know it is a matching grant with your home Rotary Club of Bidar, India in District 3160 agreeing to provide 25 % or \$11,250 and my district 6060 providing 25% or \$11,250. We hope to gain approval from the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation for the remaining 50% or \$22,500. This will provide funds to purchase supplies for 1,500 eye surgeries.

I made several copies of the grant. The original is on its way to Evanston, being mailed at 4 PM this afternoon. It should arrive on Monday or Tuesday next week, the 20th or 21st. One copy is in the mail to DG Bill Schuck for his records and another copy is being sent airmail back to you for your records.

I can tell you have a lot of experience in writing these grants. Every question was answered and all attachments and

letters were just perfect. Thank you for offering your assistance to DG Dr. Reddy. I'm sure he is very busy with his Governor duties, but I do hope the application will find its way to me very soon for the next 1,400 surgeries.

With both of these grant applications in place and being funded by our current DDF, Governor Bill and I are going to begin promoting the concept that each Rotarian in our district should take advantage of this exceptional opportunity to give sight to another human being. Since it requires approximately \$12.50 in current Annual Programs Fund giving to produce \$7.50 in DDF, we are asking that every Rotarian donate \$12.50 ABOVE his/her regular giving to the Annual Programs Fund. (Our APF goal is \$100 per Rotarian) Bill and I believe this idea of giving sight to someone for \$12.50 is a very appealing idea.

Dr. Megur, thank you very much for your speedy work on preparing this application and all it's attachments. Our hopes are now that it will arrive and be acted upon while there are still funds available to provide matching moneys.

“ . . . giving sight to someone for \$12.50 is a very appealing idea.”

Eye Camp Established in Ecuador

The following is taken from a letter written to Chairman Devlyn and Assistant Chairman Dannenburg:

We are all excited about having a great year combating avoidable blindness around the world. I attended the Task Force meeting at Newark, NJ recently and met with the Zone Coordinators from Zones 31 and 32. We mapped out some strategy for the coming year.

I would like to appoint Ken Garrett as the Vice Area J Coordinator. Ken is a Past District Governor and is very interested in avoidable blindness. He will be a great asset to our team.

Also, I wanted to let you know about an exciting Avoidable Blindness program that a team from Dist. 7390 and Dist. 6380 from Michigan carried out. I was actively involved as the Coordinator for this project.

A team of 12 people went to Santo Domingo De Los Colorados, Ecuador, established an eye camp, and performed 130 operations. This included 105 cataract operations and 25 operations on children with strabismus. These people were very poor and desperately needed the surgery. It was fascinating that a group of Cotopaxi Indians were brought in from 10 hours away, from the Chimbarozo Mountain region to have surgery. This group consisted mostly of children.

When the mission was over I was more proud that ever to be a Rotarian and to be involved in the Avoidable Blindness program that you have promoted and put to the forefront.

ALBERT A. ALLEY M.D.
Area J Coordinator

Avoidable Blindness Task Force



A team of 12 people . . . performed 130 operations.

Freedom From Cataract Blindness (*Continued*)

In all around **3000 poor patients** will be given sight by operating upon them for cataract removal in District 3050.

Out of 29 Matching Grants obtained by Dist. 3050, 14 projects are for Avoidable Blindness. Many Rotarian Doctors (Ophthalmologists) are voluntarily involved in the projects besides non-Rotarian Ophthalmologists. The Diagnostic camps are conducted at the doorstep of villages and patients are brought to the

well-equipped eye hospital for operation. 'Lesser we do but in better way done' is the principle we follow.

Needless to say that medical care suffers the most because medical care is met only after the requirements of food, clothing and shelter are fulfilled. Charity for all essentials for the blind is much more than what it will cost the society to give him sight.

