

# 2020 IMPACT 2024 REPORT



**Retina Foundation**  
Leading Research... Saving Sight

# A MEDICAL DESTINATION



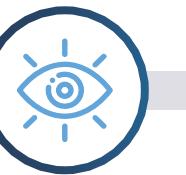
## Our Mission

The mission of the Retina Foundation is to prevent vision loss and restore sight through innovative research and treatment.



## Our Vision

The global medical destination for innovative research on degenerative retinal diseases.



## Our Values

Patient Focused  
Dallas Based  
Global Impact



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Letter from Leadership	<b>4-5</b>
2024 Goals	<b>6-7</b>
2024 Accomplishments	<b>8-9</b>
Hope Backed by Science	<b>10-11</b>
Laboratory Directors	<b>12-13</b>
Advancing Scientists	<b>14-17</b>
Rods & Cones Foresight Circle	<b>18-19</b>
Visionary Luncheon	<b>20-21</b>
Eye on Innovation	<b>22-27</b>
Thank You Donors	<b>28-29</b>
2024 Board of Directors	<b>30</b>
Staff and Departments	<b>31-33</b>
The Gift of Sight	<b>34-35</b>



# A LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Friends of the Retina Foundation



In 2024, we made significant strides in our mission to save vision, thanks to your unwavering support and belief in our work. From critical breakthroughs in our research to a record-breaking Visionary Luncheon to serving more patients than ever before, I'm proud of all we accomplished at the Retina Foundation last year and am humbled by your continued generosity, which propels our work forward.

Our world-class team of scientists and researchers advanced cutting-edge research with a focus on gene therapy, gene editing and stem cell research, and utilized artificial intelligence and virtual reality technology to find new ways to diagnose and track the progression of retinal degenerative diseases. The innovations and scientific breakthroughs you'll discover in our 2024 Impact Report have the potential to change the future of how we prevent and treat age-related macular degeneration (AMD), inherited retinal diseases (IRDs), such as Stargardt disease and retinitis pigmentosa (RP) and pediatric eye conditions.

Most importantly, these advancements offer hope to patients and families who once faced a future of irreversible vision loss. Patients like Jeanne Klein, one of the first participants in Dr. Srinivasa Sripathi's first-of-its-kind AMD sibling study, and Brad Wolken, who is encouraged by Dr. Mark Pennesi's extensive research to help Stargardt patients slow the progression of vision loss or even regain some of their lost vision. You'll read more about their stories in the pages to come and how they have found hope at the Retina Foundation.

Last year, our annual Visionary Luncheon inspired a \$250,000 matching gift with the AMD Match Challenge, adding \$500,000 to the funds raised. 2024 also saw the expansion of our Eye on Innovation, The Series program beyond Dallas to include events in Austin and Northwest Arkansas. Eye on Innovation drives collaboration between leaders

in the business, civic, philanthropic and medical fields to address current issues related to the latest innovations in ocular research and treatments that have an impact on the regional and state level. As we continue to grow our programming, I'm excited about the opportunity we have to highlight the Retina Foundation as a medical destination for ocular research and clinical trials, with the ultimate goal of serving more patients across the country.

Looking ahead, we have some big goals to hire additional MDs, increase clinical trials, upgrade our facilities, invite additional leaders to be on our board and explore more solutions to prevent vision loss and treat ocular diseases through personalized medicine. And we can't do it without the help of generous donors like you. Your steadfast support and investment in our mission allows us to provide care for patients at no cost and offer hope to those who need it most.

Thank you for being part of our journey to prevent vision loss and restore sight through innovative research and treatment. Together, we will save vision—one patient and one breakthrough at a time.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl A. Csaky".

**Karl Csaky, MD, PhD**  
Chief Executive & Medical Officer  
Retina Foundation

# 2024 GOALS

The Retina Foundation has identified the following goals to guide the organization for the next five years.



