



NORTHERN PLAINS EYE  
FOUNDATION

Winter 2017

# The Eye Opener

*Northern Plains Eye Foundation (NPEF) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect and preserve vision and restore sight for people of the Northern Plains.*



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## LOCATION

402 Saint Joseph Street  
Suite 1  
(corner of 4th and  
Saint Joseph Streets)  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
Phone: (605) 716-6733  
Fax: (605) 721-4633  
www.npef.org

## NEW ENDOWMENT BRINGS NPEF MISSION INTO SPOTLIGHT

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This month, *South Dakotan M.D.*, a publication benefitting the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine, includes an article titled, "Scholarship for USD Sanford Medical Students Continues Dr. Zimmerman's Compassion and Kindness." Excerpts are included in the article below. To read the full article, go to [www.usd.edu/university-relations/south-dakotan-md](http://www.usd.edu/university-relations/south-dakotan-md).

Northern Plains Eye Foundation (NPEF) began in 1987 with a mission to promote and support research, education, and service for eye care in the region. In 2005, its first educational scholarship launched to ensure access to quality eye and health care for future generations, contributing dozens of scholarship awards over the years for post-secondary training in health and eye-related fields.

In 2011, a respected member of NPEF's Board of Directors and partner in ophthalmology at Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, Dr. Paul Zimmerman, passed away after a courageous battle with malignant melanoma of the eye. To honor him, NPEF renamed its scholarship the Dr. Paul L. Zimmerman Memorial Health Care Education Scholarship and re-formatted criteria to include expressed interest in ophthalmology or optometry.

Through a partnership established in 2013 with the University of South Dakota Foundation, the scholarship is now presented through the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine to final-year medical students pursuing a career in ophthalmology.

This November, the Northern Plains Eye Foundation Dr. Paul L. Zimmerman Memorial Scholarship Endowment was announced. The newly created endowment, established through a generous \$25,000 gift from an anonymous donor and matched dollar for dollar by the University of South Dakota Foundation for the benefit of the Sanford School of Medicine, will allow the scholarship to be awarded in perpetuity beginning with the 2018/2019 academic year.



NPEF-USD Endowment Gathering - Left to right: NPEF Board Treasurer Curt Rising, vice Chair Dr. Terry Spencer, Chair Dr. Ryan Scarborough, Dr. Zimmerman's widow, Kris Zimmerman, NPEF Board Secretary Catherine Chicoine, NPEF Staff Carolyn Ness and Ronda Gusinsky, and Sanford School of Medicine Rapid City Campus Dean Dr. Matthew Simmons



Dr. Paul L. Zimmerman

"This endowment campaign and the ability to match donations provide an opportunity for an extraordinary partnership with organizations like Northern Plains Eye Foundation," said Mary Nettleman, M.D., Dean of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine. "Securing new endowed scholarships benefits one of our greatest assets – our students."

Dr. Daniel Terveen, a Sanford School of Medicine graduate and ophthalmology resident at the University of Iowa, received the Zimmerman Scholarship for the 2014-2015 school year. He said the scholarship not only provided valuable financial aid, but opportunity to learn of the important public service provided through the Northern Plains Eye Foundation Western South Dakota Lions Children's Vision Screening Initiative (CVSI). In the first study of its kind in South Dakota, Terveen examined CVSI vision screenings, on which his manuscript, "Results from a Pediatric Vision Screening Project in Western South Dakota," was published in the March 2015 *South Dakota Medicine*.

"Scholarships such as the Zimmerman give students more freedom to pursue their passion and get out from under the yoke of their debt," Terveen said. "The scholarship also helped me to build a relationship with an organization that provides a valuable service to our state and has set the stage for future research and collaboration with other medical students."

