



Florida Lions Eye Bank

2013

ANNUAL REPORT



Contents

1 2012-2013 Status Report

2 A Message from the Medical Director

3 A Message from the President

4 Cornea Recipient Profile

Meet musician Gio Aguirre (at left with eye surgeon Guillermo Amescua, M.D.) and learn the incredible story of how his mother's life-long dream to donate her cornea to him and repair his damaged eye became a reality thanks to Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and the Florida Lions Eye Bank.



7 2012-2013 Financial Report

8 Research

The Ophthalmic Biophysics Center has invented an automated instrument that measures and records how a patient reacts to levels of bright light – important information for ophthalmologists treating eye disorders.



10 2013 Donors

► **On the Cover:**

Cornea recipient, musician and songwriter Gio Aguirre is dressed for his role as leader of the Diablo Dimes, creators of “gypsy jazz,” a unique sound of American blues and folk music.

2012-2013 Status Report

	<i>July 1, 2012- June 30, 2013</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
Eye Donors	893	43,404
Surgical	673	
Research	220	
Eyes/corneas received:	1,780	84,226
Eyes/corneas furnished for transplant:	747	12,591
FLEB corneas used in USA	644	
FLEB corneas sent outside USA	103	
Corneas received and used for International Gratis Program	409	
Sclera tissue provided (whole or parts)	294	
Glycerin preserved corneas provided	695	
Eyes furnished for research or teaching	523	31,671
Pathology specimen studies	3,911	89,936
BPEI patients	3,277	
Patients Operated outside BPEI	546	
Medical Examiner Case	88	
Total served during the year:	6,579	

President's Report

Dr. James R Brauss

In June of 2012 I had the honor of passing the gavel to our new Florida Lions Eye Bank President, Albert J. "Bud" Mansolilli. At the start of his term, Bud put forth his ideas to promote interest and involvement of the individual Lions Clubs. He started the idea of having Club Representatives attend meetings of the FLEB Board. To our great sadness, Bud passed away on Sept 4, 2012, after only two months into his term of office, leaving behind Beverly, his loving wife of 56 years, two sons, two daughters, 12 grandchildren and three great grandchildren. I was honored when the Board of Directors asked me to serve the remainder of Bud's term of office.

In addition to having local representatives attend our meetings, the Florida Lions Eye Bank participated in the Lions Multiple District 35 Fall Conference in Altamonte Springs, and the District 35 N Conference at Frost Park in Dania Beach. We hosted the FLEB hospitality suite for the first time at the Florida Lions Convention in Daytona Beach. We also had a very well attended Appreciation Night at Bascom Palmer capped off with the serving of the traditional dish, Paella.

After 51 years of existence, the FLEB contin-



ues to adapt and remain on the forefront of the ever changing landscape of tissue acquisition and distribution. We are faced with challenges along the way, both regulatory and operational, but we continue to make necessary changes to ensure the long term success of this organization. This would not be possible without the direction and advice of our talented Executive Director, Elizabeth Fout-Caraza, and our truly visionary Medical Director, Dr Sander Dubovy. Behind the scenes the entire staff of the Florida Lions Eye Bank work

tirelessly to keep everyday functions organized and running smoothly. They are a dedicated team without whom the eye bank would be unable to continue its exceptional service.

I give my sincere thanks to my Board of Directors in both of my terms of office, without them none of these successful events would have been possible. I thank each and every one of them for their help in making these great years for the Florida Lions Eye Bank. In closing, I would encourage anyone reading this to support the Gift of Sight by becoming an organ donor, a Century Club member and honoring a deceased loved one by donating to the Florida Lions Eye Bank Memorial Wall.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

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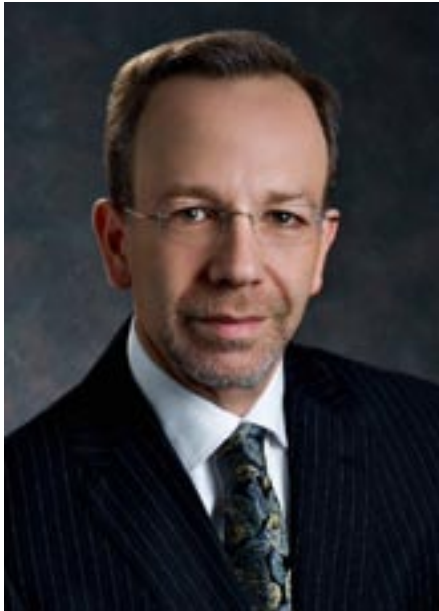
Medical Director's Report

Sander Dubovy, M.D.

