

## May at LVPEI

The month of May can aptly be termed “growth month”. Starting at the top, the outpatient capacity of our Hyderabad Kallam Anji Reddy campus has expanded by about 50 percent with the addition of facilities in a newly leased space close to our campus. We are indebted to the Saksaria Foundation of Mumbai for a generous grant for the equipment. This brand new facility looks sparkling. At the next level is the opening of “City Centres” - outpatient clinics in the busy areas of the two cities, Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada, essentially to make access to our services easier. With all these, our overall tertiary care outpatient capacity of our pyramid has grown by about seventy five percent.

Incidentally, the city centre at Vijayawada turned out to be the 100<sup>th</sup> location from where LVPEI operates. This indeed is a great lead into our 25<sup>th</sup> year which commenced on June 1 and a great tribute to all our stakeholders who have made this memorable journey. At the other end of the pyramid was the inauguration of nine new vision centres funded by the Lavelle Fund of New York and LDS Charities of Salt Lake City. In six of these, the physical space was donated by the local community and in one of the centres; the community has also committed to cover the technician’s remuneration.

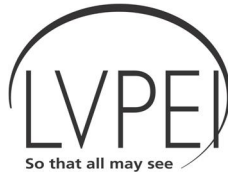
Paul Thadikonda is a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist in the US. Recently, he has added our Institute to his list of giving, by a large grant for substantial capacity building of the education centre in our Kallam Anji Reddy campus. The centre will commemorate his parents’ lives who were both school teachers in rural Andhra Pradesh. Paul was emotional when he recounted the story of his parents and how they struggled to put him through pharmacy school. What a fantastic way to repay his debt to his parents!

On the research front, the Indian Eye Research Group that the Institute founded about 15 years ago has now become an official chapter of Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) of US. This is fantastic news and yet another important milestone in the evolution of eye and vision research in India, and the increasing recognition it commands worldwide. Congratulations to Prof. Balasubramanian (Balu), our Research Director, for all that he did, and continues to do, in securing this respectable position for India on the global research map.

Subhabrata Chakrabarti (Subho), one of our molecular geneticists gained more and more recognition with his addition to the Editorial Board of the highly rated journal, “Molecular Vision” and the ARVO Publication Committee. His group’s poster at the recent annual meeting of the ARVO “Glaucoma Genetics” was included in the “Emerging Trends and Hot Topics” by ARVO. Two international graduate students, one from Tunisia and the other from Australia completed part of their Ph.D. work at our Molecular Genetics Laboratory, an illustration of excellent international collaboration and cooperation.

All the above are a clear reflection of the growing stature of our genetics group thanks to Chitra, Subho and Inderjeet along with their teams.

Not to be left behind is our Rehabilitation Centres, where their dedicated efforts have manifested once again with three of their clients performing exceedingly well in their annual school exams. This was possible only because of the combined efforts of the teams at both the inclusive and special schools,



volunteers who helped in preparing educational material (Braille and audio books) in addition to working as scribes, and our team who have worked tirelessly to change the lives of these children.

We have pioneered many aspects of eye banking in India and always strived to help build an international standard eye banking system in India along with our international partners such as International Federation of Eye and Tissue Banks, ORBIS International, and more recently, with Eyesight International and SightLife. The new community eye bank we helped developed in our Bhubaneswar campus, with support from the latter two, is making great strides. The volume of corneas harvested during the first five months of the year has already exceeded the annual number of 2010. This is again a joint effort of the voluntary board and the staff of that eye bank. My compliments to that entire team!

Last month, I have written about Shilpa, daughter of Savitri Sharma and TP Das. This month, I was excited to hear that our Education Director, Prashant Garg's son, Pranav, chose the road less travelled after his high school. He is going to pursue "Physics" and got admission to India's most prestigious science institution "Indian Institute of Science". This is something like a fresh breath of air in a country the traditional paths are medicine, engineering and management. Congratulations to Pranav and to Parul and Prashant, who encouraged this streak in their child. May he become a world renowned physicist!

On June 1, we began our Silver Jubilee Year. What better way can there be to start this than the happiness derived from looking at this snapshot of events in May?

Gullapalli N Rao