



FLORIDA LIONS
EYE BANK
— SINCE 1962 —
Restoring the Beauty of Sight



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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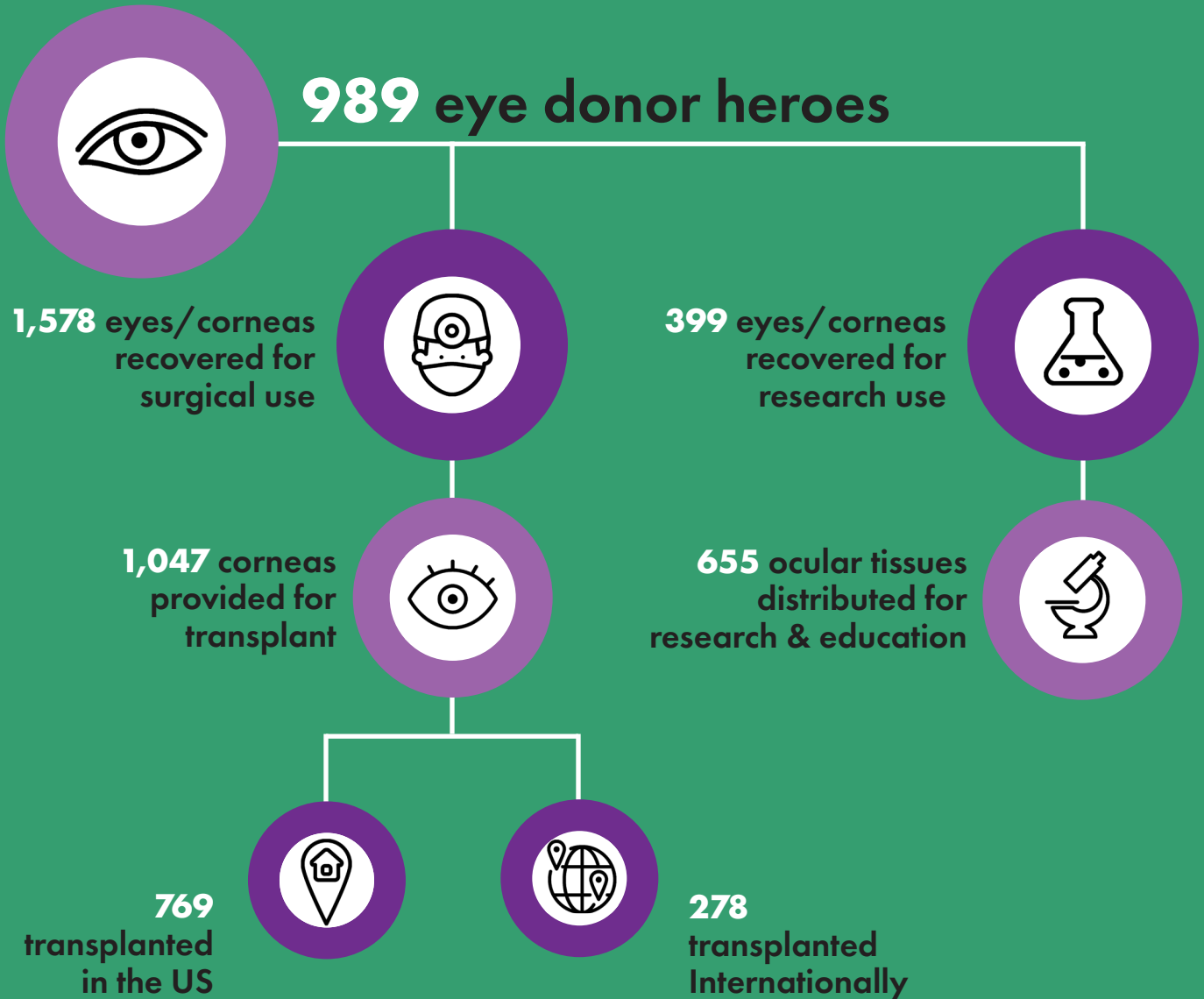
The Ophthalmic Biophysics Center is at the forefront of Photodynamic Antimicrobial Therapy.

Page 14: Financial Supporters

Thank you to all who gave generously!

