



APOA Newsletter Issue 1 Volume 2

APOA News & Updates

By Mandeep Banwait

Community Service Program

Anyone who knows of strong volunteering opportunities in their area is encouraged to spread the word through us and our website. You can also submit pictures, stories, and videos to promote these opportunities.

Elite Membership Program

The APOA is in the process of establishing an elite member status to those who pay a fee of \$35. Those with this status will receive benefits, titles, and other opportunities that will be unique to these members.

Member of the Month

Apply to be member of the month by sending in a 500-1500 word essay about yourself and your accomplishments.

Mentorship Program

The APOA is creating a program in which pre-optometry students can converse with optometry students of various colleges of optometry. This will be done most likely in a group conference format.

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Fun Facts about the Eye

By Tammy Nguyen

The largest eye on earth belongs to the giant squid. The diameter of the giant squid's eyeball is 18 inches in diameter (or roughly 46 centimeters), which can be compared to the size of a regular beach ball.

Out of all the muscles in a human body, the eye muscles are most active. Although surprising at first, when you think about it, they have to make lots and lots of movements in order for you to focus or look in other directions. Not to mention REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep in which the eyes move rapidly. REM sleep occurs when you're dreaming.

Source: 20/20 Optical Facebook

Notable Research

By: Tammy Nguyen

Using Stem Cells to Restore Eyesight

The research team at the University of Sheffield, England has discovered a new technique to help aid in restoring eyesight by using stem cells. Researchers created a new method known as microsterolithography and electrospinning to create a disc, which can be placed over the cornea. The disc is made of biodegradable material will be filled with stem cells for it to proliferate to restore the eye. The disc will have pockets to store and protect the stem cells. Hopefully this new technique will treat patients who suffer from vision loss.

Video of Dr. Lidia Ortega Asencio talking more about the new discovery:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Maw645eENL4&feature=player_embedded

Source: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/253975.php>



Photo provided by Jared Buchansky through Vanessa Meyerowitz showing donated glasses for Sandy victims.

Optometry News

By Vanessa Meyerowitz

Superstorm Sandy Relief Efforts

Following Superstorm Sandy, which hit the New York and New Jersey at the end of October, many organizations and industries have donated time, energy and money to help those affected by the storm. The eye care industry has stepped up to provide vision care to those communities. VSP Vision Care has committed up to \$1 million to the relief effort. Two mobile eyecare clinics, each equipped with an exam room, eyewear dispensary and finishing lab were dispatched to impacted areas. Furthermore, they provided the Red Cross with \$80,000 worth of gift certificates to be distributed. The gift certificates are redeemable at any VSP doctor's office and include a complete eye exam and eyewear.



Volunteers unpacking care packages for Sandy victims. Photo provided by Jared Buchansky through Vanessa Meyerowitz.

Many other individuals in the eye care industry have also taken the initiative to ensure everyone affected by the storm has the proper eye wear. Jared Buchansky used social media to begin his own collection effort. His relief program has received eyewear, safety glasses, readers, cases and uncut lenses and cleaning cloths. Many people have told him that "eyewear was never a thought until he brought it to their attention." Optical dispensaries have been discounting their products, and some, such as Staten Eye Land provided victims with replacement glasses. Optometrists have also contributed by investing their time to provide eye exams to victims.

Our thoughts are with those who are still recovering from Superstorm Sandy. We would like to express our deepest appreciation for everyone who has been involved in the relief effort.

Optometry is One of the Top 100 Jobs

Optometry was listed as number 12 in CNN Money's survey of "Best Jobs in America". The median salary for optometrists is \$105,000, and has an expected growth rate of 33%. One of the benefits of the job is that: "Patients typically aren't in pain or afraid, so visits tend to be low-key, and many stay with the same optometrist for years." Additionally, optometrists

don't have the long hours and emergency calls that many doctors expect. The downsides of being an optometrist is that obtaining an OD degree can be expensive and difficult. View the complete list at <http://money.cnn.com/pf/best-jobs/2012/snapshots/12.html>.

Optometry School Blogs

By: Tammy Nguyen

New England College of Optometry: <http://www.neco424.com/index.html#>

Nova Southeastern University: <http://blogs.nova.edu/bacigalu/>

Pacific University: <http://pacificuoptometry.blogspot.com>

Southern California College of Optometry: <http://optometryadmissions.com>

University of Incarnate Word: <http://sites.uiw.edu/optometryblog/>

Student Doctor Blog <http://studentdoctor.net/>



Eyewear donations being accepted. Photo provided by Vanessa Meyerowitz.



