

# The Lions Eye

A Publication of the  
Lions Eye Foundation of California-Nevada, Inc.



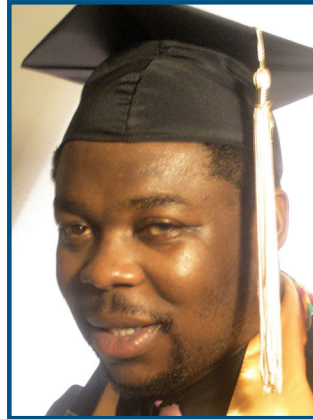
Summer 2011

## SIGHT RESTORED - Reginald Graduates

My name is Reginald York and I am a 29 year old Pre-Law student from Fresno, California. A recent college graduate from California State University, Fresno with degrees in Health Administration and Biology, my journey to this point has not always been easy, to say the least. I decided to share my story so that others may find strength in my struggles and be relentless in their pursuit of all dimensions of happiness.

As an athlete all of my life, I have always depended on my vision in order to remain competitive. The truth is that we as human beings take a lot of things for granted and don't realize the value of it till it's lost, or we just never expect to lose it. My pursuit to play professional football in the National Football League came to a screeching halt in 2006 when I was diagnosed with keratoconus<sup>1</sup> after my vision progressively declined with loss of focus and blurriness. At that time I decided to drop out of college due to my visual impairment. Various Fresno Ophthalmologists informed me that a cornea transplant surgery was necessary for both eyes after they attempted to repeatedly fit me with hard contact lenses. Doctors found my case to be a worst case scenario, to the point that my eyes were a better example of this cornea disorder than those shown in textbooks. When my number was finally called and I was notified to prepare for the operation, my health insurance company decided to drop my coverage. After enrolling in other health care provider programs, I was paying expensive premiums due to the fact that my health status labeled me with a pre-existing condition. At one point my premiums were so high that I started losing everything, from my home to my personal valuable possessions. I kept paying, hoping that one day the surgery would take place. My impaired vision no longer allowed me to drive. When looking at an object, the light refracting thru my cornea would cause me to see 9 to 12 images of that object. I was never sure how close that object was or at times even what it was!

In the winter of 2009, again uninsured, I had no place to turn so I picked up a phone book and looked around for charities that helped people like me. Within five hours an individual from a charity informed me to contact my local Lions club, the Fresno Host Lions. Mrs. M. Watts at the Lions club was quick to help me find a solution to my problem. An appointment was quickly scheduled to meet Mark and Michelle at the Lions Eye Foundation. After my initial eye exam in San Francisco, a cornea transplant surgery was scheduled. The surgery was performed by Dr. Vincent Ray and Dr. David Vastine. It was successful and after two years of not being able to read a thing, I found seeing the world again amazing. With a new found hope, I became a full time student.



Reginald York, LEF patient

Unfortunately, after 5 months of enjoying my amazing visual outlook on life, my vision took a turn for the worst. An incident took place in which my eye was accidentally hit by my younger brother's shoulder while he was trying to give me an energetic hug. The impact caused my eye to burst open. The lens in my eye was displaced and the cornea transplant was hanging by two of the remaining stitches. Emergency surgery was performed by Dr. Nay at Community Medical Center in Fresno. He re-attached the cornea, but the lens was lost. I returned to San Francisco where Dr. Vastine remained confident in his ability to once again improve my vision. He did caution me that my eye was badly damaged and that it would be a long and slow recovery. In April of 2010, Dr. Vastine and Dr. Arthur Fu determined that my retina was also a casualty of the previous accident, so a retinal reattachment surgery was scheduled and successfully performed.

I was set to graduate from college in May of 2011 and I accomplished my final classes and course work with very little vision. Even with this disability, I proudly maintained my grade point average and received Dean's List Awards and made the President's List. I repeatedly had a dream that when I walked across the stage to receive my diploma, I would do it with the ability to see. With the help of Dr. Thomas King, who repeatedly worked with me to find a pair of contact lenses that I could wear, that dream came true. I have 20/25 vision in the eye that underwent multiple surgeries, while vision in my other eye with keratoconus is a total blur.