STATUS REPORT 2021-2022

TISSUE RECOVERED & DISTRIBUTED



OTHER OPERATIONS



2,095
Serum Tears
& PRGF
processed



4,705
pathology
specimens
studied



124 sclera &
preserved
corneas
provided for
surgery



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by A. Geoffrey Wade, PID

I am pleased to provide you with an executive statement summarizing the key accomplishments and progress made by Florida Lions Eye Bank during the 2021-2022 fiscal year. The following highlights showcase our commitment to our mission and the tireless efforts of our dedicated team.

Firstly, during this term, Florida Lions Eye Bank focused on the remediation of our newly-acquired property, ensuring that it aligns with our vision for the future development of our new headquarters. We have diligently worked towards optimizing the land purchased during the immediate past president's term. Additionally, we embarked on the crucial task of selecting an architect who will play a vital role in designing the building that will soon grace this property. We are confident that our partnership with Wolfberg Alvarez & Partners, a renowned architectural firm, will significantly enhance our capabilities and impact.

Furthermore, our organization continued to expand our Serum Tears initiatives. We have proactively sought opportunities to reach a wider physician and patient base. Additionally, we have continued to provide financial assistance to Serum Tears users without the means to pay. The commitment to expanding this vital aspect of our work reflects our dedication to restoring sight and advancing health-care solutions.

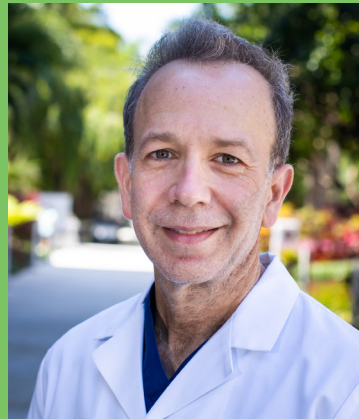
Florida Lions Eye Bank has always valued the importance of research and innovation. In collaboration

with esteemed professionals, we undertook two significant research projects during this term. Dr. Parel and the Ophthalmic Biophysics Center team led one of these projects, and we eagerly anticipate the outcomes and their potential impact. Additionally, we are proud to announce that we have received two patents for products jointly developed with Dr. Alfonso Sabater. These patents signify our commitment to advancing medical breakthroughs and translating them into practical solutions that can restore sight and make a difference in people's lives.

Amidst the challenges posed by the pandemic, Florida Lions Eye Bank demonstrated resilience and adaptability. As the world gradually returned to normalcy, we successfully resumed in-person events, including our highly anticipated Annual Installation Gala. This reinstatement of in-person gatherings allowed us to reconnect with our supporters and celebrate our shared accomplishments.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our members, stakeholders, and the dedicated team at Florida Lions Eye Bank. Your unwavering support and hard work have been instrumental in achieving these milestones. We remain committed to our mission of providing ophthalmic services to ophthalmologists and patients to assist with treatment and advancing the field of ophthalmology through research and innovation for the betterment of humankind. We look forward to continued growth and success in the coming year.

MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT



by Sander R. Dubovy, MD

As 2022 comes to a close, we look forward with hope and optimism to Florida Lions Eye Bank's future. The last several years have brought hospital closures, remote work, supply chain issues, and personnel challenges due to the most severe pandemic in over a century.

Thankfully, Florida Lions Eye Bank's sight saving services rebounded during 2022. Our total number of eye donors increased to 989, allowing us to provide a 1,047 corneas for transplant to patients in the United States and abroad. This was an increase of over 25% from the previous year. We are grateful to have given the gift of sight to more than 1,000 patients after the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, we provided numerous scleral tissue grafts for surgical use, and 655 whole eyes and corneas for research, education, and surgical training.

Florida Lions Eye Bank resumed in-person surgical training seminars, or wet labs, in 2022 as well. These hands-on sessions serve to educate ophthalmologists in the latest surgical techniques so as to better treat their patients. Florida Lions Eye Bank staff also resumed working one-on-one with doctors in both the eye bank laboratory and the operating room. These interactions, in which physicians practice working with delicate corneal grafts and precise instrumentation, are amongst the most valuable services we provide to the medical community. The surgeons we work with have expressed tremendous gratitude that Florida Lions Eye Bank has resumed these activities.