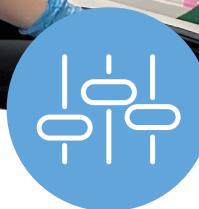
## Lead in Innovation in AMD, IRD and Pediatrics

- Recruit and retain the best and brightest
- Expand facilities to accommodate cutting edge technologies



## Accelerate achieving solutions by 50%

- Increase the number of clinical trials and the number of participants by 50%
- Focus on laboratory translational research in AMD pathology and treatments



## Implement best practices for operations to ensure sustainable and scalable infrastructure

- Apply best business practices to operations and finance
- Assess measurable outcomes
- Expand infrastructure facilities



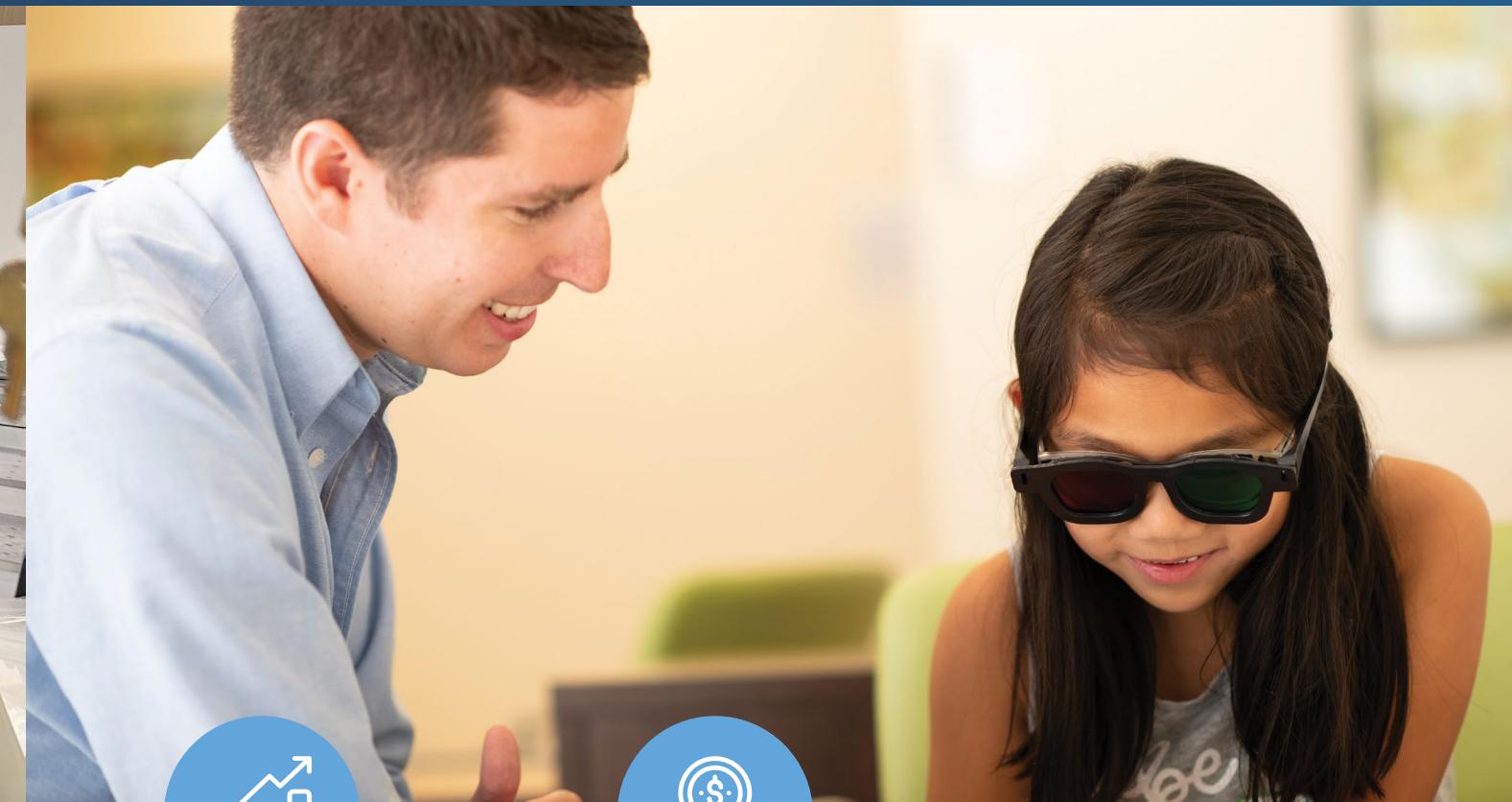
## Increase the number of patients served