Clubs involved	Supported by	No. of operations	Cost US \$
Dehgam	RC Tigre of D-4820	130	3200
Gwalior	AB Pool of RF	200	4000
Patan	RC Highton and D-9780	800	20000
Jaipur Mid Town	AB Pool of RF	100	2500
Gandhidham	AB Pool of RF	100	2500
Vijapur	AB Pool of RF	100	2500
Patan	AB Pool of RF	100	2500
Jaipur	AB Pool of RF	110	2750
Chittorgarh	AB Pool of RF	100	2500
Idar	AB Pool of RF	100	2500
Beawar	AB Pool of RF	200	5000
Nagaur	AB Pool of RF	500	12000
Sabarmati	Dist-6380	160	4000
Jaipur	AB Pool of RF	200	5000

New Website for Information on Age-Related Macular Degeneration

A great new site for those interested in learning more about Age-related Macular Degeneration has been made possible by a grant from Kemin Foods, LC., makers of FloraGlo brand Lutein.

The site states "The Lutein Information Bureau encourages you to look at Lutein and its role in vision and overall health.

I strongly recommend this site for those interested in learning more about Age-related macular degeneration and

how lutein may help to fight the onset of this condition.

The address is:
<http://www.luteininfo.com>

E-mail address to Lutein Information Bureau is: luteininfo@mww.com

O. DOYLE DANNENBERG, O.D.
Assistant General Chairman
Avoidable Blindness Task Force



Dr. Shashank Rathod
Ophthalmologist, Eye Care
Hospital, Ahmedabad-380015
DG 2000-01 (D-3050)

Another Great
Website . . . Check it
Out!

The Wilmer Eye
Institute at Johns
Hopkins has an excellent
homepage, one of the
best on the web dealing
with eyes.

You can find it at:
www.wilmer.jhu.edu/

The "Macular
Degeneration Center"
and the Links, especially
to the Glaucoma
Foundation, are of
special interest.

Rotary Club Host Project's Pilot Phase Big Success

“These dynamic relationships would not have been established without the Rotary Club Host Project, and many doors are continuing to open that will facilitate an exchange of knowledge at the very least and, perhaps, groundbreaking collaborations in the fight against avoidable blindness.”

Rotary's partnership with The Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology produced a successful initial endeavor of the Rotary Club Host Project on several different and equally important levels. Our five ophthalmologists from developing nations, sponsored by four different U.S. Rotary Clubs, came to the U.S. for a two-week period, after a careful selection process involving the Academy Foundation and leaders in international ophthalmology. All five individuals had a thoroughly enriching experience, beginning with the first week in each host club's community where they learned how ophthalmology is taught and practiced by visiting such facilities as a university, private practice and hospital. In addition, the guests had the opportunity to experience “real life” by meeting families within each host community and participating in various daily activities. This project, as you may recognize, was based on Rotary's Group Study Exchange Program.

The guests spent the second week at the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Annual Meeting in Dallas, TX., during which they were exposed to a wealth of educational, social and professional opportunities. The Academy is the world's largest national membership association of ophthalmologists. Its Annual Meeting draws in excess of 27,000 guests, 25% of whom come from outside the U.S. Following the meeting, the guests were poised to return home and share new skills and knowledge with colleagues.

A wonderful by-product of the program occurred with one of our guest ophthalmologists. So impressed with Rotary and the work it does for avoidable blindness that Dunera Ilako, MD (hosted by Roanoke, VA) became a Rotarian following the program. Parties from both Rotary Clubs are discussing ways to continue partnering together. When we created the Rotary Club Host Project, we were confident it would greatly benefit the visiting ophthalmologists in terms of educational,

social and professional immersion. We were confident also that they would see the value in Rotary and its programs for avoidable blindness. How gratifying to have this affirmed for us in such a tangible way.

The guests and corresponding clubs from the pilot phase included:

- **Roanoke, VA Rotary Club (D-7570)** Dunera Ilako, MD -- Chair, Ophthalmological Society of East Africa; lecturer at the University of Nairobi, Kenya; coordinates training of postgraduate students in community ophthalmology and is expanding an outreach program to remote rural areas of Kenya
- Jaroslaw Marek, MD, PhD -- Department of Ophthalmology, Wroclaw University of Medicine, Wroclaw, Poland; Honorary Vice President of the Lower-Silesian Foundation of Blindness Prevention
- **Effingham, IL Rotary Club (D-6490)** Katarzyna Stepien, MD -- Department of Ophthalmology, Hospital Opole, Poland; recommended by International Council of Ophthalmology Advisory Committee member in Poland
- **San Francisco, CA Rotary Club (D-5150)** Maria Jose Cordoba Alvarez, MD -- pediatric ophthalmologist, Clinica de Ojo, Managua, Nicaragua; president of Fundacion Ayademos a Ver, an organization of volunteer ophthalmologists who provide eye care for the underserved of Nicaragua
- **Salem, VA Rotary Club (D-7570)** Boris K. Gorodetsky, MD -- Deputy Director, Intersectoral Research & Technology Complex, Eye Microsurgery, Irkutsk, Russia; surgeon in non-phaco ECCE with IOL