Our research and development of two patented devices continued in 2022. In collaboration with medical researchers, Florida Lion Eye Bank leadership worked dili-

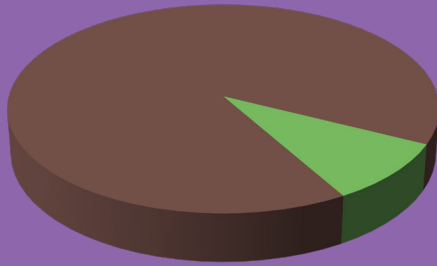
gently to bring our newly patented corneal storage device and endothelial surgical injector to market. We are certain that these innovations will improve the quality and integrity of transplantable corneal tissue, ensuring better surgical outcomes for physicians and their patients.

Florida Lions Eye Bank's Serum Tears program has seen a dramatic increase in services provided. In 2022, we processed 2,095 orders, an increase of 21% from the previous year. The Serum Tears program has been profoundly important to patients who rely on these individualized drops made from their blood. Without Serum Tears, many patients would experience incapacitating symptoms due to severe dry eye or corneal injury. Additionally, we have seen an increased demand for PRGF, a similar blood-based eye drop. Unlike Serum Tears, PRGF are chemically processed to amplify the growth factors that are present in human blood.

The number of pathology specimens we received and examined reached 4,705 during 2022. Ocular pathology is a unique subspecialty of pathology. Florida Lions Eye Bank is fortunate to have one of the very few dedicated ocular pathology laboratories in the world. This allows us to diagnose and help treat thousands of patients locally, nationally and internationally.

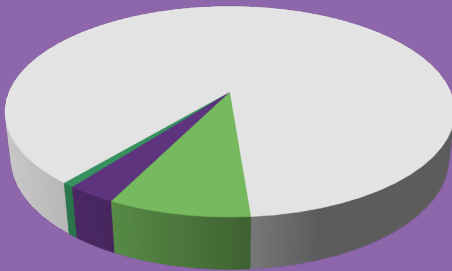
Finally, 2022 saw Florida Lions Eye Bank continue the planning and design of our new, more spacious facility. Having long outgrown our current headquarters, our new home will allow us to carry out our important work more efficiently. I would personally like to thank our staff, board members, patients, and eye donors and their families as we look forward to a clear and bright future.

EXPENSES 2021-2022



- Program Services 91%
- Supporting Services 9%

REVENUE SOURCES 2021-2022



- Processing Fees 88%
- Interest & Dividends 8%
- Contributions 1%
- Donated Facilities & Services 3%

FINANCIAL REPORT

	FY 2022	FY 2021
Revenues & Gains		
Program Service Fees	\$3,849,115	\$3,431,245
Contributions		
General Public	\$14,388	\$24,434
Bequests	\$1,908	\$40,878
Lions Clubs	\$15,548	\$19,288
Donated Facilities and Services	\$131,562	\$125,955
Interest & Dividends	\$379,184	\$270,315
Investment Net Unrealized Gain (Loss)	\$(2,683,565)	\$3,750,524
Forgiveness of PPP loan payable	\$0	\$424,985
Total Revenues and Gains	\$1,708,140	\$ 8,087,624
Expenses		
Program Services		
Medical Services	\$3,891,841	\$3,646,846
Research Grants	\$304,481	\$272,588
Supporting Services		
Management and General	\$255,267	\$317,663
Development	\$178,271	\$78,358
Total Expenses	\$4,629,860	\$4,315,455
Change in Net Assets	\$(2,921,720)	\$3,772,169

JULIE'S STORY

PRGF Patient Takes a Visionary Approach to Education

Julie Rutenberg— educator, philanthropist, longtime Bascom Palmer patient and current Florida Lions Eye Bank PRGF user— is the founder of Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf. Julie, who attended Montessori school as a child, experienced firsthand the unique benefits of this teaching philosophy, and maintains a deep personal connection to the school's mission.

Located in Pinellas County, Blossom Montessori is a school that caters to the needs of Deaf children and CODA (child/ren of Deaf adults). Unlike many other

schools that may label Deaf children as “hearing impaired,” Blossom Montessori recognizes the unique strengths and abilities of the Deaf community and seeks to empower its students to reach their full potential. As director of the school, Julie oversees a team of four teachers, two therapists, and up to 30 students ranging in age from pre-K to 6th grade. Julie takes great pride in the work that her team does to provide an enriching and supportive learning environment for Deaf children.