- Expand our present marketing/communication locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- Hire additional MD's to oversee clinical expansion



## Increase revenue to support objectives

- Increase research dollars by 50%
- Increase clinical research dollars by 50%
- Double our present endowment



# 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**1** Dr. Srinivasa Sripathi launched a groundbreaking sibling study utilizing stem cells to uncover solutions for AMD by analyzing the genetic differences between two sibling's cells. The study is being conducted at the Henderson Ocular Stem Cell Laboratory with the goal of determining why two siblings have the genetic factor for AMD, yet only one presents with the disease.

**2** The Retina Foundation enrolled the first patient in Beacon Therapeutics' VISTA Phase 2/3 Trial for AGTC-501. The investigative gene therapy trial focuses on patients with specific gene mutations in X-linked retinitis pigmentosa, a severe form of retinitis pigmentosa that causes blindness in men. Dr. David Birch is coordinating patient participation.

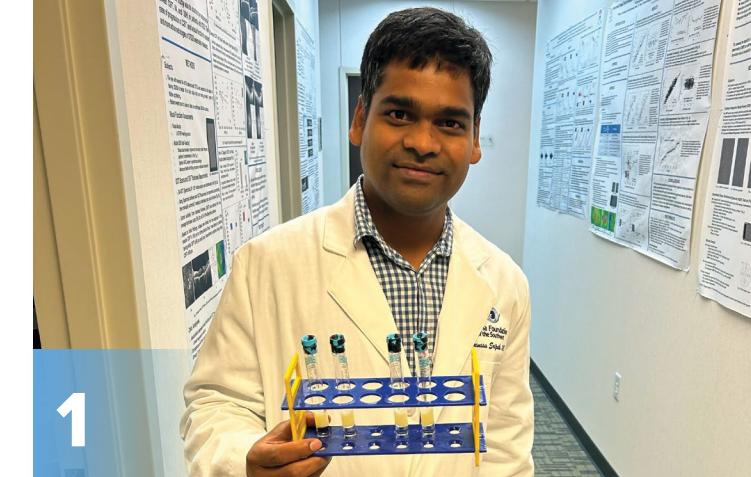
**3** A study co-authored by Dr. Mark Pennesi as the lead scientist for the Phase 1/2 BRILLIANCE clinical trial was featured in The New England Journal of Medicine. The trial provides hope for improved vision using CRISPR gene editing in patients with Leber Congenital Amaurosis, a rare inherited retinal disease for which there is currently no FDA-approved treatment.

**4** Dr. Yi-Zhong Wang is developing deep machine learning that can deliver Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) scans within minutes instead of weeks.

These scans will diagnose patients with various stages of retinitis pigmentosa. By regularly updating the model, Dr. Wang aims to efficiently identify the patient's level of vision loss, then predict the amount of vision loss the patient will have over time.

**5** Dr. Eileen Birch and Dr. Yi-Zhong Wang are collaborating on an innovative initiative utilizing AI models to identify children at high risk for amblyopia, characterized by poor vision in one eye, or strabismus, a condition characterized by misalignment of the eyes. Dr. Birch has developed a screening questionnaire for parents and is compiling eye images of children diagnosed with strabismus to be analyzed by AI models programmed by Dr. Wang. This method can be used in medical or community settings to efficiently diagnose children.

**6** A partnership with SpliceBio provides hope for new treatment options for patients with Stargardt disease, a rare genetic eye disease. The Retina Foundation enrolled the first two patients in SpliceBio's POLARIS Study, where the biotechnology company aims to develop a new gene therapy approach to treat Stargardt. Dr. Mark Pennesi is coordinating the patients' participation in the study.



