



December 2006

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# Vision Quest

## Happy Holidays!



### Congratulations

to FFB supporters, Joe and Yvonne Felix, who welcomed their new baby boy, Noah, in 2006. The Felix family wants to thank all of you who support the FFB. Please see The Last Word from Yvonne: "The first time I saw him (Noah) and I realized that I could not see his little face smiling at me, the first time I tried to read one of the books someone had given him, I knew that my plight to help cure blindness was only just beginning."

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**Sharon Colle**

*National Executive  
Director*

During the holiday season, we often take time to reflect on the many blessings we hold: family, friends, good health and many more. One of the things that I am most thankful for is **vision** – not only the kind that allows me to see people and places – but the vision held by The Foundation Fighting Blindness.

**Our vision** is to restore the gift of sight to people living with blindness. We are working very hard to make that vision a reality. I'm even more thankful that our vision is possible because of **your support**, our generous and dedicated donors. I would like to thank you and share a letter with you that shows just how much you are making a difference.

A letter from Dr. Robert S. Molday, Ph.D., Professor, CRC in Vision and Macular Degeneration Director, Centre for Macular Research, to The Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB):

Dear FFB,

After decades of basic and clinical research on the visual system and retinal degenerative diseases, I am pleased to report that we now have in place many of the key tools needed to restore sight in individuals affected by some types of inherited retinal diseases.

These recent medical advances now enable researchers to initiate clinical trials that should bring us a giant step closer toward curing blindness. I am writing to you to encourage your donors to consider vision research as a priority over the next few years.

I am part of an international team that has successfully demonstrated proof of principle in curing blindness in a mouse model for X-linked Juvenile Retinoschisis, a retinal degenerative disease that causes significant visual loss in children. We have demonstrated that a single injection of a normal gene into the eyes of 14 day old mice lacking this crucial gene can rescue retinal structure and visual function for the lifetime of the mice (~2 years). We are now extending these studies to determine if delivery of the normal gene to older mice can also recover visual function. These studies will provide a basis for future preclinical and clinical trials aimed at developing a safe treatment to restore vision in children who are affected by this blinding disease.

In another area of research, we are studying the molecular and cellular basis for Stargardt macular degeneration, an early onset inherited retinal disease that causes severe loss in central vision in affected individuals. The knowledge gained from these studies is being used to develop and apply new drug and gene based treatments in animal

models for these diseases. We are hopeful that these model studies will lead to future clinical trials for Stargardt macular degeneration.

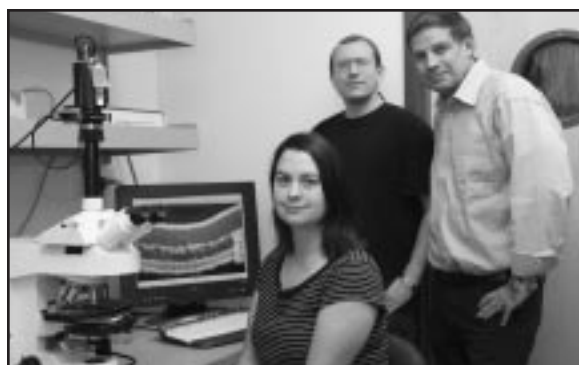
While we do not yet have a cure, we have turned the corner. I expect that within the next several years there will be major breakthroughs in efficacy, safety and treatment for a number of retinal degenerative diseases including some forms of RP and even macular degeneration. In terms of research funding, FFB's immediate need is to fund \$1,400,000 for 2006, but we also need to secure upwards of \$10 million to support vision research in Canada and train graduate students and postdoctoral fellowships for a career in this important field of study. Some of this funding would qualify for matching grants from the Canadian Institute for Health Research and other agencies. The recent elimination of tax on donations of appreciated stock should attract new donors.

This era offers great hope for Canadians affected by retinitis pigmentosa and related retinal degenerative diseases. Additional funding will also be required to

capture and test this population over the next few years. These research programs will also have major implications for people with age-related macular degeneration, a hereditary loss of central vision which affects almost 1,000,000 Canadians.

