



NORTHERN PLAINS EYE  
FOUNDATION

Winter Issue 2007

# The Eye Opener

Our mission is to promote and support education, research, and service.

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## World Sight Day Delights and Informs

Have you heard of World Sight Day? Neither had I. In the process of looking for something else, I stumbled on the website for Vision 2020, an international organization in London, England.



I was intrigued to discover the depth and breadth of Vision 2020's international influence, which includes sponsorship of World Sight Day on October 11th—"a day of global awareness

which draws attention to the problem of avoidable blindness." Vision 2020's motto is "The Right to Sight", and they are a global initiative of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The theme for World Sight Day 2007 was **Our Vision for Children**, and the Northern Plains Eye Foundation joined with Vision 2020 to raise awareness locally on issues affecting children. We were privileged to partner with the Rapid City Public Library for an entire week of events including four story times, two displays, and a Lunch 'n Learn symposium (see article on Children's Sight Symposium on p. 4). These sessions spotlighted the new eye resources donated by NPEF to the Library that are now available for check-out (see NPEF/RCPL Eye Resources Collection article on p. 5).



Librarians estimated that approximately 12,000 people had the opportunity to view the NPEF/World Sight Day exhibits. On entering the library, a small display table with general information about NPEF

and Vision 2020 and World Sight Day drew the library visitors in. Next they were directed to a large display table upstairs in the children's library with information on children's eye health and safety.

Approximately 120-130 children and parents attended one of the special Story Times focusing on eyes/vision. Librarian Leanna had the preschoolers mesmerized during **"Book Buddies"**. She read several eye-related stories such as "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See", by Bill Martin and

"Peek-a-Moo!", by Marie Cimarusti. Leanna kept the children's attention with several fun exercises and some charming props. After the evening **Family Story Time**, parents were given eye resource educational packets to take home.



Librarian Jolene delighted the little ones in two sessions of **"Baby Bookworms"**. The children loved her puppetry—a bear wearing glasses—and were also fascinated with the felt board. Jolene's selections included, "A Rainbow All Around Me", by Sandra Pinkney, "Paul Needs Specs", by Bernard Cohen, and "Where Is Bear?", by Leslea Newman.



The story times proved very effective overall. In addition to learning more about how to value their eyesight, the children had fun. They enjoyed getting their hands stamped with an eye design before the story time, and anxiously awaited their turn to receive a balloon and a special bag with an educational eye-related coloring book and colors (and parent resources) after the story time.



A heart-felt thank you to the wonderful Rapid City Public Library staff—you are true treasures and wonderful partners for programs like this. Thanks also to the "Friends of the Library" for sponsoring the lunch for the "Lunch 'n Learn" Children's Sight Symposium. And to our great speakers—**Dr. James King, Cris Mathews** and **Marsha Humphreys**—kudos to you for a job well done and many thanks!

And to our great speakers—**Dr. James King, Cris Mathews** and **Marsha Humphreys**—kudos to you for a job well done and many thanks!

If you are interested in finding out more about Vision 2020 and their World Sight Day initiative, you can find them at [www.v2020.org](http://www.v2020.org).



# The President's Perspective: What We're Thankful For

by Kathleen Kovarik, RN, MN



As 2007 rolls to a close and I reflect on this year—it's joys and challenges—the overriding theme is gratefulness and thanksgiving. These are just a few of the things we're thankful for at the Northern Plains Eye Foundation.

**We're thankful for good vision.** Here in the United States we are fortunate to have outstanding eye care overall. Even those who deal with difficult eye diseases/conditions have access to many resources. In our recent celebration of **World Sight Day**, our cover story, we see that the rest of the world is not as fortunate. Still we have a ways to go in improving Children's Sight (this year's theme). We are hoping that our efforts to emphasize education about eye health and safety will make a difference (see article on **Children's Sight Symposium** on page 4).

**We're thankful for outstanding eye care and eye care professionals.** To show our gratefulness, the Foundation decided to create our own **Eye Care Professionals Appreciation Day**. We honored local optometrists and ophthalmologists with giant cookies with an eye chart design. Can you decipher our message to them?



**We're thankful for a dedicated Board of Directors and steadfast staff.** Our Board has been hard at work revising policies, and visioning our future in a recent **Strategic Planning Retreat** at KBarS in Keystone. (see picture at left). And our small but mighty staff (only 2.4 full-time positions shared between 4 of us), has made amazing progress in furthering our mission and implementing new programs.

**We're thankful for you!** Our benefactors, our supporters, our dedicated eye care professionals across five states... Thanks for your participation in the mission and programs of the Northern Plains Eye Foundation. During this season of giving, please keep us in mind. Just for fun, with a donation of any size, we will send you a special pair of **Angel Glasses** for viewing the Christmas lights. You truly are "an angel to us". Special blessings to you all this Christmas and throughout 2008.