**1**



**6**



**7**



**2**



**3**



**4**



**5**

**7** Dr. Neha Tandon is utilizing virtual reality (VR) technology to advance the way we understand and monitor AMD. The Retina Foundation is the first and only site to conduct a study using Vivid Vision's new VR-based visual field test with AMD patients. Participants simply wear a headset and follow an interactive process while their doctor monitors results remotely. The results of this research could lead to more efficiency in making informed decisions about patient care and the effectiveness of AMD treatments.

**8** Retina Foundation researchers are assessing the effectiveness of a new drug to treat dry AMD through Aviceda Therapeutic's new clinical trial. Dry AMD is an eye condition that progressively impairs vision, for which there is currently no treatment. Dry AMD is the more common and slower-progressing form of AMD caused by the thinning of the macula and buildup of drusen, leading to gradual vision loss. Wet AMD is less common but more severe, caused by abnormal blood vessels leaking under the retina, resulting in rapid and often significant vision loss.

# HOPE BACKED BY SCIENCE

## BRAD WOLKEN'S STORY: Providing More Than Just a Diagnosis

Vision-impairing diseases can impact anyone, and for many patients, the road from initial diagnosis to receiving treatment requires support not only from their family, but also from their physicians. Thanks to the efforts and encouragement from those closest to him, Brad Wolken has the support he needs for the journey ahead.

In 2011, Brad was diagnosed with Stargardt disease—an inherited retinal disease that causes progressive vision loss for those possessing the gene. There is currently no cure. The disease has caused accelerated vision loss for Brad over the past two years.

“

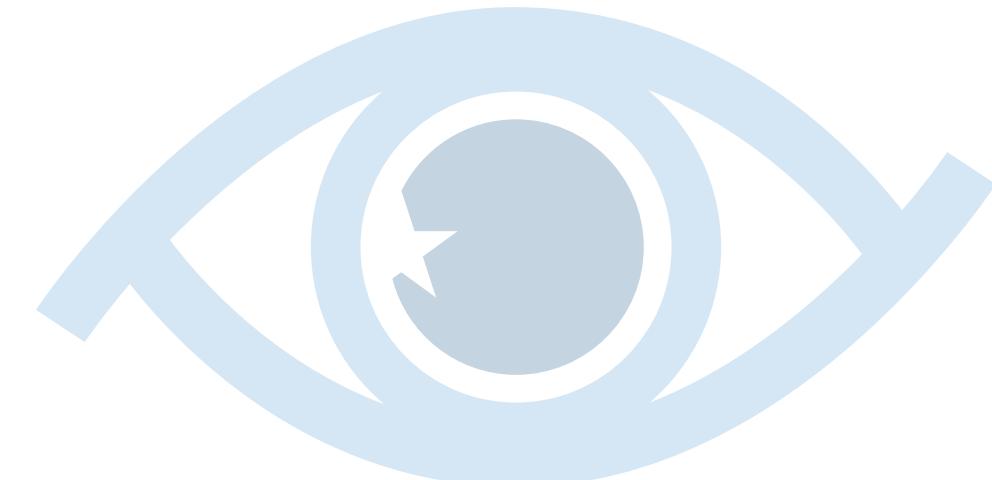
My goal is to stay as close to the Retina Foundation as possible. They care about me, and I care about them. Thanks to the Retina Foundation, I'm hopeful for new treatment options for Stargardt that will slow or halt the progression of my vision loss.

**Brad Wolken**



## Only at the Retina Foundation

Dr. David Birch discovered the gene/genetic marker aligned with Stargardt disease. The Retina Foundation held the first clinical trial for Stargardt as well.



To be closer to his daughter, Brad and his wife moved to Dallas, and he soon became a patient of Dr. Karl Csaky, chief executive and medical officer, at the Retina Foundation. Brad got to know Dr. Csaky on a personal level and notes, "He's busy, but never makes you feel like it." Brad also met with Dr. Mark Pennesi, director of ophthalmic genetics at the Retina Foundation. Together they made a plan to treat his case. While his diagnosis remains difficult to face, Brad now has hope for the future knowing he has the best minds in his corner to uncover solutions.