I am impressed that your team has already secured \$4,000,000, toward the \$7.7 million "A Cure is in Sight Campaign". I can assure you that cures really are in sight. Please spread the word that there has never been a more promising time to invest in vision research.

Sincerely yours,  
Robert S. Molday, Ph.D.



**Robert Molday with FFB supported postdoctoral fellow Celene Grayson and Frank Dyka in front of a micrograph showing a retinal section stained with an antibody to a protein responsible for X-linked Retinitis Pigmentosa.**

## Board of Directors

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**Sharon M. Colle,**

National Executive Director

## SAB New Addition

The Foundation Fighting Blindness is pleased to welcome Dr. Donald J. Zack, M.D., Ph.D. to its Scientific Advisory Board. Dr. Zack has been active in applying the approaches of molecular biology to the study of vision and eye disease. He was trained at Brown University, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Greenwich Hospital, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, and Wilmer. He is now a full professor and the Endowed Chair at Wilmer Ophthalmological Institute, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

in Baltimore, MD. Dr. Zack has experience in the retina and glaucoma in both the clinical and research areas. He is a reviewer of grants for the National Eye Institute, the Fogarty Fellowships and is currently on the Scientific Advisory Board for the FFB - US. He has written a total of 139 publications in the area of the retina and retinal degenerative diseases and has been involved in identifying some key genes in retinitis pigmentosa and macular degeneration.



## Board of Directors New Addition

The Foundation Fighting Blindness is pleased to announce the addition of Janice E. Parente to the FFB's Board of Directors. Janice completed both her Ph.D. and Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Molecular Pharmacology. After developing her skills at the director level in global pharma, Janice founded a Canadian CRO and was its President and Managing Director for 10 years. With the same drive and determination that led her former company to become one of Canada's fastest growing companies for 6 years running, Janice created ethica Clinical Research Inc. Janice was

nominated by Ernst & Young and the Bank of Montreal for the prestigious Entrepreneur of the Year Awards for the Province of Quebec in 2003, 2004 and again in 2005, and became a finalist in the 2005 Health Sciences Category. Janice is also congratulated in ranking 70th of Canada's top 100 women entrepreneurs in the 2006 PROFIT W100 ranking of Canada's Top Women Entrepreneurs by PROFIT Magazine.



## A Tour of the Lab

On September 18, 2006, a lab tour was organized by Dr. Elise Héon, Ophthalmologist-in-Chief, Dept. of Ophthalmology and Vision Sciences at the Hospital for Sick Children. FFB's Board members were invited to sneak a peek at what vision scientists do in the lab.

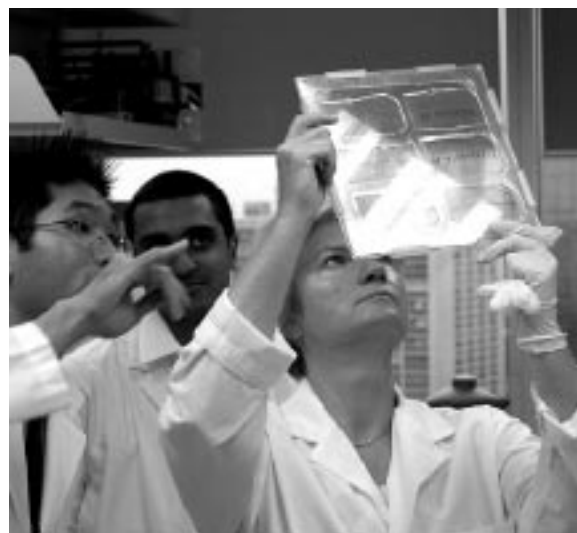


**Sonia Labatt in the SickKids lab.**



**Arthur Labatt (left) in the lab.**

Board members John Snisarenko, Catherine Tillmann, Carol Lithwick, and Garry Lee participated in the tour, as did FFB supporters Arthur & Sonia Labatt and John Breen.



