



NORTHERN PLAINS EYE
FOUNDATION

Fall - Winter 2008

The Eye Opener

*Enhancing
eye health
through
education,
research and
community service
for people of the
Northern Plains.*



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CHRISTMAS GIFT OF SIGHT - THE BEST PRESENT YET!

Imagine, if you will, being diagnosed with a major eye problem as a 4 ½ month old child. Tiffany Frederickson, a 4th year medical student at the University of South Dakota, shared her story recently, when she learned of Northern Plains Eye Foundation's new program, the **Christmas Gift of Sight**. Tiffany's pediatrician astutely picked up on examination that her right eye was bigger than her left and sent her to see an ophthalmologist who diagnosed her with congenital glaucoma. "I am eternally grateful to the eye doctors," Tiffany said of her Rapid City eye care professionals.

Frederickson felt fortunate that a specialist in Texas, who was doing what was then considered cutting-edge surgery, came up to Denver to do her surgery, a trabeculotomy. "Now they do the same thing with lasers," Tiffany related. She was 6 months old when they did her first surgery, which they had to stop in the middle of, and she waited 6 months before they could try it again. Then every 6 months follow-up exams were required until Tiffany hit high school. "I hated doctors so much when I was little," Tiffany shared, adding that her eye doctors were surprised when she chose medicine for a career.

Tiffany's case was different in that only one of her eyes was affected (she explained that this type of glaucoma usually impacts both eyes). "I have no limitations," stated Frederickson. "I'm near-sighted, but everyone in my family is near-sighted." Her eye disease did have a big impact on her entire family, though. She remarked on the sacrifice of her parents to ensure she got the care that she needed. Her Dad actually put off his college education. That is where Frederickson feels that an award such as NPEF's **Christmas Gift of Sight** can be so helpful in assisting a family in need. Tiffany reflects on the many different things she has done in her life, "...I was a professional artist, a professional seamstress and a microbiologist...and I couldn't have done any of that without my sight."

Stories like Tiffany's, and needs of our neighbors in the Black Hills prompted the launch of a brand new program —our "**Christmas Gift of Sight**"—sponsored by NPEF with the cooperation of local eye care professionals. "**Christmas Gift of Sight**" will provide a sight-saving surgery to

one individual in the Black Hills region with demonstrated financial need. By the time this newsletter goes to press, our very first recipient will have received news of his/her very special Christmas present, as applications were due on December 15th. This award is only for a significant eye disease or condition that severely impacts vision, and an eye doctor recommendation is required. A Selection Committee made up predominantly of eye care professionals will decide the first recipient of this eye surgery.

We are also asking the Black Hills Community to come alongside us to help a neighbor in the Hills see Christmas in a whole new light. In this Christmas season, take a minute to reflect on the many joys of Christmas we take in through our eyes—from the more obvious delight in bright Christmas lights and decorations, to seeing a child's face light up with excitement, to contented looks of family and friends gathered 'round a holiday table, to reading the words of a familiar Christmas song or hymn. Yet, even as you read this article, someone—maybe a neighbor of yours—is losing their eyesight and unable to enjoy these Christmas sights. Join us in helping give the best present yet—the Gift of Sight!



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EDUCATION



RESEARCH



SERVICE

EYE TO EYE: THE DIRECTOR'S VIEW



As Executive Director of the Northern Plains Eye Foundation for nearly three years, I've had the privilege of getting to know our local eye care community and their incredible spirit of generosity. These eye care professionals donate their time and talent in quiet ways with no expectation of fanfare or thanks.

Just in the last 6 months, we had 18 optometrists and ophthalmologists each give from 4-12 hours of their time to provide eye screenings and exams to elementary school children during Vision Screening Week in late October (see page 3). A large joint eye practice and their staff gave many hours of time and household donations for a giant Garage Sale which benefitted our Foundation (the story in pictures on page 6). Yet another group of eye doctors sponsored one of our Health-Care Education Scholarships in the spring. Five eye care professionals give of their time and talents serving on our Board and on committees which plan the programs and set the direction for the Foundation. And many show their support through monetary donations too. Quite a litany of generosity, isn't it? We are grateful to be on the receiving end, and then privileged to be able to turn around and serve so many others.