A Florida native from Belleair Shore, Julie attended Saint Petersburg College, where she received her AS in Sign Language Interpretation. She continued her education at the University of South Florida, graduating Cum Laude with a BA in Educational Interpreting for the Deaf. While in college, Julie volunteered in the public school system and realized the need for a different education approach for Deaf children. This experience inspired her to found Blossom Montessori in 2003. Having experienced Montessori education herself, Julie recognized its benefits for Deaf children. Blossom Montessori offers a hands-on, visually oriented curriculum that allows each child to go at their own pace with a curriculum tailored to each individual.

(Continued on next page)





Plasma Rich in Growth Factors (PRGF) Eye Drops is a biological therapy prepared from a patient's own blood.



However, Julie's journey to founding and operating Blossom Montessori has not been without its challenges, as Julie has struggled with visual impairment from an early age. As a young woman in the late 1980s, Julie developed Steven Johnson Syndrome (SJS), a rare and severe allergic reaction that causes damage to the skin, mucous membranes, and in Julie's case, her eyes. SJS is characterized by a painful rash that spreads rapidly and leads to blistering and peeling of the skin. The ocular manifestations of SJS can be particularly devastating, leading to severe visual impairment or even blindness, which unfortunately happened in Julie's case.

Treatment for SJS typically involves immediate medical attention, supportive care, and management of complications. Long term ophthalmic care and follow up are crucial to address ocular effects of the condition. Julie's eyesight, particularly in her right eye, was immediately impacted by SJS. Knowing their daughter's ocular health required expert care, Julie's parents took her to Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami.

Thus, Julie became a Bascom Palmer patient years before she crossed paths with Florida Lions Eye Bank. Traveling with her parents from the family home on the gulf coast of Florida to Miami, Julie became a patient of Dr. Stephen Pflugfelder, a specialist in ocular surface disorders. Throughout middle and high school, Julie visited Miami often to seek Dr. Pflugfelder's expertise. When he left Bascom Palmer for Baylor College of Medicine in Texas, Julie continued to be Dr. Pflugfelder's patient, traveling to Houston for treatment. Unfortunately, in 2005 Julie suffered a corneal perforation to her right eye. This painful condition, in which the cornea is penetrated, causes decreased visual acuity and for some patients, permanent damage. After this incident, Julie's vision in her right eye was limited to light perception only.

To help heal and prevent further damage to her corneas, Julie was fitted with PROSE lenses in 2006. PROSE, which stands for Prosthetic Replacement of the Ocular Surface Ecosystem, are a type of custom contact lens used to improve vision and provide therapeutic benefits for individuals with complex corneal conditions. This was a life-changing experience for Julie, as PROSE lenses helped preserve her vision, which allowed her to drive again and remain engaged with the newly founded Blossom Montessori. In conjunction with PROSE lenses, Julie began using PRGF drops, and quickly noticed an improvement in the health and comfort of her eyes.

PRGF (Plasma Rich in Growth Factors) eye drops are a regenerative therapy used to promote healing and improve the health of the ocular surface. PRGF eye drops are derived from a patient's own blood, which is processed to concentrate platelets and growth factors. These growth factors play a crucial role in tissue repair, regeneration, and inflammation modulation. PRGF can help accelerate the healing process of various ocular conditions, including corneal ulcers, dry eye syndrome, and ocular surface disorders. Florida Lions Eye Bank processes PRGF on-site at our lab at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and is proud to offer this treatment to patients like Julie.

Julie's ocular health remained stable until late 2018, when she developed an infection in her sighted left eye. Concerned about the risk of corneal perforation in her only sighted eye, Julie returned to Bascom Palmer, becoming a patient of Dr. Guillermo Amescua. Dr. Amescua, Medical Director of the Ocular Surface Program at Bascom Palmer, was determined to save the vision in Julie's left eye, and treated Julie with an amniotic membrane graft as well as antibiotics and PRGF. While the infection resolved, Julie had to discontinue using PROSE lenses, limiting her vision and independence. Julie recalls that this period was tough, but Dr. Amescua maintained a positive and upbeat attitude.

Florida Lions Eye Bank serves over 160 PRGF patients like Julie, who have ocular surface disorders that have not responded to conventional treatment.