As 2013 comes to an end after our 50th anniversary year, we look forward to our second half century with great promise. While we continue to excel in providing corneal and scleral tissue for transplantation, completing ocular pathology studies, and contributing to research and education, there are changes that take place in all areas.

The corneal and scleral portion of the eye bank continues to flourish as we have increased the numbers of harvested tissue to help more patients gain the gift of sight. In addition to collecting more tissue locally we have worked with other eye banks throughout the country and internationally to both obtain tissue and place tissue when necessary. This allows us to provide tissue to other areas of the country, or other parts of the world, where tissue may not be available and patients may not have access to corneal transplantation. While the vast majority of our tissue is provided in South Florida, shipment of excess tissue allows us to use it for transplantation rather than for research or patch material. We have developed relationships with doctors and eye banks in the U.S., Latin America and Europe that will allow us to make the best use of our resources and aid increased numbers of patients and physicians.

The pathology laboratory continues to be busy as we provide diagnostics on complicated ocular pathology material as the only ocular pathology laboratory in South Florida. We receive material from throughout Florida, other states as well as international physicians. With so few dedicated eye pathology laboratories in the U.S., and the number continuing to dwindle, our ability to aid physicians and patients is even more important. We continue to train U.S. and international residents and fellows. I traveled to Saudi Arabia



to lecture to residents as part of their basic science course in ophthalmology. This will allow them to better understand ophthalmic disease and help them provide more expert care to their patients. Over the next two years one of our fellows, Antonio Bermudez, MD, an ophthalmologist from Mexico City, will train in our laboratory and return to his home country to direct an ophthalmic pathology laboratory at a major eye hospital. Dr. Bermudez will, in turn, train residents and medical students and provide needed diagnostic services. This

will enable us to aid in patient care and continue a close relationship benefiting both institutions.

We continue to provide funds for Dr. Jean-Marie Parel from the Ophthalmic Biophysics Center who does fantastic work in the field of instrumentation and diagnostics of the eye and ocular adnexae. Additionally, research from the ocular pathology laboratory has helped elucidate some of the pathologic features of tumors of the surface of the eye and correlate instrumentation that allows for the diagnosis of malignancies. We will continue this work as we try to improve the ophthalmologist's ability to diagnose and treat surface malignancies.

In summary, 2013 has been another successful year. I would like to personally thank all of the staff for their hard work. I would also like to thank the Board of Directors and all the Lions clubs for their support, without which we could not provide our sight saving services. I urge you to get involved in the Eye Bank in any way possible, through signing a donor card, the donation of time or money or just raising public awareness of the importance of tissue donation so that we may help even more patients in the coming year.

The World Through a Mother's Eye

Every gift of sight is precious.

But in more than 50 years and thousands of cornea transplants, the Florida Lions Eye Bank has never coordinated a directed donation of tissue from a mother to son. The miraculous procedure was only possible through the efforts of Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, the eye bank staff, a skilled surgeon, fortunate timing and the life-long wish of a mother to restore her son's vision.

Today, Juan Aguirre's eye sight is better than ever. And his view of the world is even sweeter because his loving mother donated her cornea to him.

Juan Aguirre, known as Gio, was five years old while walking with his mother on a sidewalk in their small native town of Holguin, Cuba. Suddenly, an out-of-control motorcycle ridden by a drunk driver jumped the curb and struck the youngster. A gash on his head required 14 stitches. Worse, his left eye became infected from the sutures leaving his cornea badly scarred. Ultimately, Gio lost most of his central vision in his left eye.

Despite his vision problem, Gio took advantage of the extraordinary musical talent he inherited from his late father. Both father and son could pick up any instrument and play by ear. By the time he was eight years old, Gio already favored the guitar and percussion instruments.

It was only two years after the accident that seven-year-old Gio, his sister Janet, and mother, Miriam, joined the 1980 Mariel boatlift, the mass exodus of Cubans from their island to the U.S.



Guillermo Amescua, M.D. (at right) performed the directed transplant of a cornea from Miriam Aguirre Santos to her son, Juan Aguirre.

In 1983, they settled in St. Paul, Minnesota, but the long winters eventually led the family to Miami in 1994. Miriam worked as a manicurist and Gio tended bar. He continued to perform with bands and develop his own distinctive style. His pursuit of a successful music career led him to move to New York, Los Angeles and New Orleans. In South Florida, he appeared on several episodes of the reality show, *Miami Ink*.

