

June 2021 at LVPEI

June 1 is a special day for us; we celebrated the 34th Anniversary of our Institute. On this day in 1987, we began our patient care activities, with service to four patients (2 paying and 2 non-paying). The status that we enjoy today was made possible by the hard work of our committed team, trust of our patients, trainees and other clients, and very importantly the support of thousands of friends, partners and donors around the world. We want to thank all of them once again for their belief in our mission and vision and their continued support.

Prof. Vijayalakshmi Ravindranath, Director of Centre for Brain Research of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore was the Guest of Honour at this year's celebration. A few of our team members were recognised for their performance with Employee of the Year awards. To commemorate the day, we inaugurated a Centre for Elderly Eye Care on our Kallam Anji Reddy Campus in Hyderabad, a component of the larger Institutes of Excellence Programme - The Institute for Elderly Eye Care. Gland Pharma Ltd., one of the leading pharmaceutical corporations of India was the main supporter for the Hyderabad centre. Mr. Srinivas Sadu, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the corporation inaugurated the Centre. We are committed to expand these facilities across our network at all levels of care with two other tertiary care campuses already having this component.

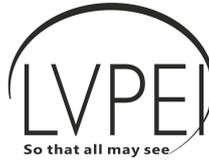
While the second wave of the pandemic impacted our various activities, our teams continued to work with the same resilience, allowing us to forge ahead with all the activities in various functional components of the Institute. Once the recovery started, our volume of activities returned to near normal levels.

Our in-house innovation for tele consultation – ConnectCare had its first anniversary. Over 83,000 individuals were served through this modality so far. From being primarily phone based technology to now video based live consultation, the journey has been very satisfying especially reaching out to patients who need critical follow-up care at a time when travel was restricted. The efforts of the team led by Drs. Padmaja Rani and Pravin Vaddavalli along with our technology innovation group made this a reality.

The Standard Chartered – LVPEI Academy for Eye Care Education hosted 28 webinars benefitting 1463 trainees covering a cross-section of eye care subspecialties and all eye care cadres. The early adoption of technology and timely scaling up made a big difference.

Brien Holden Eye Research Centre maintained its publication record and the numerous honors received at the annual All India Ophthalmic Conference was a reflection of our commitment to the academic culture.

The conversion of many hospitals to COVID focussed centres, while curtailed the cornea harvesting efforts by our eye bank did not affect this activity too adversely. 403 corneas were harvested of which 354 were distributed for transplantations. 221 of these transplants were performed in our network.



The team from Institute for Vision Rehabilitation has always been at the forefront of helping our clients not only through rehabilitation training but also in facilitating job placement and integrating them into the main stream. Even during the peak of COVID-19, rehabilitation services continued through tele-consultation. In addition, they joined hands with Vision Aid – a not for profit organisation working for disabled people and other individual donors in providing basic food security to around 200 families.

The expansion of our primary eye care network, through new technology enhanced futuristic Vision Centres, continued with the inauguration of two more centres, one each in the tribal districts of Koraput and Ganjam in Odisha. We are grateful to Mission for Vision and the WenGiving Foundation for their contribution to the development of these centres. The efforts of Niranjana Kumar, head of the vision centre network, and the rural eye health team made this possible.

Philanthropy support continued with APTOnline Limited, who renewed their partnership to support 500 surgical procedures and comprehensive eye care to 10,000 more individuals from the economically underprivileged group, at our Kode Venkatadri Chowdary campus.

I would like to end this newsletter with the inspiring story of Bharathi Ampolu, a vision therapist in our Institute for Vision Rehabilitation. Navigating her way through a difficult childhood in an underdeveloped rural area, poor educational opportunities, financial constraints, early marriage and birth of her children, and the need to support her family, she has succeeded in becoming a top class vision rehabilitation specialist. She is involved in all aspects of this work. Along the way, she completed B.Ed. in special education, Masters in psychology, and several courses offered by Hadley School for the Blind. Her story of determination, hard work and self-belief, resulting in her professional advancement, is an inspirational one. Hopefully, this will ignite such spark among others in our Institute.

- Gullapalli N. Rao

PS: One of the tasks that has given me immense pleasure over the past few years has been this chronicling of our Institute's monthly highlights and sharing with our worldwide network of friends and supporters. With the imminent leadership change of our Institute from October 2021, I am passing on this responsibility to my successor, Prashant Garg starting next month. I am grateful for the privilege of leading such an impactful organisation endowed with a very talented and accomplished group of individuals. To those of you who have taken time to send me thoughtful and encouraging comments every month, I am indebted.

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