# LABORATORY DIRECTORS



## KARL CSAKY, MD, PhD

Chief Executive & Medical Officer  
T. Boone Pickens Director, Molecular Ophthalmology  
Laboratory | Director, Clinical Center of Innovation for AMD



## DAVID BIRCH, PhD

Director, Rose-Silverthorne Retinal Degenerations Laboratory



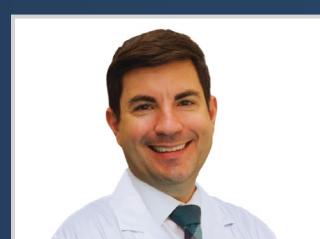
## EILEEN BIRCH, PhD

Director, Crystal Charity Ball Pediatric Vision  
Laboratory Senior Research Scientist



## YI-ZHONG WANG, PhD

Director, Macular Function Laboratory



## MARK PENNESI, MD, PhD, FARVO

Director, Inherited Retinal Degeneration Clinic



## SRINIVASA R. SRIPATHI, PhD

Director, AMD, Henderson Ocular Stem Cell Laboratory

## Just a Glimpse...

There are many honors, grants, presentations and more from Retina Foundation Laboratory Directors in 2024. Here are just a few examples:

### RECOGNITION

With 37,126 citations of her publications, **Eileen Birch, PhD**, had an h-index of 108 on the Google Scholar Profile in 2024. A typical full professor might have an h-index between 30 and 60, with 60 considered “truly unique.” An h-index of 108 is a benchmark for excellence showcasing world-class influence with exceptional impact, durable productivity, academic leadership.

**Karl Csaky, MD, PhD**, was nominated and chosen as a finalist for Achievement in Innovation in the *D* CEO Excellence in Healthcare Awards 2024. The awards honor individuals, companies and organizations in North Texas’ formidable healthcare sector, plus corporate wellness initiatives across all industries.

**Mark Pennesi, MD, PhD**, was awarded the Macula Society’s Young Investigator Award and Lecture in 2024, and he will receive the award in 2025. This honor is given to an individual under 50 years of age whose work gives high promise of a notable advance in the clinical treatment of eye disorders.

### GRANTS

**Eileen E. Birch, PhD**, received a four-year grant from the National Eye Institute to develop and evaluate two alternatives to occlusion therapy for amblyopia, designed to improve treatment adherence and maximize visual outcomes.

**Yi-Zhong Wang, PhD**, was awarded a three-year research grant from the Foundation Fighting Blindness for his project titled *Deep Learning Assisted Measurements of Retinal Layer Metrics as Biomarkers for Progression in Retinitis Pigmentosa*. This funding supports his innovative use of AI-assisted, ultra-high-resolution retinal image analysis, developed in collaboration with the Casey Eye Institute at Oregon Health & Science University.

### PRESENTATIONS

**David Birch, PhD**, joined an influential discussion at the multi-stakeholder meeting on clinical trials for inherited retinal diseases, co-hosted by Retina International, the European Reference Network for Rare Eye Diseases and the Foundation Fighting Blindness.

**Yi-Zhong Wang, PhD**, presented the latest findings from his project titled *Deep Learning Assisted Measurements of Retinal Layer Metrics as Biomarkers for Progression in Retinitis Pigmentosa* at major conferences such as the 2024 ARVO Annual Meeting and the 2024 ARVO Imaging in the Eye Conference.

**Srinivasa R. Sripathi, PhD**, presented cutting-edge work on stem cell modeling, CRISPR gene editing and high-throughput drug screening for dry AMD at the Foundation Fighting Blindness’ VISIONS 2024 conference.

# ADVANCING SCIENTISTS

## A DATABASE OF DISCOVERY: How Kaylie Jones and the Southwest Eye Registry Are Transforming Vision Research

When Kaylie Jones joined the Retina Foundation in 2008 as a research assistant, there was just one clinical trial underway to test the impact of fish oil supplements. Today, that number has grown to more than 25 active trials with 12 more on the horizon. Kaylie has been at the heart of that growth, helping match thousands of patients with cutting-edge treatments through one of the Foundation's most valuable tools: the Southwest Eye Registry.

