

Lions/University of South Alabama Eye Research Institute, Inc.

Established 1990

3800 Airport Boulevard, suite 203 • Mobile, Alabama 36608



Dear District 34C Lions Clubs,

The year 2015 commemorates the **25th anniversary** of the Lions/USA Eye Research Institute. For those of you who are new to Lions, the Eye Research Institute is an official District 34C project. Our mission is 2-fold: 1) conduct high quality vision research and 2) train the next generation of vision scientists.

In response to Lions Clubs International aggressive global blindness prevention program called "Sight First" in 1990, Lions from the Mobile area met weekly to determine how they could participate in this wonderful project. The Lions/USA Eye Research Institute was the fruit of these meetings. The Institute is managed by a motivated council of Lions members from throughout District 34C. The council operates on a volunteer basis, and is responsible with raising funds to support vision research and research fellowships for future vision researchers. Through 25 years of effort, as well as support from area and state clubs, the council has raised well over half a million dollars to support vision research.

Distinguishing itself from Alabama Sight, the Lions/USA Eye Research Institute takes a more fundamental approach towards preventing vision disease and advancing cures through basic science research. To this end, District 34C Lions clubs have sponsored vision scientist-led equipment grants to Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF). Through the LCIF matching grant program whereby LCIF funds are matched by monies from the Lions/USA Eye Research, critical equipment such as a fluorescent microscope with time-lapse imaging was acquired. Since vision research is an ever-evolving field, there is a continual need for both direct funds and new equipment grants to fuel cutting edge efforts.

In sum, since 1990, the Lions/USA Eye Research Institute has:

1. Awarded approximately \$261,000 in direct funds to our scientists
2. Received matching funds from LCIF in excess of \$174,000 for research equipment
3. Supported vision research projects resulting in approximately 50 publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
4. Supported numerous graduate and undergraduate trainees with vision research projects. *Notably, one of these individuals, Dr. Terrence Tumpey, now serves as Team Leader in the Influenza Division of the Centers for Disease Control. While no longer involved in eye research, Dr. Tumpey's career is proof that Lions/USA Eye Research has contributed to improving human health.*

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The 25 year anniversary of the Lions/USA Eye Research Institute therefore marks a history of exceptional accomplishments. Best of all, with current invested funds, the Lions/USA Eye Research Institute is positioned to have even greater impact in the future.

The truly unique partnership between community leaders in District 34C Lions Clubs and vision scientists at the University of South Alabama is advancing our understanding of eye disease. Please consider taking an active role towards eradicating eye disease by contributing to this District project.

We ask that all area clubs support Lions/USA Eye Research.

Sincerely,

Linda Ziglar, Secretary
Ferrell Anders, Treasurer
Members of the Lions/USA Eye Research Institute Council