*Kathleen Kovarik*

P.S. - I just asked to have my title changed from President to Executive Director, so if you have any brilliant ideas for a new name for this column, let me know!

*"A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other." – Unknown*

## Board of Directors Update: New Officers for 2008



### Welcome to our new 2008 Executive Committee!

(pictured left to right)

- **Chairman:** Dan Dryden, retired RC School District Business Mgr
- **Vice Chair:** Cris Mathews, PA-C Slingsby & Wright Eye Care
- **Secretary:** Kathy Conlon, Principal, Wilson Elementary School
- **Treasurer:** Kent Brugger, RBC Dain Rauscher Sr.VP & Branch Mgr

## Thanks to the 2006-2007 Officers for a job well done!

Special thanks to our Chairman, Dr John Barlow for his many hours of devoted service to our Board during this transition time!!

We also thank Dr. Sidney Goss, Dr. Jo Prang, and Pat Burchill for their dedication!



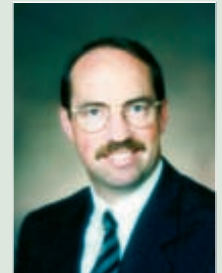
Dr. John Barlow



Dr. Sidney Goss



Dr. Jo Prang



Pat Burchill



David Lust  
Attorney,  
Gunderson,  
Palmer,  
Goodsell &  
Nelson Law Firm

Thanks also to past Director Attorney David Lust for his guidance and expertise during his term.

Also, join us in welcoming our new Directors: Chuck McLain, Chet Roberts, Sharon Zeller and Dr. Paul Zimmerman, who will begin their 3-year terms on January 1st.

# FIRST EYE CARE PROFESSIONALS APPRECIATION DAY CELEBRATED

The Northern Plains Eye Foundation recognized local eye care professionals and their office staff with an "Eye Care Professionals Appreciation Day" in September. Large decorated cookies from Eileen's Colossal Cookies were personally delivered by NPEF staff to 40 professionals in Rapid City. Each cookie carried our message in eye chart format-- "THANKS 4 ALL U DO!"

Foundation staff enjoyed meeting local eye care professionals and staff as they made their rounds with cookies. We're grateful to have such an excellent community of professionals who can partner with us in promoting "Vision for a Lifetime" in the Rapid City area. Watch for "Eye Care Professionals Day" to be extended to the Black Hills next year, and eventually to the entire Northern Plains region!



## Conference Support Reaps Educational Benefits

NPEF was happy to sponsor breaks for two outstanding conferences this Fall for Optometrists. The first, a **South Dakota Optometric Society Fall Convention** in Rapid City on September 21-22, was well-attended by South Dakota optometrists and a few from neighboring states. Kathleen Kovarik and Sue Jimmerson enjoyed assisting Cathy Ellis in welcoming and checking in the attendees—a wonderful way to connect with Optometrists across the state and let them know more about NPEF programs.

**Black Hills Regional Eye Institute** put on their annual educational program for optometrists on October 13th, with an outstanding line-up of speakers. Dr. Julia Kleinschmidt, from the Moran Eye Center in Salt Lake City spoke very practically about low-vision-related issues, and shared resource lists for South Dakota and adjoining states (feel free to request copies). A highlight for this attendee was watching Dr. Paul Zimmerman perform a "live" surgery—CK (Conductive Keratoplasty)—on one of the speakers.

It is a privilege to help support our eye care professionals as they keep up-to-date on the latest innovations. A big thank-you to BHREI for orchestrating such excellent educational programs for optometrists.



## Focal Point: Board Profile



Dr. Erwin Reimann

Dr. Erwin Reimann, at the helm as President of NPEF from 1997-2004, returns to share his expertise on the Board of Directors. Dr. Reimann is a South Dakota native who calls Scotland, SD his hometown. He has been married 45 years to his wife, Joan, and they have two grown children and 5 grandchildren. Daughter Julie lives in Rapid City and is the Vice President for University Relations at SDSM&T. Son David is a Professor and Chairman of Computer Science and Mathematics at Albion College in Michigan.

Erwin has his PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin. Reimann has an extensive teaching and research background working in a variety of places including the Medical College of Ohio, Vanderbilt University, University of Washington, University of California, Davis and Black Hills State University.

Over the years, Erwin has been involved in many professional and community organizations. Some of his professional affiliations include the American Chemical Society, the American Association for Advancement of Sciences, Sigma Xi (local past president in both Ohio and South Dakota) and the Western Research Alliance, which is part of the Rapid City Economic Development Partnership. Erwin is very active as a Director on the Northern Plains Eye Foundation Board. He takes a leadership role in chairing the Research Committee and is on the Finance Committee.

