Scientific Relationships Built Through Fight for Sight Grants
In 1980, while a Resident in Ophthalmology at the University of Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, I received a *Fight for Sight* Grant-in-Aid to study the early receptor potential (ERP) in several human hereditary retinal diseases. Like many others, this helped me in establishing my credentials in eye and vision research. Later, as a faculty member at the University of Michigan and now in my current role as Director of the National Eye Institute, NIH, I have come to appreciate and respect *Fight for Sight*’s grant program even more for a variety of reasons: among them that it serves as an entry point for fledgling researchers, many of whom go on to international prominence. This program also creates life-long linkages between giants in ophthalmology and those on the cusp of their careers. I dare say my own career might have taken a different trajectory without early support from *Fight for Sight*. I applaud the organization for its role ensuring the development of world-class eye and vision scientists for over seven decades.

Paul A. Sieving, MD, PhD, Director, National Eye Institute, National Institute of Health
Dear Supporters, Alumni, Mentors and Friends,

We are pleased to share Fight for Sight’s (FFS) 2017 Annual Report with you. It documents a journey of more than over seven decades since our founder, Mildred Weisenfeld, first sought to support and inspire eye and vision research by funding promising scientists early in their careers. In 2017, your support funded 20 new clinical and academic researchers hailing from some the nation’s most prestigious institutions, including Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, University of Miami and Duke University, to cite but a few. Descriptions of our 2017 grantees, whom we fully expect to blossom into the next generation of academic leaders in eye research for the 21st century, are included in this report. Your continued support and generosity has helped and will continue to enable their future successes.

That is only part of our story. FFS grants provide an opportunity for grantees to work under the tutelage of world-renowned senior scientists; it is actually a requirement for our Post-Doctoral Awards and Summer Student Fellowship applicants. The relationships that begin with a FFS grant often develop into professional collaborations and friendships. Quotes and anecdotes from our 2017 grant recipients and their mentors, found throughout this report, underscore the importance of these lifelong scientific and personal connections to our FFS alumni.

In addition to exciting research initiated by FFS investigators, other 2017 highlights include:

• New partnerships with the Curing Retinal Blindness Foundation and individual donors
• Augmenting existing FFS alliances with the American Macular Degeneration Foundation, International Retinal Research Foundation and Aniridia Foundation International, to name a few.
• Continued expansion of our Lights-On gala and Strike for Sight bowling events. Photos, links and event information can be seen on FFS’s Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages.
• Growing awareness of and support for FFS among members of professional organizations including the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology and the American Academy of Optometry.

Since its inception, FFS has been blessed by the generosity of those who have included us in their estate planning. Planned gifts are critical to increasing FFS’s endowment, an essential element to ensuring our continued financial health. Please consider making a bequest to FFS or including us as a beneficiary in your planned giving. Remembering us in this way will help us fulfill Mildred’s passion and vision for eye and vision research for many years to come.

As always, we thank you for your partnership with us during 2017 – as a donor, grantee, Scientific Review Committee member, fundraising volunteer or friend. We look forward to continuing our work together as we find treatments and cures for vision disorders and eye diseases.

Sincerely yours,

Norman J. Kleiman, Ph.D. Arthur Makar
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
2017 Grants-in-Aid

Grants-in-Aid (GIA) are intended to fund pilot projects and generate preliminary results for investigators who have limited or no other research funding. Grants-in-Aid are awarded to junior faculty members who are developing their independent scientific skills. A majority of Grant-in-Aid recipients go on to successfully compete for larger, multi-year awards from NIH or other governmental and private sources, utilizing preliminary results generated by their FFS-funded GIA award.

Eleftherios Paschalidis Illos, PhD
A novel titanium keratoprosthesis
Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, Harvard Medical School
FFS – Eye Bank for Sight Restoration Grant-in-Aid award

Francois Lebreton, PhD
Bacterial conjunctivitis
Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, Harvard Medical School

John T. Pena, MD, PhD
Diabetic retinopathy
Weill Cornell Medical College
FFS – International Retinal Research Foundation Grant-in-Aid award

2017 Post-Doctoral

Post-Doctoral Awards support individuals with a doctorate (PhD, MD, DrPH, OD or DVM) who are interested in academic careers in basic or clinical research in ophthalmology, vision or related sciences. Awardees typically spend a year or more engaged in vision and eye research under the supervision of a senior scientist/clinician mentor.

