2014: THE YEAR OF COMMUNICATION

The new Chinese year is the Year of the Horse; here at The Discovery Eye Foundation (DEF), it’s also the Year of Communication. Our top priority for 2014 is making sure we provide you with the most recent, helpful information on vision, in a variety of formats to meet your needs.

E-News: We also want to make sure you know about the wealth of resources offered by the Macular Degeneration Partnership (MDP) and the National Keratoconus Foundation (NKCF) by using the first two 2014 issues of this e-newsletter to delve deeply into each program. We will look at the programs and introduce you to people who use them.

Videos: We recently put many new videos on the DEF website. They provide useful information about eye diseases, treatments, risk factors, helpful hints and fun facts.
And since communication is a two-way relationship, we want to hear from you, as well. See something you like? Tell us. Have a question? Ask us. Our mission is to provide resources for you, so please let us know what you need and how we can best provide it.

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**Social Media:** We will continue to share breaking news in eye research, nutrition and eye care via social media, on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and YouTube. Please check them out, and participate in the puzzles and fun “eye activities” we have each week on Facebook. We also have a Pinterest board and hope you enjoy our wide-ranging pin subjects.

**Blog:** Later this month, we are launching a blog that will include guest postings by leading eye-care professionals from around the world, in addition to contributions by DEF staff.

**Estate-Planning Information:** The monthly DEF planned-giving e-newsletter will be undergoing some changes, as a re-design of the estate-planning section of our website is launched later this year. It will continue to provide a broad base of unbiased financial information, far beyond traditional wills. To get updates on the re-design process, click here.

And since communication is a two-way relationship, we want to hear from you, as well. See something you like? Tell us. Have a question? Ask us. Our mission is to provide resources for you, so please let us know what you need and how we can best provide it.

**WHEN GOOD EYES GO BAD**

**The History of AMD and the Macular Degeneration Partnership**

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a progressive eye condition affecting as many as 15 million Americans and millions more around the world. The disease attacks the macula of the eye, where our sharpest central vision occurs. Although it rarely results in complete blindness, it robs all but the outermost, peripheral sight, leaving only dim images or black holes at the center of vision.

“When I started working in ophthalmology in 1968, the diagnosis was ‘senile macular degeneration,’” says Judi Delgado, executive director of the Macular Degeneration Partnership (MDP). History of AMD & MDP cont’d...
POWER IN NUMBERS

Support Groups Provide Information, Combat Isolation

When 16 people get together in a room, things happen. When all those people are coping with the same life-altering condition, powerful things happen.

The Macular Degeneration Partnership’s monthly Beverly Hills AMD Support Group meets on the second floor of the Beverly Hills Library. Nearly all attendees are senior citizens, ranging in age from 60 to well into their 90s. Some are long-timers, having attended the group for more than 15 years. Some are new, looking for a place to learn and commune with other like-minded folks.

“Studies have clearly shown those who participate in support groups do better coping with their disease,” says MDP Executive Director Judi Delgado, who runs the groups.

Participants in the monthly group learn about treatment breakthroughs, get reports from professional meetings and conventions, test low-vision assistive devices and hear presentations from low-vision specialists — and they get to talk with each other, which may be the most important part. Support groups cont’d...

PROFILE

Simone Kent Finds her Way by Train, Ship, Car and Horse

Simone Kent was on the first “war bride ship” that left for the United States in 1946.

Leon, an American lieutenant stationed in Europe, reluctantly had volunteered to bring the records needed for a soldiers’ dance outside Paris. French-born Simone had come reluctantly to the dance with a friend and was dancing with a sergeant when Leon cut in.

They got engaged soon after, though neither
remembers the marriage proposal. Simone says:
“We were on the subway platform, and we weren't engaged. Then we were on the subway, and we were. Neither of us remembers how it happened.”