My focus for this newsletter is on our "Vision Screening Week" (VSW) because, like Christmas Gift of Sight, it was also a brand new program this Fall, and one that we plan to make an annual event. All of us here at NPEF were heartened by the outstanding response that we received from the 18 eye care professionals who partnered with us to make this first VSW such a success. We also had the support of local

school nurses who were willing to take on that important role of follow-up that needs to occur after the eye exam. We are very grateful for the wonderful work that they do in their rather quiet, behind-the-scenes fashion. A total of 254 children were given free eye screenings or exams, and 17 eye problems were identified that were referred on to school nurses to provide continuity of care in the classroom setting.



VSW is a major arm of our new "Healthy Vision Initiative" (HVI). The other part of the HVI is an educational component which includes teaching on eye health and safety to third graders and their parents, as well as teachers (several eye doctors have also agreed to assist us in this classroom education!). Take a look at page 7 to see an example of the type of education that we promote in "Warning Signs of Visual Problems for Children."

Please join us in thanking our business and service club sponsors of VSW and HVI for their support (listed on page 3). Without the efforts of these sponsors, the eye doctors and their office staff, NPEF's dedicated staff and directors, and many who offered free or reduced costs for publicity, we could not have served so many school-aged children here in the Black Hills. And a big "thank-you" to all of you who support our mission and programs and help promote "Vision for a Lifetime" here in the Northern Plains region. Merry Christmas to you and yours, and best wishes for 2009 from all of us at your Northern Plains Eye Foundation.

Kathleen Kovarik

BOARD MEMBERS BID FOND ADIEU



Heartfelt thanks goes out to four dedicated Board Members who are stepping down after many years of service:

Dr. Sidney Goss – SDSM&T Professor
Pat Burchill – US Bank President
Dr. Jo Prang – Pharmacist, Medicap Pharmacy
Dr. John Barlow – retired Pathologist

As part of our appreciation, CANDY BAR letters were given to Sid, Pat, Jo and John at the Annual Meeting, and the entire Board erupted in laughter as Sid Goss read each silly line aloud. As it said in the letter, we truly have "Skor"-ed having four such outstanding people on our Board, and hope that our association will continue for many more years.

VISION SCREENING WEEK DEBUTS

Special Thanks

TO OUR BUSINESS SPONSORS OF VISION SCREENING WEEK

Black Hills Insurance Agency

Dark Canyon Design

Epic Outdoor Advertising

Ketel Thorstenson, LLP

KSLT Radio

Lamar Outdoor Advertising

Mid-Dakota Diesel, LLC

Rapid City Downtown Lions Club



Dr. Anne Britton

Thanks

Eye Care Professionals
who dedicated their time to
Vision Screening Week

HELPING KIDS

SEE CLEARLY



Anne Britton, OD
Mary Buurma, PA-C
Monte Dirks, MD
Elizabeth Ellender, OD
M. Scott Ellender, OD
Bill Holec, OD
Joseph Hartford, OD
Gaylene Kudrna, OD
Brad Moriarty, OD

Robert Nixon, MD
Eric Porisch, OD
Scott Schirber, OD
Paula Sorensen, OD
Lynn Tucker, OD
Pauline Weichler, OD
Nathan Wiederholt, OD
Falon Young, OD
Paul Zimmerman, MD



NORTHERN PLAINS EYE
FOUNDATION

Vision for a Lifetime



NORTHERN PLAINS EYE FOUNDATION OFFERS \$11,000 IN HEALTH-CARE EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

For the 2009-2010 academic year, the Northern Plains Eye Foundation (NPEF) is offering a total of \$11,000 in health-care education scholarships for students with primary residence in the northern plains region. This region includes all of South Dakota, northwest Nebraska, northeast Wyoming, southeast Montana, and southwest North Dakota.

Six **"Health-Care Education"** scholarships of \$1000 each are available for graduating high school seniors planning full-time post high school health-care related studies.

Five **"Continuing Health-Care Education"** scholarships of \$1000 each will be offered to former NPEF scholarship winners continuing their health-care related studies in college.

Applications are available through high school guidance counselors, by request, or on-line at www.npef.org/scholarship after January 1st.

Winners are selected based on academic performance, school and community involvement, health-care related activity, and leadership.

Completed applications must be postmarked by February 20th, 2009.

This is the fifth year that NPEF has offered academic Health-Care Education scholarships. Over 120 students applied last year from South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana. For questions contact the Scholarship Manager at (605) 716-6733, e-mail vision@npef.org, or write the Northern Plains Eye Foundation, PO Box 5568, Rapid City, SD 57709-5568.



LION'S CLUB DONATES TO SCHOLARSHIP FUND



Rapid City Downtown Lion's Club President, Todd Walhof presents a check for a \$1000 Continuing Scholarship.