Following Dr. Amescua's rigorous treatment protocol, Julie noticed gradual improvement to her vision and comfort over the course of the next month. By early 2019, Julie was able to use PROSE lenses again. She has remained on PRGF ever since and receives a 6-month supply at a time supplied by Florida Lions Eye Bank. Julie describes her current vision as "fairly decent," and has no problem carrying out daily activities, driving, and managing Blossom Montessori School.

During Julie's treatment at Bascom Palmer, she found herself in conversation with Dr. Amescua about their shared interest in community service. Dr. Amescua travels frequently to his native Mexico to provide ophthalmic surgeries to those without the means to pay. Inspired by her doctor's commitment to philanthropy, Julie generously gave a gift earmarked for Dr. Amescua's mission trips, allowing him and his clinical team to restore sight to even more people in need.

Despite the challenges she has faced, Julie enjoys a busy life and rewarding career at Blossom Montessori, now in its 20th year of operation. She appreciates spending time with her friends and family, going to the beach, traveling, scrapbooking, and doting on her beloved 15-year-old dog, Molly. She is grateful for the



support of her loved ones and colleagues, as well as the Bascom Palmer and Florida Lions Eye Bank staff.

Julie credits Dr. Amescua and PRGF with maintaining her ocular health. Julie's journey is an inspiring example of how perseverance and a commitment to a vision can overcome even the most daunting of challenges. Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf is a testament to Julie's dedication to providing a unique and empowering education for Deaf children.

Page 2: Julie and Molly at the beach

Page 7: Julie stands outside of Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf

Opposite page: Students at Blossom Montessori, and blood-based eye drops made at Florida Lions Eye Bank

This page: Julie and Dr. Amescua at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute

Visit blossomschool.org to learn more about Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf!



TYLER'S STORY

Tyler was born in St. Petersburg, Florida on May 20, 2015 to parents Aubrey and Tim and older brother Julian. Doctors immediately noticed that Tyler's left cornea was cloudy. Prompt medical attention led to Tyler's diagnosis with Peters anomaly within hours of his birth. Peters anomaly, a congenital disorder of the eye, involves thinning and clouding of the cornea, leading to blurred vision. It often affects both corneas, requiring a corneal transplant to restore sight. Fortunately, in Tyler's case, only his left eye was affected.

Doctors believed that Tyler would benefit from a corneal transplant, but there was not an experienced pediatric corneal surgeon near the family's St. Petersburg home. Seeking expert care, Tyler and his parents traveled to Miami's Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, home to Florida Lions Eye Bank. There, Tyler was seen by Dr. Mohamed Abou Shousha, a physician who specializes in Pediatric Cornea and External Diseases.

Dr. Abou Shousha recommended a corneal transplant as quickly as possible to ensure that Tyler's vision developed normally. At the age of 4 months, Tyler underwent corneal transplant surgery at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute with tissue provided by Florida Lions Eye Bank. The procedure went well, and Tyler got to go home right away.

For the first two months following his transplant, Tyler and his family returned to Miami every week for follow up care. Because he was a healthy, active infant, Tyler had to undergo general anesthesia every time his sutures were checked or removed to ensure he kept still. Fortunately, Tyler's cornea healed very quickly, and all his sutures were removed within several months.

Tyler is now an energetic school-aged child. Like many corneal transplant recipients, he wears glasses to improve his visual acuity, and uses eye drops to prevent rejection. While Tyler has some residual photophobia, or sensitivity to light, and a slightly irregularly shaped pupil in his left eye, he reads, plays, and uses the computer like other kids his age.



While congenital disorders of the cornea are relatively rare, affecting about 6 in 100,000 newborns, the skilled pediatric ophthalmologists at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute have treated many patients like Tyler. Florida Lions Eye Bank has provided corneal tissue for countless young patients in need of transplant. We are honored to be part of these children's path to improved vision.

Tyler's parents are happy to report that their son is "full of energy and constantly moving." He's an enthusiastic student who likes science and math classes and loves building Legos. In the past year, he has started competing on a swim team. He enjoys caring for Nora, the family dog, and reading the "Nate the Great" series. He and brother Julian, both Star Wars fans, like to recreate sprawling scenes with their action figures when playing together. "He's a nice, nice kid," says mom Aubrey. "We're so happy with how everything turned out for Tyler."

Opposite page, from top: Tyler from infancy through age 7.
This page, left: Tyler in 2023.
Right: Mom Aubrey with Tyler and older brother Julian.