As a Senior Research Associate, Kaylie manages this powerful database, which has grown from 4,000 participants to over 10,000. The registry is a living archive, tracking patients with inherited retinal diseases (IRDs) over time and helping researchers across the country find clinical trial candidates, uncover gene mutations and refine treatment strategies.

**“** The Southwest Eye Registry started out as a way to keep track of patient data. Now, it's become a launchpad for discovery. Every clinical trial we do starts with the registry.

**Kaylie Jones**



The Southwest Eye Registry is used daily, not just by the Retina Foundation, but also by scientists around the world at no charge. Instead, the goal is collaboration and impact. It includes genetic data, visual acuity measurements, imaging and even VR mobility testing. When new genes are discovered and when new tests are developed, the registry evolves too.

Kaylie is passionate about the real-world impact of her work. Many of the families she sees have never had access to this level of care. Some travel from East Texas, Austin, Arkansas and beyond to be seen at no charge. The Retina Foundation's nonprofit model prioritizes patients, not profits.

## EYES ON THE FUTURE: Brooke Koritala's Passion for Pediatric Vision Health

As a Clinical Research Assistant II, Brooke Koritala works with infants and children at the Retina Foundation, testing for visual disorders that often go undetected in routine screenings.

Amblyopia, or 'lazy eye,' is one of the most common issues she sees. It can be missed if children are only tested binocularly, using both eyes. Testing each eye separately may reveal one is much weaker.

Brooke conducts critical tests for many children who have special needs or are too young to verbally communicate with the Teller Acuity Test. Holding up cards with stripes on one side, she relies on a baby's natural instinct to look toward the pattern and can test infants as young as three months. This leads to referrals from all over the state since the test is not available in most places.

Brooke also helps administer reading, fine motor and gross motor evaluations to better understand how vision affects a child's overall development. She's part of a team working on several studies, including an American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus (AAPOS) 2024 study, which compares physical activity in children with and without amblyopia, and an eye-related quality of life study with Dr. Mark Pennesi for kids with inherited retinal

diseases (IRDs). The latter uses the Pediatric Eye Questionnaire (PedEyeQ), a measurement tool co-developed by Dr. Eileen Birch, in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic, to evaluate how children with eye conditions experience daily challenges, like seeing the board at school or navigating stairs.

Brooke eases the nerves of her young patients by wearing an eye patch first or letting them bring a stuffed animal. "You have to gain not just the child's trust, but the parents' too," she said. "You're working with their most prized possession."



“

Vision is something we take for granted until it's taken away and that loss can begin very early. Working in pediatrics has shown me how crucial early detection really is.

**Brooke Koritala**

Looking ahead, Brooke is working toward becoming a pediatric ophthalmologist and advancing treatments for amblyopia and other childhood vision disorders. “I wasn’t expecting to love research as much as I do,” she said. “It’s changed how I see medicine. Research informs everything we do in the clinic.”