Spotlight on an Optometrist: Dr. Andrea Thau

By Vanessa Meyerowitz

Dr. Andrea Thau is an Associate Clinical Professor at the SUNY College of Optometry and owns a five woman group private practice in Manhattan. Dr. Thau is a leader in Optometry, serving on the American Optometric Association Board of Trustees. Following her passion for providing children with eye care, Dr. Thau was a founding member of InfantSEE®, a national public health program created by the American Optometric Association in partnership with Johnson and Johnson Vision Care, which provides free vision assessments for all children less than one year of age. Dr. Thau is on the board of the New York Children's Vision Coalition, which advocates for mandatory eye examinations for students upon entering school in New York State.

Q: Where did you go to Optometry School, what made you choose that school?

A: I attended SUNY College of Optometry. SUNY's reputation is of being an outstanding institution both in terms of didactic curriculum and clinical experience. SUNY students perform exceptionally well on the National Board examination which is evidence of their excellent academic training. The clinic in New York City was unrivaled, and ensured that one saw a large variety of patients and conditions, making it a very exciting place to be trained. As a clinician, you're only as good as your clinical training. At SUNY, I felt that I would receive the clinical training necessary to become a great clinician. Furthermore, I was interested in staying in the New York area, and by going to SUNY I would make many contacts that would be helpful in the future.

Q: Why and when did you decide to go into optometry?

A: Some people say it was my destiny; my first word was light. I made the decision in 7th grade after doing a science project on vision. My father was an optometrist which constantly exposed me to the profession. My father was my role model. He was the only person I knew who truly loved what he did. Optometry blended my love of math and science with my desire to help others. Some people say that after life itself G-d's greatest gift is the gift of vision. I find it very exciting to be able to help improve people's quality of life by enhancing, preserving, and protecting their vision.

Q: You did a clinical externship in Israel. What made you decide to do that, and what did you gain from that experience that you wouldn't have gained in USA?

A: It was a great experience. My classmate and I were the first SUNY students ever to be trained outside of our institution. Externships are now a regular part of clinical training. Israel is a drier environment. Because of that, we did many gas permeable hard contact lens fittings because many patients then were unable to wear soft lenses as comfortably. We also didn't have all the advanced equipment that is common in the U.S., so we had to become very good at the basic skills without relying on technology.

Q: What do you think is the job outlook for Optometry?

A: Excellent. There is more and more demand for visual services because of the aging population and greater awareness of vision in children as a result of programs like InfantSEE®. Society demands much more from vision because of computer and hand held device use. These factors result in an increased demand for eye care. The eyes are something people use every hour and there is so much we can do to enhance vision, especially in children.

Q: Are you pleased with the profession? What do you like/dislike about it?

A: I like almost everything. Each day and every interaction is exciting. I get to play "eye doctor detective". It is very rewarding to figure out what the problem is and how to best help the patient. I also love that you can custom tailor optometry to what you want it to be. You can work in private practice if you would like

to own and operate your own business, you can work for another optometrist, a hospital, a HMO, or a nursing home, or you can teach. In addition, you can choose which specialties you would like to practice such as pediatrics, geriatrics, low vision, primary care, contact lenses, vision therapy, or ocular disease.

Q: How did you get so involved with Children's vision, being a founding member of InfantSEE® and a member of Children's Vision Committee?

A: My father practiced full scope optometry. He examined patients of all ages but was particularly passionate about helping children. It breaks your heart to see children receiving their first eye examination at age nine, only to discover that they had been struggling with a vision problem their whole life. My dad met with the New York City Board of Education to encourage them to have eye examinations for all of their students. In a sense I am carrying on his life's work. Of all the patients we care for, when you examine children and improve their vision, you have the opportunity to change their life. Children don't know they have a problem. They assume what they see is normal which is why it is so important that every child undergoes an annual comprehensive eye examinations. I feel that I have the privilege and the obligation to give children the gift of good vision.

Q: You have served as a leader and spokesperson for vision, being interviewed on NBC, CBS and other networks and even speaking before congress. Why do you think it is so important for optometrists to be leaders in vision care?

A: Optometry is a legislated profession; we can only do what the laws enable us to do. The way that I am able to practice is the result of the efforts of the volunteer optometrists before me. I saw how my father and his colleagues in the New York State Optometric Association and the American Optometric Association advocated on behalf of optometry. I witnessed the profound changes that occurred in my lifetime as a result of those efforts. We went from a profession that was drugless to one that allows us to diagnose and treat diseases; from not being able to participate in Medicare and third party insurance to one that can. I see it as my duty to pay it forward. One of the secrets of being involved in optometry is that no matter how much you give, you get back more! First of all it makes practicing even more fun. You meet great people. The optometrists that are most involved are the most successful. When you interact with colleagues and help create the future you are engaged and able to respond proactively to change. You learn clinical and practice management tips that help you be very successful.

Q: What advice do you have for students considering optometry?

A: Optometry is a fabulous profession. If you like science, math and helping people, spend time observing optometrists to see if this is something you enjoy. Visit optometry schools. Take a tour and learn more about this meaningful and important profession. If you enjoy it, then go for it!

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