**Catherine Tillman in the SickKids lab.**



**John Snisarenko (foreground) and Dr. Elise Heon (background) in the lab.**

## TELUS Holiday Promotions Benefits The Foundation Fighting Blindness



Canadian wireless telecommunications provider, TELUS, has unveiled two holiday promotions to benefit select charities, including The Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB).

The first is its corporate stores charitable campaign, in which TELUS raises money for charitable organizations through the sale of exclusive GUND plush toys, based on the monkey “spokescritters” featured in TELUS’ national holiday advertising campaign. TELUS is donating a portion of the proceeds to its designated charities, including the FFB. To find out which stores in your area have selected FFB as their charity of choice,

please call us at 1-800-461-3331.

The TELUS’ Holiday Gift campaign kicked off in December, in which selected TELUS clients received a postcard offering them a box of Lindt chocolates, a \$25 gift certificate for Amazon.ca or the option to have TELUS make a \$25 donation to one of its designated Canadian charities, including The Foundation Fighting Blindness, on their behalf. Last year, this campaign raised more than \$80,000 in donations for FFB.

Thank you to TELUS and its customers for their generous support in the fight against blindness.

## Happy 50th Anniversary to Long-time FFB supporters: Al & Shirley Weinstein

The Foundation Fighting Blindness would like to extend its very best wishes to Al and Shirley for their 50th wedding anniversary. They were married, December 15, 1956. Al and Shirley are good friends and longtime dedicated supporters. Mazel Tov!



# Making a Difference

## Appreciating A New Way To Make A Big Difference

Donating appreciated stock is the newest way to reduce taxes and fight blindness. As of May 2, 2006 you don't have to pay any capital gains tax on charitable gifts. Why donate appreciated securities?

- Everyone must dispose of stock at one time or another
- If you sell stock for cash, you pay the government capital gains taxes on 50% of the appreciated amount
- Donating stock eliminates taxes on capital gains and provides a tax deductible receipt for the full market value of the securities

FFB has an account established with its investment custodian, RBC Dominion Securities, to facilitate the receipt of donated publicly listed securities. FFB will sell the securities when they are received and direct the net proceeds to the area of greatest need. Your receipt will equal the value of the security at the closing price on the date that the gift is received in FFB's account at RBC. An electronic transfer of securities usually takes about three days, but delays can occur, depending on whether the stock is in book-based or in certificate form. Therefore, it is important to notify FFB when a transfer-donation has been made. For more information, please contact your stock broker or Paul Moore, Director of Development, FFB at 1-800-461-3331, ext. 26.

## Donate Stock and Save Taxes

<b>Assumes 45% Tax Rate</b>	<b>Sell Stock &amp; Give Cash</b>	<b>Stock Donation As of May 2, 2006</b>
Market Value	\$10,000	\$10,000
Cost Basis	\$2,000	\$2,000
Capital Gain Realized	\$8,000	\$8,000
<b>Tax Payable on Gain</b>	<b>\$3,600</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Net Gift to Charity	\$6,400	<b>\$10,000</b>
Tax Credit on Donation	\$2,880	\$4,500

For more information please call your stock broker or Paul Moore CFRE Director of Development (416) 360-4200 ext 26 or email: pmoore@ffb.ca



# Stock Donation Form

Donate now simply by filling out this form.

### Direct Stock Transfer Instructions :

- 1) Notify Paul Moore, CFRE; Director of Development by phone 416-360-4200 ext 26
- 2) Deliver this form to FFB by fax, mail or email to pmoore@ffb.ca
- 3) Inform your broker

I/We, (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ hereby irrevocably authorize  
 Name of Brokerage Firm \_\_\_\_\_ Broker Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ Fax # \_\_\_\_\_  
 to transfer (#) \_\_\_\_\_ of my Name of Shares \_\_\_\_\_ Shares Symbol \_\_\_\_\_  
 from my account (#) \_\_\_\_\_ to The Foundation Fighting Blindness.  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov \_\_\_\_\_ PC \_\_\_\_\_