---

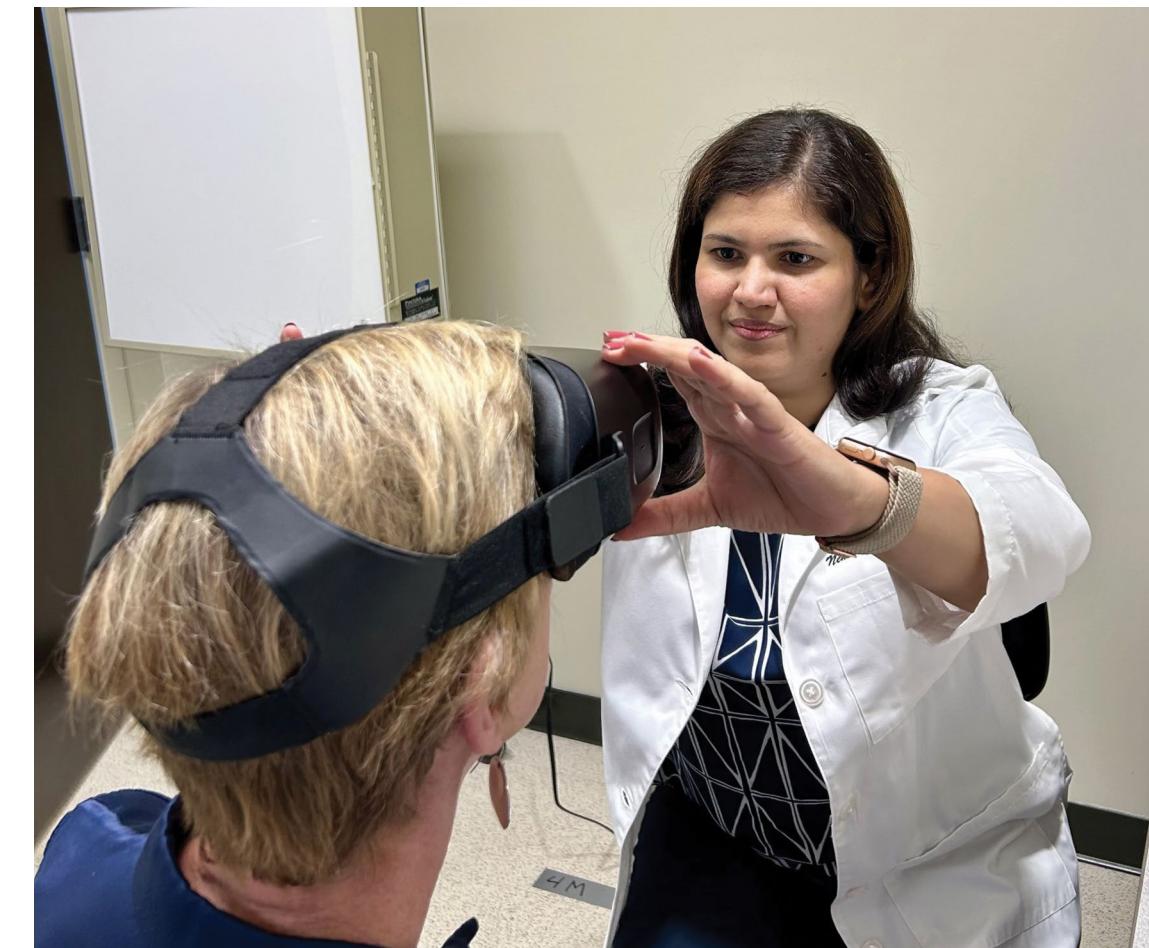
## **FROM THE LAB TO THE CLINIC: Neha Tandon’s Journey to Restoring Sight**

Growing up, Dr. Neha Tandon was always experimenting and asking questions. That curiosity and drive led her from her home in India to the University of Texas at Dallas, where she earned her master’s and PhD in Biological Sciences.

The first in her family to live abroad, she moved alone to the U.S. at just 22 years old to pursue her master’s degree at UT Dallas with little financial support. When a position became available in the PhD program at UT Dallas, the university extended the offer to Dr. Tandon in recognition of her exceptional academic performance and impactful research contributions during her master’s studies.

In 2022, Dr. Karl Csaky invited Dr. Tandon to join his lab, where she initially worked on preclinical research. But something was missing.

“For a long time, I found reward in the behind-the-scenes work, developing new protocols, optimizing them, improving the quality of results,” Dr. Tandon said. “But I realized I wanted to be closer to the impact. I wanted to see, in real time, how our work changed people’s lives.”



Dr. Tandon later transitioned from the lab to the clinic setting, where over the past three years she has gained expertise in assessing visual function and analyzing retinal imaging in patients with age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Dr. Tandon has a strong interest in understanding the relationship between structural retinal changes and functional vision loss in patients with AMD. Her work as a staff scientist aims to uncover why some individuals experience rapid vision decline while others maintain stable vision for years. She is actively involved in advancing visual function testing methods, such as microperimetry, and in

developing innovative approaches, such as virtual reality, to measure visual function loss and predict disease progression in AMD. Her work has begun to gain recognition in the field. Dr. Tandon is currently consulting on clinical trials and advising pharmaceutical companies on optimizing visual function testing methods.