Under the name of Diablo Dimes, Gio has recorded and released six albums of "gypsy jazz," a unusual style of American blues and folk. He often plays gigs in South Florida.

“It’s like a whole new world has opened up”

Gio is married to Cozette and they have two children, Sophie and Lucien. About two years ago, they relocated to rural Virginia, where Cozette works in her father’s optometrist office. Gio and Cozette tried to convince Miriam to leave Miami and move in with them.

“We thought we could get her to settle here,” Gio said. “But she loved Miami too much. She didn’t want to leave her friends.”

Miriam had diabetes and high blood pressure. On her 61st birthday, she suffered a heart attack. She was taken via Fire Rescue to the hospital where she was placed on life support, but later was declared legally brain dead. Years previously, Miriam had signed up to be a registered organ and eye donor with the state of Florida and her desire was honored. She had also made it known that one of her corneas should be used to restore her son’s vision.

Miriam’s wish set into motion a desperate cross-country race against time. For the best visual outcome, corneas are typically transplanted within seven days of preservation. At first, the family, doctors and the eye bank tried to arrange for the operation to be done in Virginia, but a surgeon and facility could not be arranged in time.

So Gio flew to Miami and was examined by Guillermo Amescua, M.D. at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. Dr. Amescua determined Gio was a good candidate for his mother’s cornea and the surgery was scheduled for the next day. The transplant was a success and Gio has returned for several check-ups with Dr. Amescua.

Because Gio’s case was unusual, dramatic and a first for the eye bank, his story received exten-



At a post-surgery check-up at Bascom Palmer, Dr. Amescua makes sure the cornea tissue is healing on schedule.



COURTESY OF JUAN AGUIRRE

Miriam Santos Aguirre and one-year-old grandson Lucien

“When he is completely healed, Gio will see better than he has in his whole life.”

- Ophthalmic surgeon Guillermo Amescua, M.D.

- Continued from the previous page

sive media coverage, including a front page story in the *Miami Herald* and on the local CBS news affiliate.

“Once he is completely healed, he will be seeing better than he has his whole life,” Dr. Amescua said.

His restored sight may even change the sound of Gio’s music. “When playing the guitar, I play the chords with my left hand,” he said. “When I looked down, I could never see my fingers. After the surgery, for the first time, I could see my hand on the neck of the guitar.”

Gio said that his mother donating her organs was difficult for some of his relatives to accept, because the practice is often stigmatized in the Latin community.

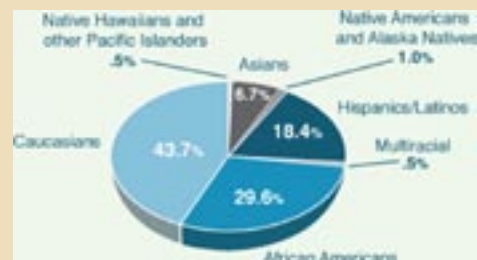
“My mother would have been happy to know that she helped so many people. Once people understand how important it is, they will accept it,” he said. When he is not busy playing music and spending time with his wife and children, Gio steals a moment to look in the mirror and stare at his left eye.

“It is wonderful and overwhelming at the same time. I look at my face and I know a part of her eye is a part of me now. I know she will be a part of me forever.”

Efforts Underway to Increase Hispanic Organ and Cornea Donation

In many Hispanic communities the donation of corneas and tissues after death is stigmatized because of cultural attitudes. In cities with a high percentage of Hispanics, media campaigns are starting to change the negative perspective shown by these statistics from the Department of Health and Human Resources:

- More than 18 percent of all Americans waiting for an organ transplant are Hispanic. This is slightly higher than their percentage of the population.
- Only 12 percent of organ donors are Hispanic.
- Hispanics/Latinos comprise 19% of those waiting for a kidney, and 17% of those waiting for a liver.