The Foundation Fighting Blindness · FINS#: T002 · Account #: 436-08283-5 · US Account #: 436-08283-1-5

### Delivery Instructions :

**Foundation Fighting Blindness**  
 Attn: Paul Moore CFRE, Director of Development  
 12th floor – 890 Yonge St, Toronto, ON, M4W 3P4  
 Telephone : (416) 360-4200 ext. 26  
 Fax : (416) 360-0060

### FFB's Receiving Stock Broker:

**RBC Dominion Securities**  
 Attn: Susan Cadorette  
 Bay-Wellington Tower, BCE Place, 181 Bay St, #700  
 P.O. Box 831, Toronto, ON, M5J 2T3  
 Telephone: (416) 842-3682

## Thank You!

## Researcher Spotlight: Dr. Michel Cayouette

**Born in** Chicoutimi, Quebec

**Age** 35

**Status** Married, New father

**Q: When did you first realize that you wanted to be a scientist?**

**A:** I can't say that there was a specific moment. It was rather a progressive process. As a kid, I have always been curious to know how things work. I would take my toys apart to figure out what was inside and how it could work. This is basically what a researcher does, taking apart biological processes to figure how they work. I also loved to watch the TV show "Quincy", about a pathologist trying to find clues to solve mysteries.

**Q: Why did you decide to pursue the field of vision research?**

**A:** I first started to work in vision research as a graduate student. Right from the start the retina fascinated me. It is such a great organ that performs a truly amazing function in the nervous system (to transform light into nerve influx). I also believe

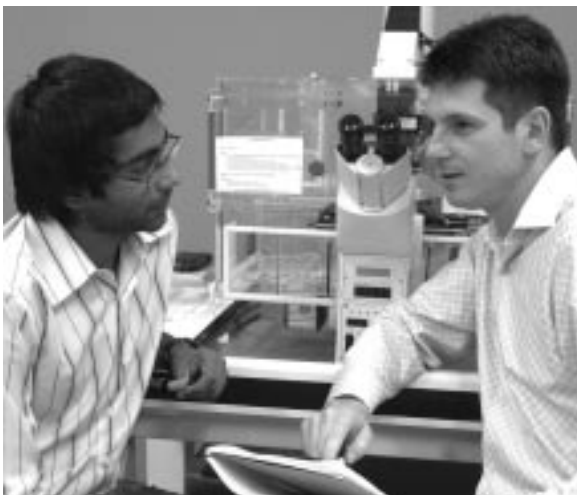
that vision is one of the most important of all senses, losing it must be a devastating experience. I hope the work I do will help give back the gift of sight.

**Q: In 2006, The Foundation Fighting Blindness awarded you with two research grants: the W.K. Stell Award and The RBC Young Investigator Award in AMD research. Tell us about each of these research projects and what this work means to patients.**

**A:** Both projects address the same problem, which is to explain how the various retinal cell types are generated. The ultimate goal is to use the knowledge gained in these studies to manipulate retinal stem cells to generate photoreceptor cells to regenerate retinas. Briefly, we have identified a gene that gives the capacity to retinal stem cells to give rise to the right retinal cell type at the right time during retinal development. For stem cell

therapies, it is critical to understand this process if we want to reconstruct damaged retinas with a specific cell type, for example photoreceptors in the case of AMD. We are currently working to manipulate the expression of this gene in retinal stem cells to help them to specifically give rise to photoreceptor cells.

The W.K. Stell award project is aimed at studying how retinal stem cells make various critical decisions as they multiply. For example, we are interested in understanding how a stem cell divides “asymmetrically” to generate two daughter cells with distinct functions. Such mechanisms are critical in generating cell diversity,



**Dr. Michel Cayouette (right) speaking with a graduate student in his lab at IRCM.**

which lead to the formation of a functional retina. If we better understand how cell diversity is achieved, we hope to be able to manipulate stem cells to direct them towards generating a cell type of particular interest, for example photoreceptors, for cell therapies aimed at AMD or RP.