Dr. Reimann is very active in the community, having served on the Storybook Island Board, as a Board Member and Treasurer at Faith Lutheran Church, the Chamber of Commerce Technology Committee and as a Junior Achievement Volunteer. Erwin was instrumental in helping to start the Junior Leadership program in Rapid City, and he is very active in Rotary Club (past president and secretary). Of the Rotary, Erwin shared that it boasts of 1.2 million members worldwide, and is active in such various agendas as eradication of polio in third-world countries, development of solar ovens for the people of Haiti, and exchange programs to foster understanding worldwide.

Travel is one of Erwin's interests (in addition to reading and gardening/landscaping), and he spoke of two of his most memorable trips. Erwin and Joan explored New Zealand's north island with a group of 12 on a Rotary Exchange trip. Reimann enjoyed meeting the native Maori people and stayed with some who were dairy farmers. He found many parallels with the Maori people and Native Americans (many of the difficult issues that both face are similar—i.e. high incidence of diabetes, loss of land and cultural practices). A trip to Israel and Egypt was another highlight.

When asked what inspires him to serve his community, Erwin replied, "I think everybody needs to contribute to the improvement of society", and he said that one way that he does this is to "share what I have learned over the years." We are grateful to have Erwin serving on the Board, especially with his long-term involvement with the Foundation. Speaking of NPEF, Erwin concludes, "It is fun to see it evolve from where it was ten years ago".

# Children's Sight Symposium Informative

Local eye care professionals generously offered their time and expertise at the Lunch 'n Learn at the Rapid City Public Library, as part of the World Sight Week celebration. Approximately 22 attended the Children's Sight Symposium and lunch sponsored by the Friends of the Library and NPEF. The program opened with a film from Vision 2020 which gave a global perspective on sight-related issues pertaining to children.

Optician **Marsha Humphreys** of **Your Eyes Only Optical** (Slingsby and Wright Eye Care) was the first speaker, and she offered insight on selecting children's glasses and sunglasses (i.e. proper lenses and anti-glare). Humphreys challenged participants to examine their priorities—does it make sense to pay more for tennis shoes/fancy sports equipment for a child than for their glasses, which guard their precious vision? Yet, as Marsha pointed out, parents often cut corners on things like children's glasses/sunglasses, when, in actuality, sturdier glasses/lenses are needed for the more-active children!



Cris shared a helpful list of warning signs which should be followed up with a visit to your optometrist or ophthalmologist. These included things you might notice such as sensitivity to light, excessive watering of the eyes, pus or crusts, or redness persisting for several days in either eye. Consult with your child's eye doctor if you notice drooping eyelids, bulging eyes, crossed-eyes, eyes fluttering quickly from side to side (nystagmus), one pupil larger or smaller than the other, or white or yellow material in the pupil or the iris (the colored area of the eye). Behaviors such as excessive squinting or rubbing of the eyes can also signal a problem.



The symposium wrapped up with a talk on vision and learning by **Dr. James King**, a recently retired local **optometrist**. King talked about MKM Reading Systems which he had developed, and gave an overview of how the system works. He engaged the audience with his great sense of humor and by involving them in several of the learning activities, which they found challenging at times.



**Cris Mathews**, a certified P.A. who also works for the **Wright Vision Center**, was the second speaker. She gave a very comprehensive talk on children's eye safety, including the most common causes of eye injury for children, and how to remove hazards at home and play, at school and on the road. Mathews also highlighted common eye diseases/disorders of childhood, such as amblyopia, strabismus, pseudostrabismus and blocked tear duct.



There was great audience participation throughout all three talks, and excellent questions were raised. Participants were appreciative of the display tables provided by NPEF—one with resources for children's eye health and safety, and one set up for adult-related common eye issues.

## NPEF Pledges \$10,500 for Students Pursuing Health Care Field

As part of our educational mission, NPEF is again offering college scholarships to deserving high-school students and former Foundation scholarship winners who are pursuing a health-care-related field of study. This year the Foundation will award 6 high-school senior awards (two \$1500 and four \$1000) and three college-student awards (one \$1500 and two \$1000), for a total of \$10,500. Students from our 5-state service area (northeast Wyoming, northwest Nebraska, southeast Montana, southwest North Dakota, and all of South Dakota) are invited to apply. Deadline for submitting applications is **February 29th, 2008**.