NPEF is a small foundation with a big goal – to end unnecessary vision loss, noted NPEF's Board Chair Dr. Ryan Scarborough. "We feel very blessed to have generous donors who allow NPEF to move our community outreach forward and extremely honored to have our wonderful partnership with Sanford School of Medicine and its students acknowledged in *South Dakotan M.D.*"

NPEF would like to extend our sincere appreciation to *South Dakotan M.D.* for publication of "Scholarship for USD Sanford Medical Students Continues Dr. Zimmerman's Compassion and Kindness," article author Jill Callison, USD Sanford School of Medicine Senior Director of Development and Planned Giving, Edd Storey, and USD Foundation.

## EYE TO EYE



Thank you, Jeff!

This month, longtime Northern Plains Eye Foundation (NPEF) Board Member, Dr. Jeffrey Rausch, a Pierre-area Optometrist, steps off the NPEF Board of Directors after serving our Foundation for almost a decade.

Dr. Rausch, who joined NPEF's Board in January 2009, became Chair of NPEF's Program Committee in 2014, guiding important signature education and community outreach programs. These programs carry forward our mission to protect and preserve vision and restore sight, making it possible for us to change lives for the better across our region. For those of us who were blessed to work alongside him, his passion, integrity, and kindness forever changed our lives for the better.

On behalf of the NPEF Board and Staff, thank you, Jeff, for the very important role you played in support of our Foundation's mission through the donation of your valued time, talents, and expertise. Your encouragement, dedication, and leadership will be truly missed.

As we say goodbye to 2017, we give thanks for our many blessings throughout this year, of which you are one. May your holidays be joyful and your New Year filled with health, happiness, and prosperity.

Ronda



Ronda Gusinsky  
NPEF Executive Director

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Terry Wolthuis, OD



Brian Iverson

Terry Wolthuis, OD, a South Dakota native, practices optometry at Wright Vision Center in Rapid City, SD. He received his Bachelor's degree from the University of South Dakota. He then moved to Chicago and completed a Bachelor's degree in Visual Science, in addition to a Doctorate degree in Optometry at the Illinois College of Optometry. He and his wife, Kelly, enjoy spending time and traveling with their two children.

Brian Iverson is Senior Vice President & General Counsel for Black Hills Corporation in Rapid City, SD. He is a University of South Dakota alumnus, receiving his Bachelor's in Business Administration in 1984 and MBA in 1993, followed by his Juris Doctorate in 1995. He and his wife, Linda, moved to the Black Hills in 2001 from Sioux Falls, and enjoy experiencing numerous Black Hills outdoor activities, as well as RV road trips to visit their grown children, Emily and Daniel.

Welcome, Terry and Brian! We are grateful to have you join our Northern Plains Eye Foundation Board of Directors.

## 5TH ANNIVERSARY CASINO ROYALE CHARITY AFFAIR



Delighted. Excited. Grateful. That's how it felt seeing the dozens of guests at the Northern Plains Eye Foundation September 30th Casino Royale Charity Affair! We, of course, hope everyone had a wonderful time at the 5th Anniversary Celebration, but more importantly want to express our gratitude to the Casino Royale guests, sponsors, promotional partners, and auction and event donors, who make it possible for us to change lives for the better through their support of the essential vision outreach Northern Plains Eye Foundation brings to young and old across the region.

Each year, funds raised at Casino Royale support thousands of free vision screenings annually for pre-school and elementary age children, sight-saving surgeries to help individuals in need regain their vision and independence, scholarships for future eye care professionals, and workplace eye safety training – carrying forward our mission to protect and preserve vision and restore sight.

We hope you will plan to join us for next year's Casino Royale Charity Affair on SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2018.

## CASINO royale

Presented by



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## NPEF NEWS BRIEFS



MARCH 2017 | **Christine Riegel** joined Northern Plains Eye Foundation (NPEF) as its new Project Coordinator. Riegel oversees the Children's Vision Screening Initiative (CVSI) and provides general project coordination. Born in Boston, she moved to the Black Hills when she was a year old. Prior to joining NPEF, Riegel worked in the ophthalmology field for almost 12 years at The Eye Doctors at Rapid City Medical Center, mostly part time due to her love of photography, another part-time career and hobby. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her family, hiking and kayaking.