Brian A. Allen, PhD
Visual cortex reorganization in individuals with partial blindness
University of Washington, Seattle
Mentor: Ione Fine, PhD

William M. Johnson, PhD
Exfoliation Glaucoma
Duke University
Mentor: W. Daniel Stamer, PhD
FFS – Glaucoma Research Foundation Award

Scott J. Neal, PhD
Retinal development and function
Upstate Medical University, SUNY
Mentor: Francesca Pignoni, PhD

Selina S. Solomon, PhD
An optogenetic study of feedback pathways in visual cortex
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Mentor: Adam Kohn, PhD

Since 2014, Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine has received five Fight for Sight grants. One of the significant non-financial benefits of the program is in how former FFS grantees mentor their younger colleagues. Rebecca McGreal, PhD, who received a 2016 Post-Doctoral Award, was mentored by Alves Cvekl, PhD, recipient of a 1998 Grant-in-Aid. Other faculty, myself included, have also served as mentors, learning more about FFS in the process. This institutional peer support is often the beginning of rewarding professional affiliations and lifelong friendships.

Roy S. Chuck, MD, PhD, Chair, Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Summer Student Fellowships are awarded to undergraduates, graduate and medical students interested in pursuing eye-related clinical or basic research. For most students, this is their first exposure to eye or vision research, and the experience has helped influence many students to choose academic ophthalmology or eye and vision research as a full-time career.

Davis Uzo Anugo
Corneal diseases
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Mentor: Roy S. Chuck, MD, PhD
FFS – Millicent Bellah Summer Student Fellowship

Ganiru Anunike
Glaucoma
Case Western Reserve University
Mentor: Carol B. Toris, PhD

Sandeep Aryal
Lens development and cataract
University of Delaware
Mentor: Salil A. Lachke, PhD
FFS – Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Foundation Award

Charles Gallagher
Pediatric amblyopia
Cleveland Clinic
Mentor: Fatema Ghasia, MD

Zachary Goldsmith
Retinoblastoma
University of Tennessee Health Science Center
Mentor: Vanessa Morales-Tirado, PhD

Ishita Gupta
Glaucoma
Case Western Reserve University
Mentor: Padmanabhan Pattabiraman, PhD

Alexandra Hunt
Radiation cataract
Columbia University
Mentor: Norman Kleiman, PhD
FFS – Basil Worogul Lens Research Award

Phuong-Thi Lam
Diabetic keratopathy
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
Mentor: Dimitrios Karamichos, PhD

Yuan Liu
Neurodegenerative eye diseases
University of Miami
Mentor: Richard Lee, PhD

Danielle Pellack
Glaucoma
University of Iowa
Mentor: Michael Anderson, PhD
FFS – John & Anita LaSpina Summer Student Fellowship

Corinne Renner
Glaucoma
University of Maryland
Mentor: Osamah Saeedi, MD
FFS – Glaucoma Research Foundation Award

Mahbubul Shihan
Secondary cataract
University of Delaware
Mentor: Melinda K. Duncan, PhD

Adanna Udeh
Optic nerve regeneration
University of Miami
Mentor: Abigail Hackam, PhD
FFS – Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Foundation Award
Scientific Review Committee (SRC)

The **Scientific Review Committee (SRC)** is charged with reviewing and evaluating grant applications for Summer Student Fellowships, Post-Doctoral Awards and Grants-in-Aid. It is composed of prominent research scientists, academic ophthalmologists and clinician scientists representing a broad range of disciplines in ophthalmology, vision and eye research. Many received a FFS grant earlier in their career and/or have served as FFS mentors to the next generation of awardees.

**FFS** strives to create a diverse group of reviewers representing many of the best academic and clinical institutions across the country, who help us choose the best and brightest young students and scientists for our awards. Our review process is modeled on the peer review system utilized by the National Institutes of Health, which evaluates and ranks each application on scientific merit, strength of institutional resources and clinical relevance. The SRC meets annually to review award applications. We are extremely grateful for their assistance, dedication and hard work.