Follow the example of the Rapid City Downtown Lions Club and sponsor one of the 11 NPEF scholarships to be given in 2009. A \$1,000.00 donation makes you eligible for a named scholarship. But donations of any size are welcome. Honor someone you love by naming a scholarship for a year, or even consider endowing a scholarship for the long term. Contact our office for more information at (605) 716-6733.

GOODBYE TO SUE JIMMERSON



Executive Assistant extraordinaire, Sue Jimmerson steps down after 2 ½ years at NPEF. Sue will be sorely missed by the staff and Board of Directors, but assures us that she will stay involved with us—helping with exhibits and maybe even on the Scholarship Committee, if we're lucky! Thanks, Sue, for your incredible dedication, hard work and your wonderful spirit.

Goodbye

NPEF OUT AND ABOUT



It was a busy Fall with two new exhibits added to NPEF's "usual suspects." The Northern Plains Eye Foundation was an exhibitor at the South Dakota Medical Association on September 17 & 18 in Rapid City, and at the South Dakota Nurses Association on September 28 & 29th (also in Rapid). Staff enjoyed the opportunity to share about the mission and programs of NPEF with these two groups of health care professionals who can help spread the word about promoting eye health and safety.



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS PARADE HELPS LAUNCH CHRISTMAS GIFT OF SIGHT

If you attended the Festival of Lights Parade in Rapid City this year, or watched on TV, you may have seen NPEF staff, Board and a number of volunteers “leading the pack.” NPEF partnered with KOTA and local Boy Scouts to help promote the KOTA Care and Share Food Drive. As donations of canned food or money were collected by the Boy Scouts, NPEF gave a pair of “Angel Christmas lights-viewing” glasses to the donor. With many children begging parents for glasses, we suspect the monetary donations increased this year!

Although the wind and cold were a challenge, this was a great debut for our **CHRISTMAS GIFT OF SIGHT** program. In our lovely fluorescent safety vests and “racing lights” glasses, obscured by many layers of warm clothes, we were all but unrecognizable! Nevertheless, a great time was had by all the participants, and our glasses provided even more fun for all the Parade-goers. Look for us next year as you’re waiting for the Parade to start!



HOSTING HOLIDAY TABLE A HOOT!



Talk about great timing. When we reserved many months ago for the December 10th slot to host a table for Women's Network I thought, “What are we going to

do?” I knew our Vision Screening Week would be long over, and little did I know then that our new debutant, “The Christmas Gift of Sight” would need a coming-out party.

For the over 100 women in attendance, an introduction to this new program was made. With our table festooned with Christmas lights, the perfect backdrop was created for use of newly-acquired angel glasses. Presenters Kathleen Kovarik

and Monae Johnson precipitated the fun, and the wonderful women of Women's Network entered into it fully. And the fun continued throughout the Women's Network Christmas Party, culminating in a huge group rendition of the 12 days of Christmas, complete with actions (yes, you had to be there...!)



Fran Hatfield

FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY: GIVE 'TIL YOU GRIN!

GARAGE SALE



Thanks to everyone that came out and helped and donated items for the sale.

"Give until it hurts." Although a popular saying, "Give until you grin!" is probably closer to the truth. For this "Focus on Philanthropy", we will spotlight a delightful group of happy givers—the staff of Slingsby and Wright Eye Care in conjunction with the staff of The Heart Doctors. Even in troubling financial times when many back off on their giving, these two groups came up with a unique idea that proved to be a win-win proposition—hold a supersized Garage Sale with the proceeds going to two Foundations—the Northern Plains Eye Foundation (Slingsby and Wright's staff's choice) and the American Heart Association (Heart Doctor's staff's choice). The garage sale proved to be the impetus for basements and closets to be cleaned out for these worthy causes. And when the sale was over, yet another family benefitted by receiving all the items left over to help replace what they had lost in a house fire.

Staff members were very generous with their time in organizing and publicizing this event, in procuring donated food for the lunch, in spending the evening pricing and marking the donations, and in helping

in a variety of capacities on the day of the sale. A great deal of enthusiasm was generated overall, according to organizer Alan Berg. There were some minor challenges with clothing racks being blown over in the wind, but all in all, things went very smoothly.



NPEF Staff and Board were very touched by this thoughtful contribution. It was a pivotal moment when Alan Berg and key volunteers from the Slingsby and Wright staff met

with Kathleen Kovarik and the NPEF staff to ceremonially present and receive the check. To every single person who helped with the organization and orchestration of the Garage Sale, we extend our heartfelt thanks. Know that we will honor your contribution by continuing to "pass it on." And it is our hope that your creative contribution will inspire others to give in such a joyful manner.