**Q: You’ve just had a research paper accepted for publication based on work funded by FFB. Please explain what it’s all about, in a way that non-scientists can understand.**

**A:** In this paper, we showed that a certain neurotrophic factor (which is a class of protein that I had shown before to be efficient in slowing-down retinal degeneration in mouse models of RP) has the opposite effect during retinal development; it can actually increase cell death of photoreceptors. This is important because it points to a new role for such factors and forces us to be careful in evaluating its effects in preventing retinal degeneration. It shows that the use of these factors

is context-dependent and although they can be favorable in certain conditions, they could have adverse effects in others.

**Q: What would you consider to be your most meaningful career highlights to-date and why?**

**A:** I can think of two. First, as a graduate student I showed that certain types of proteins, called neurotrophic factors, can dramatically slow down photoreceptor degeneration in mouse models of retinitis pigmentosa. The results of these studies, and that of others, served as a base for a clinical study in which such neurotrophic factors are delivered into the eyes of patients with retinal degenerations. Although it is still too early to know whether these approaches are going to work, it is very gratifying for a scientist to see something he worked on in the lab is reaching the patient. After all, this is our ultimate goal!

More recently, my work as a postdoctoral fellow demonstrated that the cells that give rise to the

different retinal cell types during normal development have a hard-wired intrinsic developmental program built into them. This is exciting because if we can understand how this program is set and how it is played out, then we could re-program retinal stem cells to reconstruct damaged retinas.

**Q: What can you tell us about yourself that some people may be surprised to know?**

**A:** I was not very good at school. Up until the end of high school, I was above average, but at university, as an undergrad student, I was not at all one of those top students. I was average and even sometimes below average. When I decided to go to graduate school, I was right on the lower limit of grades required to be accepted. One professor even told me once that I should forget about doing a career in research... I am glad I did not listen and I did not let him discourage me. This is to show that when one is passionate about something, one can succeed with a lot of work and dedication.

**Q: What philosophy do you live by, in life? In work?**

**A:** Treat others the way you want to be treated. Respect is everything.

**Q: Favorite quotes?**

**A:** "Make everything as simple as possible, but no simpler"

"Imagination is more important than knowledge"

- Albert Einstein

**Q: 2006 marks the year that you joined FRB's research family, but more importantly it's the year you added a new addition to your family. Tell us about it.**

**A:** Our daughter Alicia, our first child, was born on April 9th 2006. Of course, like any parent, we were full of joy and very excited to meet her and to see that she was healthy. She is so much fun and everyday is a new adventure with her. We are both very excited! I will always remember the day I came back from the hospital with my wife and Alicia. It was April 11th and of course it was exciting to bring her home. But that day, I also received an official email from Harry Veening at FFB to inform me that the

grants that I submitted had been approved for funding, I was ecstatic! For me it was the icing on the cake to get the news on the day that I came back from the hospital with Alicia. What a beautiful day!



**Dr. Michel Cayouette with his lovely wife, Christine Jolicoeur, and adorable daughter Alicia Cayouette.**

**Q: Why is now an exciting time in retinal research? What do people have to look forward to in the next 10 years?**

**A:** There is a lot going on in retinal research at the moment. In my opinion, the possibility of using stem cells to regenerate retinas is very promising, and the retina is probably the part of the nervous system where stem cells are most likely to be

useful sooner than any other areas of the nervous system. However, we need to be careful and there is a lot of work to be done before we can start using stem cells in the clinic. Nonetheless, the potential is real and research progresses very rapidly in this field. I would not dare give a time frame for any of this though, as history has proven that scientists are very bad at judging when a discovery will directly translate to the patients.