I am blessed to have the generous helping hand of the Lions Eye Foundation which gave me the opportunity to become a productive individual. Although this may sound cliché, I truly don't know where I'd be today without Lions and their support and assistance. To all those that have given me another chance at life, thank you. I am eternally indebted to you. Thank you to Dr. Vastine, Dr. Ray, Dr. Wilkes and all the California Pacific Medical Center eye residents who have attended to my needs. To all the generous Lions Eye Foundation members and donors, I will make sure and prove that your efforts are not in vain. Thank you to my friends in the San Francisco office: Maria, Stacy, Zoila, Michelle and Mark who have personally taken it upon themselves to reach out to me and help me along this journey.

As I walked across the stage at my graduation ceremony, I had many reasons to be thankful. I had finished my degree and my entire family was in the audience. I could not only hear them, but also see their smiling faces. My dream of once again being able to see was a reality... thanks to Lions.

<sup>1</sup>Keratoconus – a degenerative corneal disease characterized by generalized thinning and cone shaped protrusion of the central cornea. These structural changes within the cornea cause distorted and reduced vision.

## *Create a Legacy by Participating in the Partnership!*

For fifty years the Lions Eye Foundation (LEF) and the California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) in San Francisco have formed a unique partnership providing complex eye care and surgery. LEF supplies financial sustenance and a flow of needy patients to CPMC where patients are provided complex eye care and surgeries by residents under the supervision of an outstanding faculty headed by Dr. Susan Day of the Department of Ophthalmology. This partnership of donors and practitioners changes and saves lives. You can support LEF and participate in this partnership through various forms of planned gift giving which can happen now or in the future.

Did you know you can support LEF through your IRA? A current charitable gift up to \$100,000 from your IRA, if you are over 70 ½, may be made to LEF. Such a gift known as the IRA charitable rollover gift saves on income taxes, allows you to currently participate in the LEF and CPMC partnership, and provides LEF with an important gift. The IRA charitable rollover is only available until December 31, 2011.

Perhaps you cannot afford to presently give from your IRA. You can still participate in the partnership by making a future gift to LEF through your IRA by designating LEF as the beneficiary of your IRA after death. This option is not limited to those over 70 ½. It allows you to continue to receive IRA income during your life time and fulfill your philanthropic goals at a later time. Such a gift may have tax benefits because IRAs may be subject to both estate and income taxes if passed to family members or other individuals.

Another possible tax saving future IRA option is the creation of a charitable remainder trust. With this option you provide income to children or heirs for their lives or for a fixed period of years. After that time, the whole or a portion of the remainder of the trust may pass to LEF, allowing you to provide for heirs and still make a charitable gift.

If you are considering a contribution to LEF, another form of planned gift giving to consider is your life insurance policy or policies. Perhaps you no longer need all that coverage, yet you still have the policies. There are various options available if you wish to use an insurance policy for purposes of a charitable gift. You can name LEF the owner of the policy or retain ownership of the policy and name LEF the beneficiary of the policy. The latter option allows you to maintain greater flexibility over the policy. If your family's needs have to be secured first, LEF can be named as a contingent beneficiary. Any of these options may provide significant income and estate tax benefits while fulfilling philanthropic goals.

The uses of your IRA and/or life insurance policies are a few of the creative ways you may make charitable gifts. Future tax exclusions and rates are unpredictable and can make planning challenging. We recommend that you discuss the benefits of any of these charitable gift options with your CPA or tax advisor and that you consult with an attorney who specializes in estate planning before exercising any of these options.

Your gift of any amount to LEF entitles you to become a member of the Future Vision Society. In order to become a member just send a letter to Lions Eye Foundation, Attn: Don Stanaway, Executive Director, P.O. Box 7999, San Francisco, CA 94210, confirming LEF will receive a gift from your IRA or life insurance policy. It is not necessary to provide the gift amount; just provide your name, address and telephone number.