SPECIAL NOTE



Tiffany Frederickson

Visit Tiffany Frederickson's website to see the beautiful jewelry she has for sale

DocFredShinyBits.etsy.com

Tiffany will donate proceeds to NPEF's Christmas Gift of Sight program.

SPOTLIGHT ON RESOURCES

Vision Service Plan Provides Glasses and Eye Exams

VSP, short for Vision Service Plan, is a non-profit organization that was established in 1955 by a group of optometrists in Oakland, CA, with a desire to provide a high-quality, cost effective eye care benefits program. VSP now has the largest eye care doctor network in the US, and has a members network of over 44 million people nationwide. This equates to 1 in 8 people in the US relying on VSP for eye care health coverage.

In 1997, Vision Service Plan began a Sight for Students program, which provides eye exams and eyeglasses to children of low-income, uninsured families. VSP also offers complete school program kits, including lesson plans, which teachers or eye doctors can use to promote healthy sight in the classroom.

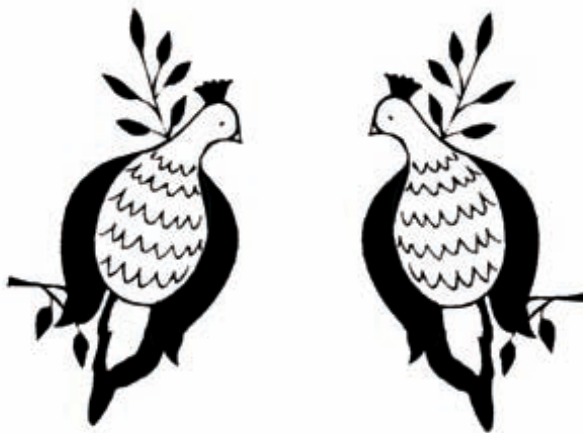
School Nurse Supervisor, Linda Poppens Boland, shared that VSP was one of the major resources they used to help children obtain glasses in the Rapid City School District.

In 2005, when Hurricane Katrina hit, VSP bought ophthalmic equipment and set up temporary clinics to assist. Out of that was birthed the VSP Mobile Eyes Program, which provides disaster relief. They have 2 mobile eye care clinics, each housing 2 complete exam rooms and full dispensaries. When not responding to disasters, the mobile clinics travel to community events throughout the US and team up with VSP doctors to provide services to the underserved. Want to learn more about VSP? Find them on-line at vsp.com.

OPTICAL ILLUSION

1 Hold the drawing at arms length

2 Stare at the blank spot between the turtle doves beaks.



3 Slowly bring the paper closer to your face.

4 Do you see the two birds kissing?

WARNING SIGNS OF VISUAL PROBLEMS

Children may not know to tell you they are having trouble seeing; they may not realize that “blurry trees or faces” are not normal. If it’s all they have ever seen, that can be “normal” to them.

It is important to catch vision problems as early in a child’s life as possible. Many problems are correctible, but some problems, if left untreated, can lead to permanent vision loss.

Have you observed your child demonstrating any of the following? They could be indicators that your child has a vision problem:

- ☐ Sitting close to the TV or computer screen or holding a book very close to read
- ☐ Squints, blinks frequently, or closes one eye to read or watch TV
- ☐ Tilts the head to see better
- ☐ Loses place or uses finger to keep place when reading
- ☐ Very sensitive to light
- ☐ Ongoing eye redness or excessive tearing; encrusted eyelids
- ☐ Constant eye rubbing

- ☐ Complains of headaches, dizziness, or burning/itchy eyes
- ☐ Avoids or dislikes reading, writing, coloring or other activities requiring near vision
- ☐ Bumps into or trips over objects; excessive clumsiness
- ☐ Avoids activities requiring distance vision, such as playing ball, tag, etc.
- ☐ Performs consistently below potential or has disruptive behavior

Consult with an eye care professional to determine if the problems you’ve identified need further attention.





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VISION
FOR A LIFETIME

NORTHERN PLAINS EYE
FOUNDATION

Dear Supporters,

The Christmas season is the perfect time to thank you for your generosity throughout 2008 to the Northern Plains Eye Foundation. We are grateful for your help, which has allowed us to expand our programs and serve so many people in our region. May you and yours have a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2009 ahead!

From Kathleen Kavarik,
the Staff and the Board of the
Northern Plains Eye Foundation