2012-2013 Financial Report

<i>Revenues and Gains</i>	<i>2012-2013</i>	<i>2011-2012</i>
Program Service Fees	\$2,249,584	\$2,332,414
Contributions		
General Public	\$ 24,099	\$ 18,239
Bequests	\$ 180,650	\$ 207,315
Foundation Grants	-	\$ 48,400
Lions Clubs	\$ 26,100	\$ 15,115
Donated Facilities & Services	\$ 110,270	\$ 100,800
Interest & Dividends	\$ 352,034	\$ 329,939
Net unrealized and realized gains of long term investments	\$ 759,853	\$ (292,392)
Total Revenues And Gains	\$ 3,702,590	\$ 2,759,830

<i>Expenses and Losses</i>	<i>2012-2013</i>	<i>2011-2012</i>
Program Services		
Medical Services	\$2,232,545	\$2,420,734
Research Grants	\$ 127,088	\$ 50,465
Supporting Services		
Management & General	\$ 275,425	\$ 285,975
Development	\$ 131,437	\$ 169,643
Total Expenses	\$2,766,495	\$2,926,817
Total Expenses & Losses	\$2,766,495	\$2,926,817
Change In Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 936,095	\$ (166,987)

Ophthalmic Biophysics Center Develops Photosensitivity Tester

Mariela C. Aguilar, Alex Gonzalez, Cornelis Rowaan, William Lee, Carolina de Freitas, Karam Alawa, Andres Bernal, David H. Sliney, Byron L. Lam, Jean-Marie Parel

Ophthalmic Biophysics Center at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
Vision Cooperative Research Centre, Brien Holden Vision Institute, UNSW, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Overview

Photosensitivity is a common occurrence that everyone experiences when stepping outside into the Florida sunshine or turning on a bright light in a dark room. Simple, right?

But the human eye is an amazing and complex organ. Designed to receive and interpret light for our sense of sight, human eyes are not all the same. What is discomforting bright light to one person may be perfectly normal for the next.

The challenge faced by scientists at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute's Ophthalmic Biophysics Center was to develop an instrument that could measure the exact threshold for light discomfort and to create a comprehensive computerized record of the testing procedure.

The resulting invention is the BPEI Photosensitivity Tester, which uses light emitting diodes (LED) binocular light stimuli to quantitatively measure and record light discomfort.

Methodology

Previous photosensitivity instruments utilized incandescent light sources which also generated heat, causing additional discomfort to the individual being tested. To eliminate the heat, researchers installed small LED lights. A total of 210 lights were arranged in a concave array similar to the shape of two human eyes. This shape provides an even distribution of the light.

Illuminance, or the measure of illumination on a surface, is gauged in lux. If you held out your hand at night under a full moon, the illumination on your hand would be one lux. Under standard office lighting your hand would be illuminated at approximately 500 lux, while in bright overhead sunlight your hand could be illuminated as high

as 25,000 lux (*see chart*).

The research team programmed the instrument to generate 25 levels of light intensity, from a low of 14 lux to a high of 30,000 lux.

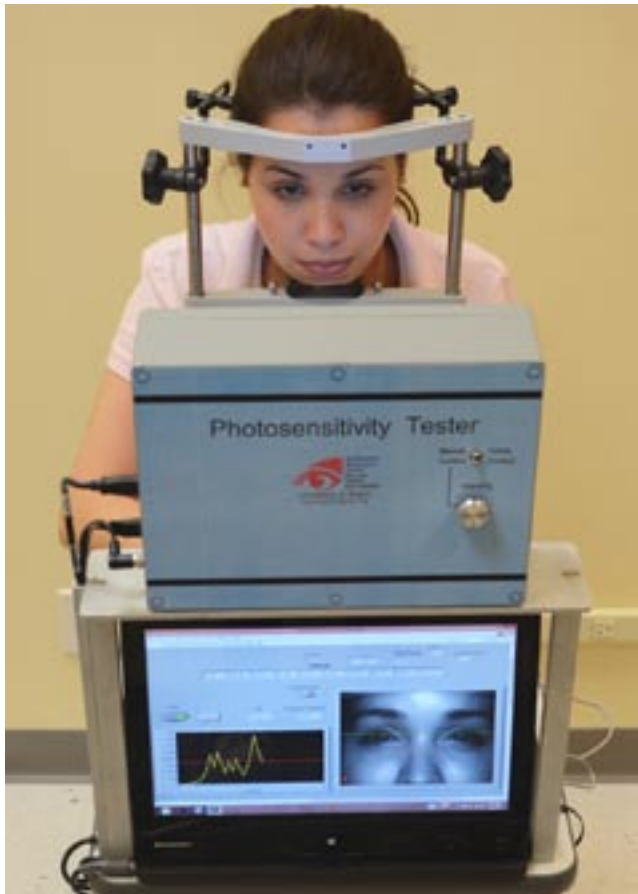
Other than the assistance of a technician to adjust the patient's head on the chin rest, the test itself is completely computer-controlled, with automated voice instructions guiding the test subject. The monotone computer voice keeps the subject from being influenced by any inflections in a human voice. The technician can select between English, Spanish, French or Portuguese for the voice, covering most languages spoken by BPEI patients. Additional languages could be added as needed.