### 2017 Reviewers

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  Akron Children’s Hospital
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  Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
- Abigail S. Hackam, PhD  
  Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
- Anna K. Junk, MD  
  Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
- Victor L. Perez, MD  
  Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
- Vittorio Porciatti, D.Sc.  
  Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
- Wei Li, PhD  
  Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
- Sayon Roy, PhD  
  Boston University
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  Brigham and Women’s Hospital
- John Ubels, PhD  
  Calvin College
- Graham Quinn, MD,MSCE  
  Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
- Stephen Tsang, MD, PhD  
  Columbia University
- Lin Wang, MD, PhD  
  Devers Eye Institute
- Vadim Arshavsky, PhD  
  Duke University
- Goldis Malek, PhD  
  Duke University
- W. Daniel Stamer, PhD  
  Duke University
- Cynthia Toth, MD  
  Duke University
- Vittorio Porciatti, D.Sc.  
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- Goldis Malek, PhD  
  Duke University
- W. Daniel Stamer, PhD  
  Duke University
- Cynthia Toth, MD  
  Duke University
- R.V. Paul Chan, MD  
  Duquesne Eye Institute
- Richard Dix, PhD  
  Duke University
- Peter Gehlbach, MD, PhD  
  Johns Hopkins University
- Thomas Johnson, PhD  
  Johns Hopkins University
- Prem Subramanian, MD  
  Johns Hopkins University
- Anne L. Coleman, MD, PhD  
  Jules Stein Eye Institute, UCLA
- Kourosh Nouri-Mahdavi, MD  
  Jules Stein Eye Institute, UCLA
- Ann-Marie Lobo, MD  
  Michigan State University
- Simon Petersen-Jones, DVM, PhD  
  Michigan State University
- Roy S. Chuck, MD, PhD  
  Montefiore Medical Center
- David C. Gritz, MD  
  Montefiore Medical Center
- Barrett Katz, MD  
  Montefiore Medical Center
- Jeffrey S. Schultz, MD  
  Montefiore Medical Center
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- Penny A. Asbell, MD  
  Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- Scott E. Brodie, MD, PhD  
  Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- Michelle Rhee, MD  
  Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- S. Patricia Becerra, PhD  
  National Eye Institute
- Frances Rucker, PhD  
  New England College of Optometry
- Ronald Gentile, MD  
  New York Eye & Ear Infirmary of Mt. Sinai
- Sanjay Kedhar, MD  
  New York Eye & Ear Infirmary of Mt. Sinai
How Can You Help Fight for Sight?

For over seven decades, Fight for Sight has been dependent on individuals, the scientific and medical communities, foundations and corporate philanthropy to advance our mission to support and inspire eye and vision research by funding promising scientists early in their careers. We need your help more than ever today.

Here are some very specific ways for you to help us:

• Make a donation to Fight for Sight on our website, www.fightforsight.org, or mail your contribution to Fight for Sight, 381 Park Avenue South, #809, New York, NY 10016. If you, your spouse or significant other works for an employer with a matching gift program, your gift could be doubled.

• Consider joining the Mildred Weisenfeld Society, a group of individuals who have included Fight for Sight in their estate plans. For specific information about membership in the Mildred Weisenfeld Society or to discuss other planned gift options, please contact Arthur Makar at (212) 679-6060.

• If you are a past Fight for Sight grantee, consider joining our Scientific Review Committee. Membership applications for this critical group of scientist/educators are available on our website, www.fightforsight.org. Go to the “About Us” tab, then to the Scientific Review Committee section.

• Past grantees are the best mentors to future Fight for Sight grant recipients. Encourage your best and brightest younger colleagues to apply for the various grants for which they are eligible.

• Fight for Sight is active on social media including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Please follow us and share your achievements in eye and vision research.

• Fight for Sight needs volunteers to assist with fundraising and with general office duties. If you live or work in the Metro New York area, please call (212) 679-6060 if you wish to become a volunteer.

www.fightforsight.org
**Financial Highlights**

Generous donors and prudent financial management are critical to FFS’s success. The numbers from our 2017 audit underscore our expertise in this area. FFS’s program spending ratio was 68%. This means that for every dollar spent, 68 cents went towards program services.