There is satisfaction that comes from knowing you have made a difference in the lives of others through planned charitable gift giving. The best gift plans may also improve your financial and tax situation. A gift to LEF will help preserve and restore the gift of sight by providing free ophthalmic examinations, operations and medications to the less fortunate members of our community. Your gift provides another benefit which can easily be overlooked. Because of the unique partnership between LEF and CPMC, your gift will allow us to aid CPMC, through financing and by providing patients, in the training of future doctors who will lead the future fight against blindness. You can create a legacy, participate in the LEF/CPMC partnership, and continue as a Knight of the Blind in the crusade against darkness with your gift to LEF.

## *LEF's Residents Share Their Stories*



**Christian Hester**  
**LEF Resident**

Christian Hester is originally from Magnolia, Arkansas. Dr. Hester received his undergraduate degree in Economics and Business from Hendrix College in Conway, AR and studied medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. During college Dr. Hester's interest in politics and policy led him to found a grassroots political organization and political action committee that received national media attention for uniting the student governments from all nineteen four-year colleges and universities to lobby the state legislature in support of funding for higher education in Arkansas.

Dr. Hester feels fortunate to have the mentorship of one of the leading figures in organized medicine and ophthalmology, Dr. Susan Day. He currently serves on the American Academy of Ophthalmology Young Ophthalmology Committee and Board of Trustees of California Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons.

During his residency, Dr. Hester has particularly enjoyed treating patients in the CPMC Lions Eye Clinic. "The Lions Eye Clinic is a special place for both patients and residents. It is tremendously gratifying to be a part of a program that couples the generous resources made available by the Lions with the expertise of our faculty in order to improve the vision and lives of thousands of patients."

While Dr. Hester and his wife Tammy Hester plan on moving back to Arkansas once he completes his training, San Francisco will always hold a special place in their hearts, even if it is tough to find good fried chicken.

## Meet Jan Ahern, LEF's Secretary



**Jan Ahern**

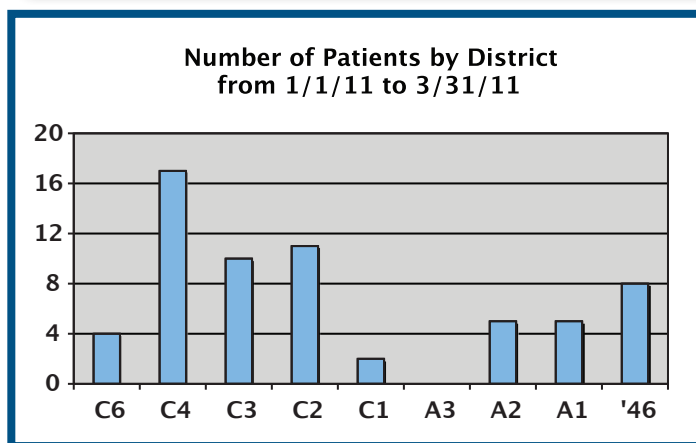
Busy does not begin to describe our LEF Secretary Jan Ahern. During one recent week she was not only juggling her duties as secretary of LEF and Lions in Sight, where she also serves as Secretary, Jan was handling audits, installation ceremonies and house guests, still having time for her duties as organist in her church. Born in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, Jan grew up in Milwaukee where she attended school, graduating from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan with a degree in music. She, and her husband Joe, who she lost in 2008 after twenty-three wonderful years of marriage, are the proud parents, collectively, of three children and two grandchildren.

To quote Jan, "I had enough of shoveling snow in harsh winters" and in 1953 she moved to sunny California. Jan spent the next 25 years working for Industrial Indemnity Company as a worker's compensation underwriter. She states "the highlight of my career was being chief underwriter aboard the USS Missouri when it was refurbished in 1986."

Jan joined the Big Valley Lions Club of Kelseyville in 1995. It was at Big Valley where Jan very proudly served as the club's first female President. Jan, as you know by now, is a very busy lady. After serving as President she was not content to sit back as just a member of a Lions club. Throughout her tenure in Lions just a few of the offices she has had are - Zone Chair, Membership Chair, and Student Speaker Chair. Gaining experience for her duties with LEF, Jan served as Cabinet Secretary for Governor Jerry McCrea in 2005. To honor Jan's dedicated service, while a member of the Big Valley Lions, she was awarded the MD-4 Excellence Award in 1998 and then in 1999 was presented with the International President's Certificate of Appreciation. Currently Jan belongs to the Early Lake Lions Club after the Big Valley Club disbanded.