The instrument begins by illuminating the subject's eyes for two seconds at a low level of light. Gradually the intensity of the light increases. The computer asks the subject to press a button to indicate when the light intensity is uncomfortable.

At this point, the computer begins a "staircase" technique of adjusting the intensity in

Examples of Levels of Illuminance

Illuminance	Surface illumination
1 lux	Full moon on a clear night
50 lux	Family living room lights
80 lux	Office building hallway
100 lux	Very dark overcast day
320–500 lux	Direct office lighting
400 lux	Sunrise or sunset on a clear day
1000 lux	Typical TV studio lighting
10000–25000 lux	Full direct daylight



Once the patient is positioned by a technician, the photosensitivity test is completely automated. The screen shows both what the video camera is capturing and a record of the light intensity.

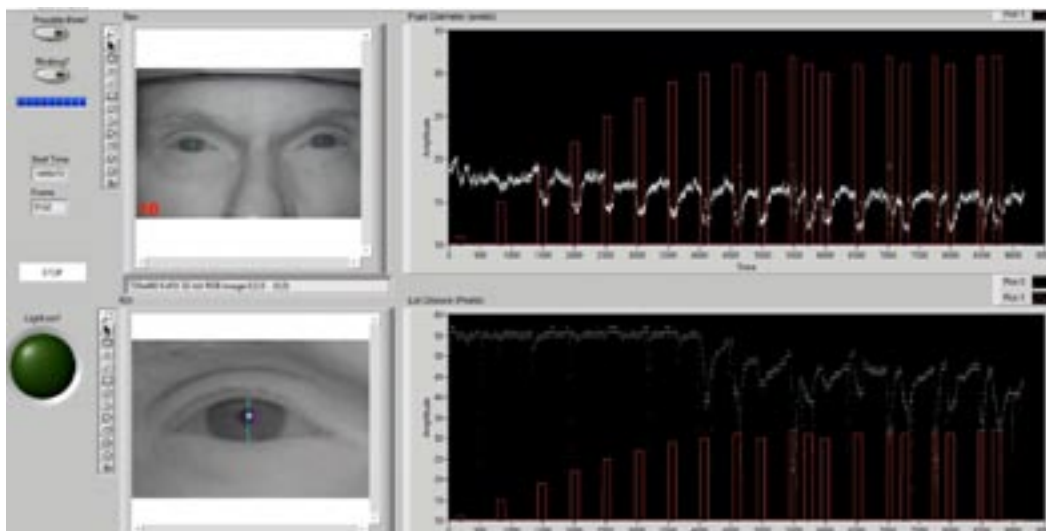
unequal ascending and descending steps. The test continues until the patient being tested makes five “uncomfortable” responses and five “comfortable” responses to the computer. The photosensitivity threshold is then calculated by averaging the light intensity during the 10 stimulations when the patient changed their reported level of comfort.

Throughout the test, a high resolution infrared video camera is constantly recording the amount of the patient’s pupil dilation, blink rate and the level of inner eyelid distance (squinting). This data is also useful to physicians. Because the camera is infrared, the light flashes are not visible on the video.

Results

Both the light level intensities and the physical changes and variations of the eyes throughout the test can be reviewed by a technician or physician on the computer. So what was the average discomfort level? A handful of young healthy subjects had photosensitivity thresholds between 1,793 and 2,767 lux.

Ophthalmologists believe the device will directly benefit patient care by testing the sensory capabilities of patients with retinal degeneration, dry eye, trauma and blepharospasms or eye lid spasms.



Post test, the instrument provides a complete review. At top right, the white level shows how the pupil contracts as the light intensity increases (in red).

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January 1, 2012 - December 31, 2012

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Miami Colombian Lions Club
Miami Dade Interamerican Lions Club
Miami Interamerican Ecuador Lions Club
Miami Lakes Lions Club
Miami Lautaro Lions Club
Miami Lions Club
Miami Springs Lions Club
Moore Haven Lions Club
Naples Nites Lions Club
North Fort Myers Noon
North Port Lions Club
Palm Bay Happy Lions Club
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Port St. Lucie Downtown
Port St. Lucie Lions Club
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