**SOURCE OF FUNDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions and grants</td>
<td>$88,498</td>
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<td>Legacies and bequests</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest and dividends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net realized and unrealized gain on investments</td>
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<td>Other revenue</td>
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<td><strong>Total operating revenue</strong></td>
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**EXPENSES**

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<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Supporting services:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$633,891</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Change in net assets**

($148,609)

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In 1989, while a fellow at Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, I received a Grant-In-Aid which, as it did for so many of my colleagues, helped launch my career as an ophthalmology researcher. A few years later, while at New England Medical Center - Tufts University, I had the opportunity to mentor Drs. Tamar Pedut-Kloizman and Lisolette Pieroth, who received a FFS Post-Doctoral Award (1995) and Summer Student Fellowship (1996) respectively. Dr. Pedut-Kloizman has gone on to a distinguished career at Bnai Zion Medical Center in Haifa and has also collaborated with me on scholarly articles relating to glaucoma. Dr. Pieroth has also gone on to a distinguished career in ophthalmology and, like Dr. Pedut-Kloizman, has been a collaborator on scholarly works. This is at the heart of a Fight For Sight grant, where someone who begins as a mentor, becomes a colleague and friend in the decades that follow. Mildred Weisenfeld would be proud of how her original vision has grown.

**Joel Schuman, MD,** Chair, Department of Ophthalmology, NYU Langone Health
Partner Spotlight

*Fight for Sight* recognizes and thanks the organizations listed below as grant partners, allowing us to co-fund scientists in specialized areas of eye and vision research.

Since 2012, we have co-funded Summer Student Fellowships focusing on macular degeneration through our partnership with AMDF.

**AMDF**

Fight for Sight co-funds a Summer Student Fellowship focused on aniridia research in partnership with Aniridia Foundation International.

**Aniridia Foundation International**

A Summer Student Fellowship, Post-Doctoral Award and Grant-in-Aid are eligible for funding in partnership with the Choroidermia Foundation.

**Choroidermia Research Foundation**

A new Post-Doctoral Award was created in partnership with the Curing Retinal Blindness Foundation.

**Curing Retinal Blindness Foundation**

Since 2012, we have co-funded Summer Student Fellowships focusing on macular degeneration through our partnership with AMDF.

Two Summer Student Fellowships are offered annually through a partnership with the Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Fund.

**Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Fund**

A Post-Doctoral Award and Summer Student Fellowship are funded in partnership with Glaucoma Research Foundation.

**Glaucoma Research Foundation**

Fight for Sight funded its first annual Grant-in-Aid with the International Retinal Research Foundation in 2013. Two Grants-in-Aid are now funded through this partnership.

**International Retinal Research Foundation**

A Summer Student fellowship is available through a partnership with Lirot, the Israeli eye and vision research organization, restricted to students studying in Israel.

**Lirot**

A partnership related to transplantation of eye tissue was brokered in 2012 between *Fight for Sight* and the Lions Eye Institute for Transplant & Research.

**Lions Eye Institute for Transplant & Research**

A Post-Doctoral Award or Grant-in-Aid with The Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC) focused on vision restoration after traumatic nerve injury.

**MTEC**

In partnership with the North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society, we offer a special research fellowship for neurology or ophthalmology residents or fellows pursuing academic research in neuro-ophthalmology.

**North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society**

We have offered a Summer Student Fellowship focusing on ocular immunology in partnership with the Streilein Foundation.

**Streilein Foundation for Ocular Immunology**

Since 2011, we have partnered with The Eye Bank for Sight Restoration, co-funding a Summer Student Fellowship related to corneal transplantation research.

**The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration, Inc.**

We have partnered with Women'sEyeHealth.org to fund a Summer Student Fellowship to study gender-based disparities in vision health, treatment and/or eye disease prevention.

**Women'sEyeHealth.org**

**Basil V. Worgul Lens Research**

Fight for Sight awards the Basil V. Worgul Lens Research Summer Student Fellowship to honor the memory of Professor Basil V. Worgul, who was internationally recognized for his work in radiation cataract.

**Basil V. Worgul Lens Research**
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Estate of Marjorie Louise Connors
Estate of Telsa Albee Laurence
Charles R. Geard, PhD
Since 1946, Fight for Sight has supported and inspired eye and vision research by funding promising scientists early in their careers.