Application packets are available for high school students from their high-school guidance counselor, by online download at [www.npef.org/scholarship](http://www.npef.org/scholarship), by mail request to NPEF attn: Sue Jimmerson, PO Box 5568, Rapid City, SD 57709-5568, or by phone at 605-716-6733. Continuing Scholarship application materials will be mailed to former winners and are also available online at [www.npef.org/scholarship](http://www.npef.org/scholarship).

*"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."*

- Benjamin Franklin

### Sponsor a Scholarship and Ensure a Better Health Care Future For All!

Medical providers, businesses, service organizations, and individuals are invited to sponsor one of our 2008 Health-Care Education Scholarships and help ensure ongoing excellence in health care in South Dakota and surrounding regions. Sponsorship can be for one year or for a number of years. Think about endowing a scholarship so that your gift can keep on giving. Your name will be incorporated into the award and used in press releases.

For 2008, there are 9 scholarships available for sponsorship:

High school--two \$1500 and four \$1000

Continuing college scholars--one \$1500 and two \$1000

Call Executive Director Kathleen Kovarik at 605-716-6733 for more information on endowing a scholarship or to arrange for your name on one of our 2008 scholarships!

## Spotlight on Resources: RCPL/NPEF Eye Resources Collection



If you visited the Rapid City Public Library this last month, you may have noticed a number of eye-related books on the "New Book" shelves. These are some of the purchases made by the RCPL in conjunction with the Northern Plains Eye Foundation as a result of NPEF's \$1000 donation for eye resources. This special collection includes books on cataracts, diabetic eye disease, glaucoma, macular degeneration, general eye health information and books for children. Also included are some large print books, CD's and DVD's to benefit people with low vision or visual impairment.

NPEF has developed a bibliography list of the eye care resources that are available at the Rapid City Public Library. This list will be available on-line by January 1, 2008, at [www.npef.org](http://www.npef.org). You can also e-mail and request a copy at [vision@npef.org](mailto:vision@npef.org) or stop in at the Northern Plains Eye Foundation office at 623 Quincy Street, Suite 101 (right across the street from the library).

We hope to continue updating and adding to these resources yearly as part of our education and service mission. If you have suggestions of good resources for purchase, let us know, and we can review them and possibly add them to our list. And, if you wish to earmark your donation to NPEF to help build this collection of eye-related resources at the RCPL, just indicate that on your remittance envelope by checking the "Education/Service" box.

## Angels Everywhere



Join the NPEF staff and start seeing angels everywhere! Just send us a donation of any amount between now and January 15, 2008, and we'll send you our special Christmas lights-viewing angel glasses to enjoy (they also work with streetlights!). Our donors are truly angels to us and those we serve. Thanks for helping us to promote **"Vision for a Lifetime!"**

## MAKING IT POSSIBLE: From Dreams to Reality!

*"If you can dream it, you can do it." --Walt Disney*

Heartfelt thanks to our 2007 donors. (donations received as of 12-14-07)

Your contributions help turn our dreams and visions into concrete programs that serve to optimize eye health in our region.

We are grateful for your support of the mission and programs of the Northern Plains Eye Foundation.

Thank you.

Mr. and Mrs. Addison Ball  
Dr. and Mrs. Reuben Bareis  
Dr. and Mrs. John Barlow  
Black Hills Regional Eye Institute  
Mr. and Mrs. Kent Brugger  
Mr. and Mrs. Pat Burchill  
Mrs. Leanne Carl  
Dr. Monte Dirks  
Mrs. Suzanne Gabrielson  
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South Dakota CommunityFoundation  
Ms. Cheryl Swenson  
Mr. Gary Thompson  
Dr. Lynn Tucker  
Ms. Rita Wolf  
Dr. Terry Wolthuis  
Dr. Paul Wright

## Focus on Philanthropy

### IRA Rollover Provision Set to Expire

**Extension passed by US House, Senate Yet To Act**

Unless the Senate acts before 12-31-07, the IRA Rollover Provision passed in 2006, will expire soon. The provision allows donors to make gifts up to \$100,000 to charitable organizations like NPEF from traditional IRAs or Roth-IRAs. Donors must be age 70 ½ or older and the gift must be transferred directly to the charity. A spouse may also give up to \$100,000 from his/her own IRA if over age 70 ½. The IRA distribution will not be included in your federal taxable income.

The US House of Representatives passed the Temporary Tax Relief Act of 2007 (H.R. 3996) to include a one-year extension of this provision. The Senate has not yet acted on this however at press time.

**Don't pass up this opportunity, which benefits both you and the receiving charity.**

Contact your financial advisor, accountant, insurance agent or lawyer for more information on your tax benefits and how you can make an IRA donation to the Northern Plains Eye Foundation!

(NPEF is a tax-exempt not-for-profit organization, Tax ID 46-0367494)

VISION FOR A LIFETIME



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