Soon after their wedding, she boarded a ship with 800 other new brides. Leon picked her up in New York in “an old beat-up car,” and the couple drove cross-country to Los Angeles, where Leon worked as an attorney. “I only have memories of the ice-cream parlors,” she says. “During the war, we didn’t have any food, so the food was very impressive to me when I got here.”

Simon Kent cont’d...

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**FOILING PHOTOPHOBIA**

Photophobia is a severe sensitivity to bright light that can result in discomfort and pain. It varies from person to person, with discomfort coming from lights that don’t ordinarily affect others, including natural outdoor light, overhead lighting (such as fluorescent light), reflected light or flames of a fire.

In most cases, photophobia is harmless; it is NOT an eye disease, but may be a symptom of an underlying problem, such as an infection or abrasion that irritates the eye, a viral illness, medications, severe headache or migraine. Photophobia could also be the result of your unique physical makeup. A person’s eye color can affect one’s sensitivity to light: People with lighter-colored eyes can be more sensitive to light than people with darker eyes.

The best treatment option for relieving the discomfort of photophobia is to address the underlying cause, which an examination by an eye doctor can help determine. It could be the clue that alerts doctors to another treatable condition. The answer may be as simple as changing a medication or treating a corneal abrasion. In most cases, if you treat the underlying cause, the sensitivity will decrease or disappear. If you are naturally sensitive to light, wearing sunglasses with UV protection, brimmed hats and avoiding bright-light situations are the only alternatives.
DEF NEWS

First Annual Donor Appreciation Dinner
We were thrilled to honor our 2013 donors at our first annual Donor Appreciation Dinner on Feb. 6 at Casa Del Mar In Santa Monica.

Nearly 40 people braved torrential rains to join fellow donors, board members and staff at the event, which turned out to be a fun, informative, inspirational evening. Lively discussions took place during the cocktail hour, as longtime DEF supporters reconnected with old friends, made new ones and chatted with staff about the latest goings-on at DEF, MDP and NKCF.

During dinner, board chair Jack Schoellerman welcomed guests — including board member Roni Cohen Leiderman, who came all the way from Florida — and presented outgoing board member Mario Antonini with a certificate thanking him for his many years of service. Perhaps the most moving part of the program was DEF President and Medical Director Dr. Anthony Nesburn talking about how much DEF has meant to his family.

Members of our Vision Legacy (those who have included DEF in their estate plans), as well as donors of $1,000 and more during the previous calendar year, are included in our annual dinner. We hope to see you next year!

For more information about becoming a donor, please click here.

DEF Funds CXL Study in India
DEF, through NKCF, proudly provided $15,000 in funding to Dr. Debashish Das for his study investigating the safety of accelerated corneal crosslinking on the limbal epithelial stem cells residing in the limbus (at the periphery of the cornea). Das is the chief scientist of basic science R&D at Narayana Nethralaya super specialty eye hospital in Bangalore, India. Be sure to check www.nkcf.org for project updates.
EVERYDAY SOLUTIONS

Tips for dealing with vision loss

A Ray of Light on Eye Strain

Ultraviolet light from the sun comes from two types of radiation, UVA and UVB rays, both of which can cause vision loss. As we age, the UV effects can accumulate, increasing your chances of vision loss from AMD and cataracts. You can protect your vision by wearing regular glasses and sunglasses that have both UVA and UVB protection, even in cloudy weather. Just remember: UV protection is more important than the darkness of your lenses.

Your eyes are now exposed to more harmful light spectrums indoors, as well. Overexposure to “blue light” also may contribute to vision problems, including cataracts and AMD. Blue light comes from fluorescent, CFL and LED bulbs, and electronic devices. Because of the increase in use of electronic devices, many people, including children, are experiencing digital eye strain. Symptoms include red, dry or irritated eyes; blurred vision; eye fatigue; back, neck and shoulder pain; and headaches.