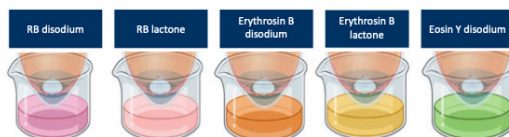
Clockwise from right: the dual-wavelength "PDAT Duo" delivery system; a close up of the custom light source created by the OBC team; a diagram outlining how human corneas in vitro are prepared for PDAT.



De-Epithelialization



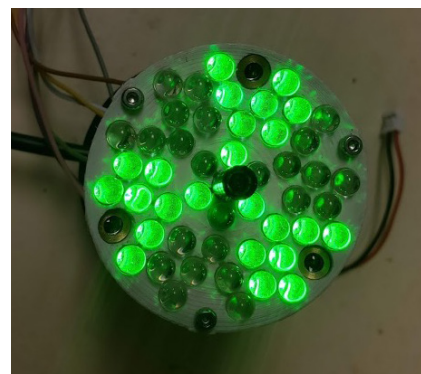
Soak anterior in 0.0075% photosensitizer solution for 30 mins and apply DAPI to endothelial side



Apply Glycerin and OCT



Image with Confocal Microscopy



With support from Florida Lions Eye Bank, the Bascom Palmer Ophthalmic Biophysics Center (OBC) has long been at the forefront of Photodynamic Antimicrobial Therapy (PDAT) research. PDAT works by applying a photosensitizing agent topically to a patient's cornea. When activated by a specific wavelength of light, the photosensitizer generates reactive oxygen species (ROS). ROS selectively and effectively eliminates microbial pathogens within the infected cornea while simultaneously strengthening the corneal stroma by enhancing the cross links between collagen fibers.

PDAT has shown considerable success in the field of ophthalmology, particularly in the treatment of corneal infections. While PDAT has been extensively studied in cancer treatment, the OBC's focus is on the challenging

and rare infections that pose significant risks to patients' vision. One such breakthrough was the OBC's development of a new light source that combines two wavelengths: green light to activate rose Bengal and blue light to activate riboflavin. By utilizing different photosensitizers with specific light wavelengths, the OBC aims to combat resistant infections that do not respond well to rose Bengal PDAT alone.

To date, the OBC has used PDAT to treat numerous patients with positive outcomes. However, PDAT using rose Bengal and riboflavin, two commonly used photosensitizers, is not consistently effective against fungal infections and deep acanthamoeba infections. The OBC team hypothesized that this is due to the molecular size of these agents, which prevent them from penetrating deep into the tissue where

RESEARCH STORY

The Ophthalmic Biophysics Center at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute continues to explore Photodynamic Antimicrobial Therapy



Florida Lions Eye Bank has long supported the OBC's research into PDAT: our 2014 and 2017 Annual Reports highlighted their earlier breakthroughs in this field!

pathogens are present. Drs. Jean-Marie Parel, Heather Durkee and Mariela Aguilar of the OBC are currently investigating the potential of PDAT utilizing erythrosine and eosin, two novel photosensitizing agents.

The OBC's in vitro studies indicate that erythrosine and eosin show tremendous potential for combating treatment-resistant microorganisms. One key advantage of these agents is their smaller molecular size, which allows them to penetrate deeper into the cornea. This ability to reach infectious organisms that larger-molecule drugs, including Bengal and riboflavin, cannot effectively target has led the OBC staff to observe that erythrosine and eosin may offer a new approach to eradicating infections and improving patient outcomes. Through their experimentation and research, the OBC aims

to expand the repertoire of PDAT and provide effective treatments for individuals suffering from these challenging ocular infections.

The ongoing research and experimentation conducted by the OBC with PDAT and novel photosensitizing agents highlight their commitment to advancing the field of ophthalmological research and providing effective treatment options for patients with treatment-resistant corneal infections. By exploring different agents and optimizing light sources, the OBC aims to enhance the efficacy of PDAT and improve outcomes for individuals affected by these challenging ocular conditions. Florida Lions Eye Bank is proud to partner with the Ophthalmic Biophysics Center and looks forward to lending our support for their future innovations.

With deepest
gratitude to our

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Florida Lions Eye Bank's innovations, like the novel viewing chambers shown at left, are made possible by your generous contributions.

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