Jan joined LEF in 1996, first serving as Advisor, chairing the Advisor's committee for several years. Jan soon became a Trustee of LEF and was elected as Secretary in 2010. Very quickly after joining LEF, Jan became a Life Member of the Foundation and soon followed with a Helen Keller in 2001. Jan understands the increasing need for ophthalmology services in our fast changing, ever aging society. If there is one thing Jan could wish for the Foundation, it is that all Trustees and Advisors become more "diligent" in educating fellow Lions members, and their respective clubs about how they can support LEF in its quest to provide eye care services to those in need. She states that "some clubs do not even know we exist" and that "we need to diminish that trend." "Team work", says Jan "is essential to the success of our organization".

## Statistics and Leverage



**Total number of Patients --- 62**

**New Referrals ----- 109**

**Actual Dollars Spent --- \$116,255**

**Estimated Value ----- \$1,117,000**

**LEVERAGE 10:1**

### **Fast Facts**

- The most prevalent surgery was for cataracts
- There were 16 surgeries for retina, cornea or strabismus problems that would have cost \$25,000 to \$35,000 each
- Youngest patient was 3 years old, oldest was 87 years old
- There were also 36 Laser Procedures with an estimated value of \$54,000

## Acknowledgements and Thanks

### **April - June 2011**

#### ***New and Progressive Helen Keller Fellows***

• Barbara Bergero • Tim Brown • Michael Chan • Paul Halcomb • Jody Johnson • Dr. Jeremiah Myers • Todd Riebe • Doug Smallfield • Tom Stark

#### ***New Life Members***

• Krishna Bakshi • Shanna Coressel • Maynard Dunn • Sharon Granlees • Steve Irving • Sharon Keenan • Pam Kroyer • Ronald Mino • Joe Morovich • Karen Shipley • Ora Syler • IMO Jim Stephens • Allen Ventflin

#### ***Memorial Donations (at least \$200)***

• Barbara Fong • Sam French • Don Stanaway • Sally Territo-Wong

#### ***General Donations (at least \$200)***

• Jack Heffernan • Stephen Woon • Geneva Mission Lions Club • Laytonville Lioness Club

#### ***Donations (at least \$1000)***

• Richard Smith • Hayward Lions Club • Park Presidio Lions Club • San Francisco Chinatown Lions Club

#### ***Total Received:***

<b><i>General Fund</i></b>	<b><i>\$26,448</i></b>
<b><i>Restricted (Life) Fund</i></b>	<b><i>\$ 1,500</i></b>



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### **Officers & Key Personnel**

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Second Vice President – Dennis Noble  
Treasurer – Leila Chinn  
Secretary – Jan Ahearn  
Executive Director – Don Stanaway  
Program Coordinator – Mark Paskvan

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***For More Information: [www.lionseyeca-nv.org](http://www.lionseyeca-nv.org)***

## ***Exciting News!***

For more than 30 years, the Pacific Vision Foundation (PVF) has been a philanthropic organization supporting the Department of Ophthalmology financially and helping sponsor research and education in eye care treatment. PVF has been in the forefront in the search for a new facility, and has been successful in purchasing a new building at the corner of Turk and Van Ness in the heart of San Francisco, accessible via multiple modes of public transportation.

This is a major milestone in making PVF's vision for a unique Eye Institute a reality. Specific timelines and occupancy plans are still not known and should be developed over the next 3-6 months.

General plans are for the building to house a surgical center, optical shop, ophthalmology practice offices, and a walk in clinic for non-surgical eye care so that those in need of specialty eye care can have access in one convenient stop. Moving the functions of the current Department of Ophthalmology and the Lions Eye Foundation into this new facility is expected to create significant and key efficiencies by centralizing most functions that are now at multiple locations under one roof. It is hoped that one immediate advantage will be for Mark and Michelle to get more space so they can become even more productive.



**New Building  
at 777 Van Ness Avenue**

***Mission Statement: "The Lions Eye Foundation preserves and restores the gift of sight by providing free ophthalmic examinations, operations and medications to the less fortunate members of our community."***