A year after the pilot phase, we still stay in touch with our guests, from simply communicating by e-mail to actually visiting several guests' home nations. These dynamic relationships would not

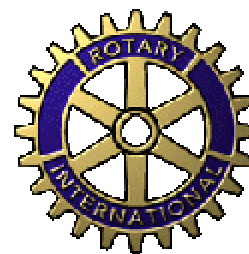
have been established without the Rotary Club Host Project, and many doors are continuing to open that will facilitate an exchange of knowledge at the very least and, perhaps, groundbreaking collaborations in the fight against avoidable blindness.

Plans are well underway for the second year of the Rotary Club Host Project, with the goal having doubled to ten international ophthalmologists. We anticipate

many more satisfied international guests, as well as many more new Rotarians.

We encourage all clubs to find out more about the program and how to get involved by contacting Wendy Ovaitt at The Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology at 415/447-0281 or wovaitt@aao.org.

KENNETH D. TUCK, MD
Roanoke, VA (USA) (D-7570)



Thought for September . . . “Friendship”

As we continue to work on our Avoidable Blindness Task Force with President Rick King's great theme: "MANKIND IS OUR BUSINESS," we are reminded that "Friendship" in our clubs, our districts, and around the Rotary World is important. You all remember the challenging theme of Rotary International President William H. "Bill" Huntley in 1994-95 - "BE A FRIEND." Chairman Frank Devlyn and I encourage each of you to "BE A FRIEND," not only to fellow Rotarians, but especially to the needy cataract blinded and others with visual problems around our world. Thus it seemed appropriate to share with you this month this message on "Friendship".

- The first step in the art of friendship is to be a friend; then making friends takes care of itself. To be a friend a man should start by being a friend to himself, by being true to his highest and best and by aligning himself with the enduring values of human life that make for growth and progress.
- To be a friend a man should strive to be "like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," to be a source of refuge and strength to those who walk in darkness.
- To be a friend a man should believe in the inherent goodness of men and in their potential greatness; he should treat men in a big spirit, expectant of a noble response.
- To be a friend a man should strive to lift people up, not cast them down; to encourage, not discourage; to set an example that will be an inspiration to others.
- To be a friend a man should be sensitively responsive to the dreams and aims of others and should show sincere appreciation for the contributions others make to the enrichment of his life.
- To be a friend a man should practice the companionship of silence and the magic of words that his speech may build and not destroy, help and not hinder.
- To be a friend a man should close his eyes to the faults of others and open them to his own.
- To be a friend a man should not attempt to reform or reprimand, but should strive only to make others happy if he can.
- To be a friend a man should be himself, he should be done with hypocrisy, artificiality and pretense, he should meet and mingle with people in quiet simplicity and humility.
- To be a friend a man should be tolerant, he should have an understanding heart and a forgiving nature, knowing that all men stumble now and then, and that he who never made a mistake never accomplished anything.
- To be a friend a man should join hands with all people who are working for great principles, great purposes and great causes; he should put his shoulder to the wheel to help achieve common goals.
- To be a friend a man should go more than halfway with his fellow men; he should greet others first and not wait to be greeted; he should radiate a spirit of overflowing good will.
- To be a friend a man should remember that we are human magnets; that like attracts like, and that what we give we get.
- To be a friend a man should recognize that no man knows all the answers, and that we should add each day to his knowledge of how to live the friendly way. (Copied from the Art of Living by Wilferd A. Peterson)

I wish for all Rotarians increased friendships in your clubs, communities, and around the world as we continue to serve the needy blind because "MANKIND IS OUR BUSINESS".

O. DOYLE DANNENBERG
Assistant General Chairman ABTF