**Q: Is there anything you want to say to the committed individuals who support The Foundation Fighting Blindness?**

**A:** First, I would like to take this unique opportunity to thank you all very much for helping in funding our work. I can assure you that we are working very hard and doing our best to take us closer to a cure for retinal degenerations. Your support to the FFB is essential to keep cutting-edge research going. For us scientists, we need funding to do our research and the budget of federal granting agencies is not enough to support all the excellent

research projects submitted to them. As a result, sometimes excellent and promising research never get funded because of lack of funds. It is by getting our projects funded by a foundation such as the FFB that these projects can go on. Otherwise, we could not do this research and this would slow down progress towards a cure for retinal degenerative diseases.

In addition, by funding research your donations help in the formation of tomorrow's Canadian scientists. This is critical for the future of our economy and for the health of Canadians. A society filled with highly qualified people is rich and prosperous. Your investment in FFB is therefore not only essential to help find a cure for retinal diseases, but also for the future of Canadian vision research.

**Thank you.**

## **FFB/CIBC Children's Vision Research Registry: Update**

In September 2004, Dr. Elise Héon, of The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), was awarded a five-year grant by The Foundation Fighting Blindness/CIBC to develop a Children's Vision Research Registry for inherited retinal dystrophies.

The project is now well into its second phase whereby the development and validation of the registry is near completion. Dr. Héon and her team are on schedule, with approximately 130 patients registered and over 200 consents signed and returned.

The mandate set by Dr. Héon for the next three years is to first continue implementing the registry for the SickKids patient population diagnosed with an inherited retinal dystrophy. The registry will then extend to the four major Canadian ocular genetics sites. Dr. Héon will also ask community ophthalmologists to work closely with these sites including SickKids to refer only those patients suspected or diagnosed with

a retinal dystrophy giving them an opportunity to also be involved in the registry. The future goal of the registry is for it to be implemented throughout the country and even abroad. The development, validation, and implementation of the registry can only be accomplished through generous donations such as that received from CIBC. More funds however, will be required to allow the registry to be maintained through the years.

This initiative was approved by the Research Ethics Board of SickKids. The creation of this registry is for patients diagnosed with retinal dystrophies, physicians and scientists. The goals of this project are first to identify and register patients affected with retinal dystrophies, especially if a molecular diagnosis is identified. Second, it is to collect a minimum standard of information describing the retinal function and medical issues relating to patients. Third is to allow scientists to access a specific patient population (e.g. a specific disease type, a specific age or a specific gene change etc.) for research. This gives patients more opportunities to participate in studies including clinical trials assessing new treatments.

## **FFB researcher discovers new gene that causes childhood blindness**

Researcher Dr. Robert Koenekoop and his colleagues have made an important new discovery in the genetics of childhood blindness, thanks to funding from The Foundation Fighting Blindness.

The new study identified the gene most often responsible for LCA (Leber Congenital Amaurosis), the most common form of hereditary blindness. LCA causes blindness from birth or during the first few months of life. "This discovery represents a significant advance in the fight against this debilitating condition," says Dr. Koenekoop, Director of the McGill Ocular Genetics Centre at the MUHC (McGill University Health Centre) and Associate Professor in Ophthalmology, Human Genetics at McGill University.

About 600 patients with LCA are currently being diagnosed and managed at the McGill Ocular Genetics Center of the MUHC,

directed by Dr. Koenekoop. The disorder affects 1 in 30,000 newborns, and is currently incurable. "This is about to change, however," says Dr. Koenekoop. "Our discovery has major implications for improved screening. It also opens avenues for treatment of LCA."

Discovery of the new (CEP290) gene and a single mutation found in 20 percent of LCA patients will significantly speed up the genetic testing process for blind children. From a treatment point of view, this discovery gives researchers clues about how to treat the disease and opens the door for human gene replacement trials. If future trials are successful, gene replacement therapy may not be far off. To continue this research, more funding is needed!

The team's research, which was funded by the Foundation Fighting Blindness Canada, was published in the September 2006 issue of The American Journal of Human Genetics.

To read the full LCA press release, visit [www.ffb.ca](http://www.ffb.ca), Newsroom, For immediate release. Or go directly to: <http://www.ffb.ca/koenekoop/index.html> to watch CTV National News coverage of the discovery.

