



## October at LVPEI

The celebration of our Institute's Foundation Day on the 17<sup>th</sup> was certainly the most important event this month. Twenty- nine years ago, ten days after Pratibha and I landed in India with our two kids after our long stint in the USA, and looking at a future of uncertainty, we had the ground breaking ceremony. The then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. N T Rama Rao, did the honours in the presence of Mr. L V Prasad and Ministers from the States of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, where Mr. Prasad had spent his life building a flourishing career as a film director and producer. He too had moved to a future of uncertainty when he set foot in Mumbai without completing high school and with no money - a phenomenal saga of courage, perseverance and hard work. Six weeks later the construction work commenced and six and a half months later, we provided service to the first person. The rest is history, as they say. On this occasion, the guest of honour was Mr. Mohan Reddy, yet another example of a successful entrepreneur in the technology sector. He spoke of how he saw LVPEI through his prism and the secrets of its success.

The journey of these twenty nine years has been a non-stop process of evolution and this was marked this month by the inauguration of our 125<sup>th</sup> primary care vision centre (in a foot print of 146 locations): conducting a Hack-A-Thon on diabetes, in collaboration with Boston's famous Massachusetts General Hospital; signing an MOU with Germany's Gebauer, a high end precision manufacturing of surgical instruments company; and the award from the Eye Bank Association of India at its Silver Jubilee celebration for reaching the milestone of 20,000 corneal transplants earlier in the year.

October is also the month, when all those involved in eye care around the world, celebrate the "World Sight Day". This is on the second Thursday every October. Much progress has been achieved in the combat against avoidable blindness since the first World Sight Day 16 years ago and this day has become an important advocacy tool over the years. Our Institute has played an important role in promoting this event both locally and globally since its inception.

Early last year, we made a commitment to develop a functional eye care system for the Republic of Liberia and this idea has the support of the country's President, Her Excellency Dr. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. She was personally involved in the discussions and gave a lot of encouragement. However, this had to be put on hold due to the Ebola crisis that Liberia had to deal with. This month, I had the pleasure of meeting Her Excellency again, during her visit to Delhi, and the project is put on track again. The plans are in place for the first stage and we are working with a couple of international organizations for possible funding. We intend to get this off the ground during the first quarter of 2016.

Close on the heels of the inauguration of our "Operation Eyesight Universal Institute for Eye Cancer" is the story of a 3 year old girl from Pakistan who came to us with a recurrence of the eye tumor, Retinoblastoma and subsequent to fourteen cycles of chemotherapy. She was advised removal of the eye locally. Our team led by Swathi Kaliki, administered intra-arterial



chemotherapy, not often used yet in our countries that resulted in salvaging of both the eye and partial vision. The family returned home happy.

The news of three of our clients in our PRK Prasad Centre for Rehabilitation of Blind and Visually Impaired securing job placements in IT giant CISCO was a cause for celebration to our team. The increasing number of such clients trained in our "Assistive Computers Lab" is indeed a very encouraging development. Congratulations to the entire team that help realise our vision "so that everyone realise their full potential"

- Gullapalli N. Rao