To preserve eye health, the optical industry is testing new lens technologies to enhance the digital experience while minimizing eye strain. Many video-gamers use yellow-tinted “gamer goggles,” which are specially treated for blue light.

The Vision Council prepared a report, “DigitEYEd: The Daily Impact of Digital Screens on the Eye Health of Americans,” about digital eye strain, based on findings from an October 2013 survey of 7,000 adults nationwide. It includes recommendations of ways to help prevent or lessen digital eye strain (see p. 11 of the report for a full list), including the following suggestions:

- Wear computer eyeglasses to help focus while in front of a digital screen.
- Every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break from the screen and look at something 20 feet away.
• Build an “eye-gonomic” workspace to mitigate outside stressors.
• Program your devices for optimal distance viewing.

NUTRITION

Are You my Valentine?

Running late on your Valentine’s plans? Skip begging for a reservation at an expensive restaurant, and cook up an eye-healthy meal at home. DEF’s Eye Cook is offering up an easy recipe for Citrus-Glazed Salmon with Triple-Citrus Salsa. Salmon is high in omega-3 fatty acids, and citrus, of course, is packed with vitamins A and C. All the better to ensure you can gaze into your dining partner’s eyes.

This is no day to debate the healthy benefits of chocolate. Visit our For Your Valentine board on Pinterest to see some of our favorite treats, chocolate and not chocolate (told you our pins are wide-ranging!). Happy Valentine’s Day!

GIFTS

Three Easy Ways to Give

Because of you, the Macular Degeneration Partnership and the National Keratoconus Foundation are available for people coping with vision loss. Your donations to DEF support these vital programs, which are available to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

Below are three examples of how you can make DEF an easy part of your giving goals. All donations can be specified by you for DEF, MDP, NKCF or a research project. We will explore more giving options in our next issue.
• **Monthly credit-card donations:** This is a painless way to give, and you can cancel easily at any time. As a bonus, if you sign up, we won’t send you any solicitations until year-end, when we will remind you to renew. Also **if you sign-up to give at least $20 per month, we will mail you the very helpful Harvard Health Newsletter every month for a year!**

• **Shopping:** By registering with Supporting Pals or Amazon Smile, you can designate a percentage of your purchases to be automatically donated to DEF. You only have to register once and do your shopping through the designated site. Think of how much you can give throughout the year, not to mention on Cyber Monday 2014! And it won’t cost you a penny extra.

• **Tributes and Honoraria:** Do you want a special way to say “Happy Birthday,” “Congratulations” or “Thank You”? Or would you like to honor the memory of someone? Let us help by sending out a card on your behalf with a message from you in honor or memory of the person of your choice. These are also a great option for businesses that want to show their appreciation to clients.

If you have any questions about designating your giving, please contact Susan DeRemer at sderemer@discoveryeye.org or (310) 623-4466.

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**VISION LEGACY**

**Yearly Financial Checkups**

Just as we suggest you have an eye exam every year to check your vision and protect yourself from vision loss, we also suggest you check your estate plan on a yearly basis. Just take 60 seconds to review this list of six steps to see if you are comfortable with your financial plans for the future:

1. **Update your estate plan.** Through a new will, revocable living trust, or a codicil or amendment modifying your old documents, you can address any changes that happened in your life during the past year, such as:

   • **Your family:** With births, deaths, marriages or divorces, you may want to add or remove beneficiaries, or increase or decrease their shares of your estate.
• **Your property:** Events such as growth (or decline) in the value of your estate, the acquisition of a new home, or the sale or gift of property may necessitate changes to bequest provisions.

• **Your new location:** Your estate plan should be updated if you move to a new state. Different requirements for the execution of a will or trust, as well as different state inheritance taxes and probate laws, may make revisions necessary. Contact an estate-planning attorney in your new state.

• **Your charitable interests:** Will your good works continue after your lifetime? Consider including a bequest to DEF by designating a percentage of your estate for our use.

Financial checkups cont’d...