# 14th Retina International World Conference –

Brazil October 20th to 22nd

## **Science and Patients: Partnership for the Future**

Doctors and researchers specializing in retinal diseases came from all over the world to attend the 14th Retina International World Conference in Brazil on October 20th to 22nd. They delivered presentations on the following subjects: clinical and genetic aspects of inherited retinal dystrophies, clinical trials and treatment therapies, patient registries, artificial vision, Age-related Macular Degeneration treatment possibilities and more.

One of the keynote speeches was presented by Matthew LaVail, Ph.D., Director of the Kearn Family Center for the Study of

Retinal Degeneration, University of California. The topic of his talk was “Neuroprotective Therapy for Retinitis Pigmentosa and AMD”.

His research focuses on the causes of photoreceptor degeneration and how to protect photoreceptors from dying to prevent or delay the onset of blindness. His team studies rodent models with photoreceptor degenerations, like those that occur in human diseases such as retinitis pigmentosa and macular degeneration. Currently this research is aimed at developing medical therapies for these diseases.

Research has shown that injecting a growth factor into the eye dramatically reduces the rate of photoreceptor degeneration in a rat model for inherited retinal degeneration. Growth factors are proteins which induce proliferation

of cells. They are necessary to direct tissue development by controlling cell growth. Dr. LaVail and colleagues are testing growth factors as therapeutic substances to slow down the retinal degeneration progress. Growth factors are also referred to as “survival factors”.

One of the hurdles that must be overcome for survival factors to be used effectively in the human eye is the method of delivery. Because the agents cannot enter the eye via a systemic injection, they must be injected directly into the eye.

Dr. LaVail explained that a vision-preserving protein was successfully delivered to the retinas of 10 patients with late-stage retinitis pigmentosa in a Phase I human clinical trial conducted by a biotechnology company called Neurotech at the National Eye Institute.

Neurotech’s tiny delivery device (six millimeters in length), which uses their patented Encapsulated Cell Technology (ECT), was implanted

into one eye of each patient for six months. The ECT secreted a photoreceptor-preserving protein known as ciliary neurotrophic factor (CNTF). Neurotech reported that the devices were safe, well-tolerated, and still contained viable, protein-producing cells after they were removed. Some patients also showed improvements in their visual acuity.

ECT has the potential to preserve or restore vision in many forms of RP, regardless of the genetic abnormality. Furthermore, it is one of the few emerging treatments for dry AMD. Phase II trials of Neurotech’s treatment device and protein are being planned.

Details of the Phase II trial are forthcoming soon, and will be available from FFB.



# Upcoming Events

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## **6th Annual Valentine Dinner & Dance Fundraiser**

**Saturday February 17, 2007**

**Julius Roman Empire Banquet Hall  
2201 Finch Ave. West**

**Disc Jockey, Door Prizes, Raffle, Silent Auction, Live Entertainment**

**Adults: \$65 Under 14: \$45**

**Antipasto buffet, 3 Course Meal, Deluxe Open Bar**

For a donation, gift contribution or tickets, contact:

Vince or Rosa Lombardi @ 416-633-7417

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## **8th Annual Achilles St. Patrick's Day 5K Run/Walk – 3rd Party Fundraising Opportunity**

**Sunday March 11, 2007, Exhibition Place**

By participating on behalf of FFB, every dollar pledge (100%) goes back to FFB.

