



October 2017 at LVPEI

October 17th is the Foundation day of our Institute. Thirty one years ago on this day (October 17, 1986), the foundation stone was laid by the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Sri N T Rama Rao in the presence of Sri L V Prasad, renowned movie director and producer after whom the Institute was named. For me, it was the beginning of yet another chapter of my life, looking at an uncertain future. The evolution and the progress achieved by the Institute is indeed very gratifying. We were privileged to serve millions directly and many more indirectly through our education, research and capacity building programmes. We have built a robust, multi-tier eye care delivery system that is of high quality, sustainable and providing comprehensive eye care through an eye care team approach. On this day, we were honored to have Prof. Bruce Alberts from the University of California, San Francisco and former editor of the journal “Science” as the guest of honour. Anil Kompalli, whose life story is an inspirational saga, was the keynote speaker. Anil is a public prosecutor and happens to be the first one in the country, who is blind. He has been a client of our rehabilitation service since 1991 and we are proud of his accomplishments. He completed his Masters in Law and is now pursuing a doctoral programme.

Several new initiatives were launched during this month. We have begun to focus on “cerebral visual impairment” with the main nodal point based in our tertiary care campus in Vijayawada. Our team has the mix of talents to care for the group of individuals afflicted with this problem - ophthalmologists, optometrists and rehabilitation specialists. This is led by Niranjan Pehera, Head of the David Brown Children’s Eye Care Centre on this campus. All the other tertiary care centres in the network are part of this initiative. We are grateful to Mr. Subbarao Chalavadi from USA for his contribution to make this possible.

Other philanthropic support from the Cognizant Foundation, the charitable arm of IT major, Cognizant, helped us to create a “Bio-Imaging Laboratory” that will strengthen our biology research. Sri Nataraja Foundation of Chennai awarded a grant for starting a “Centre for Retinitis Pigmentosa and Allied diseases”. India has one of the largest burden of these problems with no preventive or therapeutic strategies available. This will enable us to have a special focus on these conditions. We are grateful to Mr. Lakshmi Narayanan and Cognizant for this munificence.

Our spread into remote rural areas continued with the addition of two more primary care vision centres taking the total to 158. These Centres in the relatively underdeveloped Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh will link these populations more closely to our secondary Centre in Madanapalle of that district.

One of the greatest assets of our Institute is the talent pool that we are privileged to have. Vijaya Kumari Gothwal represents this so well. An optometrist with a doctoral degree from



Queensland University of Technology of Australia, she has grown into a global leader in low vision and outcomes research. The American Academy of Optometry honored her during this month with their “Diplomate in Low Vision” award, first one from India. My congratulations to Vijaya on this well deserved recognition. She is among the first batch of optometrists at our Institute and helped in enhancing the image of our Institute. Several other colleagues were honored with awards from various organizations and through editorial appointments.

The convergence of science, art and nature is one of the hallmarks of LVPEI. Keeping up the tradition, we hosted the “Dhrupad Utsav” – a classical Hindustani musical event - presented by Dhrupad Sansthan, Bhopal and Dhrupad Gurukulam, Hyderabad. This was attended by music and art lovers from Hyderabad to a packed auditorium on all three days.

While we had an eventful month, it ended with the loss of one of our biggest benefactors, Mr. Edward Brown from France. Mr. Edward and Mrs. Soona Brown have been associated with our institute since they came forward to support the Children’s Eye Care Centre at our Vijayawada campus in memory of their beloved son David, whom they lost when he was a child. They continued to be emotionally attached to the centre and made an annual visit on the anniversary of the centre. Impressed with the services provided, they later supported the creation of a secondary centre - The Edward and Soona Brown Eye Center at Dhulipalla, Guntur District in Andhra Pradesh. With the passing of Mr. Edward Brown, we lost a great friend and an ardent supporter of our institute. The LVPEI family conveys its deepest condolences to his wife Mrs. Soona Brown and his daughter Shirin.

- Gullapalli N. Rao