APRIL 2017 | For the past five years, Northern Plains Eye Foundation (NPEF) and Lions Volunteers have teamed up to administer free CVSI screenings at the annual **YFS Kids Fair**, a wonderful and fun opportunity to serve families in our community. This year was a record-setter with 660 children receiving free vision screenings during the 3-day event. 11.21% of those children screened had risk factors detected and required referral for a complete eye exam. Thanks to an awesome group of 23 Lions Volunteers, along with assistance from NPEF Board Members, Dr. Ryan Scarborough and Dr. Sarah Kuipers, who also volunteered, and a talented NPEF staff, all went off without a hitch!



MAY 2017 | USD Sanford School of Medicine announced **Nicole West** received the 2017 Northern Plains Eye Foundation **Dr. Paul L. Zimmerman Memorial Scholarship**. West, a graduate of Sioux Falls Lincoln High School, attended the University of Missouri-Columbia for her undergraduate in Biology. She is currently a fourth-year medical student at Sanford School of Medicine and plans to specialize in ophthalmology. West noted, "I have always been intrigued by the eye and naturally drawn to ophthalmology based on the continuity

of care for all ages, exciting aspect of performing microsurgery, and ability to make a significant impact on a patient's sight." West was also involved with the NPEF children's vision screening research. Upon graduation from medical school, she hopes to attend ophthalmology residency and fellowship thereafter.



JUNE & NOVEMBER 2017 | "Restore sight" is a very important aspect of the mission of Northern Plains Eye Foundation (NPEF). Annually, each June and November, NPEF awards sight-saving surgery through its **Gift of Sight Program** to underserved individuals with severely impaired vision and known financial hardship, who are referred to NPEF by local eye care professionals. Since 2008, just short of 50 donated sight-saving surgeries have been performed by NPEF, with assistance from NPEF program partner, Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), helping recipients from across the Black Hills regain their vision – and most importantly, their livelihood.



Shown in the photos at left are two recent recipients from the seven Gift of Sight awards this year. Top photo: Dr. Stephen Khachikian, Surgeon, Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, Leonides "Leo" Dionicio, Gift of Sight recipient, Ronda Gusinsky, NPEF Director, and Rebecca Andrew, SBVI Rehabilitation Counselor. Lower photo: Pam Penfield, Gift of Sight recipient, and Dr. Gail Bernard, Surgeon, The Eye Doctors at Rapid City Medical Center.

## SHOPPING WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE

Make shopping an opportunity to give! It's easy. First, register at Smile.Amazon.com and select Northern Plains Eye Foundation as your charitable organization. Then, every time you shop Amazon at Smile.Amazon.com, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Northern Plains Eye Foundation at no cost to you! So, "Smile!"

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## THANK YOU, LIONS

Each June, we take the opportunity to thank the volunteers of the Northern Plains Eye Foundation Western South Dakota Lions Children's Vision Screening Initiative (CVSI), who contribute hundreds of hours each year, for their important work with our Foundation.

In 2017, CVSI Lions Volunteers contributed nearly 350 hours assisting NPEF staff in performing over 5,000 free vision screenings for pre-school and elementary age children across the Black Hills region.

Here are this year's CVSI awards for volunteerism:



DICK FISCHER, PIEDMONT VALLEY LIONS,  
2017 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



WENDY & KEITH CLANTON, PIEDMONT VALLEY LIONS,  
2017 VOLUNTEER COUPLE OF THE YEAR



PIEDMONT VALLEY LIONS CLUB  
2017 VOLUNTEER CLUB OF THE YEAR



SCOTT JENSEN, RUSHMORE LIONS,  
CVSI HONORARY VISION AMBASSADOR



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