**The cost for a team of 10 runners/walkers is \$300 and \$30 for each additional team member over ten. Each team member receives official event t-shirt, hot Irish stew and a pint of beer.**

Pre-registration: March 8-10, 2007

Visit: [www.achillestrackclub.ca](http://www.achillestrackclub.ca)

## **NHL Fantasy Hockey Draft**

**Tues. April 10, 2007**

**Hockey Hall of Fame, Toronto, ON**

Chair: TBA

**Visit [www.ffb.ca](http://www.ffb.ca), Events, NHL Fantasy Draft**

**or contact: Jackie Davies, 416-360-4200, ext. 30**

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## **Blind Boys of Alabama Concert**

**April 12, 2007, Dominion Chalmers Church**

**35 Cooper St, Ottawa**

**Tickets are \$45. VIP tickets \$150**

**Contact: Jackie Davies, 416-360-4200, ext. 30**

# Comic Vision 2007

Monday, April 23  
London Convention Centre  
London, ON



Tuesday, April 24  
OE Banquet & Conference Centre, Oakville, ON

Wednesday, April 25  
Kool Haus, Toronto, ON

## New This Year

Thursday, April 26  
Vancouver's Funny Bone, Vancouver, BC

**Comic Vision is a fun-filled evening of standup comedy which has raised over \$523,000 for vision research and has become the most popular comedy fundraising event of the season.**

**This year Comic Vision has expanded to four great evenings of laughter - Toronto, Oakville, London and Vancouver.**

**Please visit our new website [www.comicvision.ca](http://www.comicvision.ca) for more information or contact Ann Morrison at 800-461-3331, ext. 32 for sponsorship or ticket inquiries.**

# The Last Word

*By Yvonne Felix*

Seasons greeting everyone! As 2006 is ending, my new role as a mother is just beginning. My baby boy, Noah, is now a healthy 20 pound five-month old and is busting at the seams with personality. Having him in my life has been the most exciting and wonderful experience. It is thrilling to see this world all over again through his eyes: fresh and new.

With all the wonderful things about having a new baby there also comes many challenges. I know that no one can possibly be prepared for what is actually coming. **As a person with vision loss there were things I had not anticipated experiencing as a new mom.** The first time I saw him and I realized that I could not see his little face smiling at me, the first time I tried to read one of the books someone had given him, I knew that my plight to help cure blindness was only just beginning.

I would like to thank The Foundation Fighting Blindness and all of its sponsors and donors for their support over the years. Because of you, I have hope that treatments and cures for



blindness will be found. The research you and FFB is funding will make that happen. Now, more than ever, we need to keep supporting each other and the Foundation. I know that with all your help there will be a cure.

Thank you and Happy Holidays!

Yvonne Felix has Stargardt's disease, otherwise known as juvenile macular degeneration. Not only is Yvonne a new mom, she is an artist and dedicated supporter of The Foundation Fighting Blindness, having donated artwork and sales of her artwork to FFB. Yvonne is a great advocate for FFB, having shared her story with media and having spoken to patients and families at the 2005 Vision Quest Conference.

**FFB thanks you, Yvonne, for The Last Word!**

**Do you have inspiring words to share?**

Write to FFB in 300 words or less and you can have The Last Word. Send to FFB c/o Vision Quest Newsletter or email [info@ffb.ca](mailto:info@ffb.ca).

# Yes... I will help fight blindness!

## Mail Donation!

.....  
**Please fill out and mail your donation form to:**

The Foundation Fighting  
Blindness – Canada  
890 Yonge St., 12th Floor  
Toronto, ON  
M4W 3P4

## Donate Online!

.....  
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You can give a one-time gift, set up **monthly giving** and get information about **corporate matching gifts**.

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### My donation for eye research is:

\$100    \$75    \$50    \$35    Other Amount \$ \_\_\_\_

### Method of Payment:

Cheque    Money Order    Visa    Master Card

Card# \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I want my employer to match my donation

Name of employer \_\_\_\_\_

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In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

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Occasion \_\_\_\_\_

### I would like an acknowledgement card sent to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send me information on your Commitment to a Cure monthly giving plan.**

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The Foundation Fighting Blindness

a cure is in sight

# Vision Quest



Vision Quest is published by The Foundation Fighting Blindness to inform readers of research directed to finding the causes, treatments and cures of retinitis pigmentosa, macular and related retinal diseases, as well as providing Foundation news.

**To contact the Foundation** call 1-800-461-3331 or email: [info@ffb.ca](mailto:info@ffb.ca)

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## New Address!

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