Now at home in Dallas, she continues to seek answers to big questions: Why does AMD impact individuals so differently? Can we intervene earlier? Can we preserve vision longer? And how can we enhance the accuracy and clinical relevance of functional vision testing?

“

Listening to our patients talk about the daily struggles they face with vision loss changed everything for me. It reminds me that what we’re doing isn’t just groundbreaking science, it’s deeply human. We’re helping people, and their children, and their grandchildren.

**Neha Tandon, PhD**

# RODS & CONES FORESIGHT CIRCLE

## Ringing in the New Year

Members of the Rods & Cones Foresight Circle gathered in January for an exclusive event to celebrate the new year and receive an update on the Retina Foundation's plans and progress. Dr. Karl Csaky shared the Foundation's goals for 2024 and ongoing initiatives to elevate Dallas as a leading medical destination. Guests mingled while enjoying delicious Wagyu tastings provided by Rosewood Ranch.



James and Elizabeth Berglund graciously hosted Dr. Csaky and the Retina Foundation in their home for the event.

*L to R: James Berglund, Elizabeth Berglund and Dr. Karl Csaky*



*L to R: Chef Gene Christiano, Chef Jesus Olivares, Chef Michael Scott, Chef Salvatore Gisellu and Chef Gianni Santin*

Rods & Cones is an impact society established to support and engage in the Retina Foundation's mission to save vision. Members enjoy access to private events with Retina Foundation leadership, exclusive social engagements and a first look at the Foundation's latest research and breakthroughs.



Lauren Sands presented a generous \$100,000 gift on behalf of the Rosewood Foundation to support the Retina Foundation's groundbreaking AMD research.

*L to R: Loren Greaves, John Dzminiski, Lauren Sands, Dr. Karl Csaky, Lynn Fisher and Amy Johnson*

# VISIONARY LUNCHEON

## Inspired Generosity Drives Innovation

The 2024 Visionary Luncheon, held at the iconic Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, united a community of dedicated supporters to the Retina Foundation's cutting-edge vision research and treatment. Guests were deeply moved as patients shared personal stories of sight loss and hope. Dr. Karl Csaky shared how the Retina Foundation is changing the trajectory of prevention and treatment for degenerative retinal diseases.



Event co-chairs Bill and Jennifer Voss pledged \$100,000 to kick off fundraising efforts for the 2024 Visionary Luncheon and set a goal to raise \$1 million.

*L to R: Bill Voss, Jennifer Voss, Danielle Bilibio and Dr. Mark Pennesi*

The highlight of the Visionary Luncheon was the powerful story shared by sisters Jeanne Klein and Diane Boddy, the first participants in Dr. Sripathi's groundbreaking AMD sibling study, which analyzes stem-cell derived retinal cells (mini eyeballs) grown from a patient's own blood sample. The sisters shared how they watched their mother struggle with AMD, a condition Jeanne is now facing while Diane remains symptom free. The study aims to determine why

“

What we learn from this study will not only help me and my family but also the 18 million people in the United States living with AMD. There's no bigger dream than stopping AMD.

**Jeanne Klein**

one sibling develops AMD and the other does not, even though they both have the same genetic factor for the disease, as well as testing various drug therapies on Jeanne's cells to determine their efficacy.

Inspired by Klein's story at the event, the Buena Vista Foundation and the Tapestry Foundation in Austin offered a \$250,000 matching gift to support the Retina Foundation's efforts in finding solutions for AMD and other retinal diseases. This launched the AMD Match Challenge, extending the impact beyond that day, ultimately raising \$1.3 million.

With the Dallas community mourning the recent loss of legendary businessman and philanthropic leader Herbert Hunt, the 2024 Hunt Family Visionary Award announcement was particularly impactful. The Communities Foundation of Texas' (CFT) W.W. Caruth, Jr. Fund was recognized with the award for its investment in innovative vision research. Lyda Hill presented the award to CFT President and CEO Wayne White. An initial grant from CFT's Caruth Fund launched the Retina Foundation's Clinical Center of Innovation for AMD with a focus on transforming and accelerating the path to AMD diagnosis and treatment.



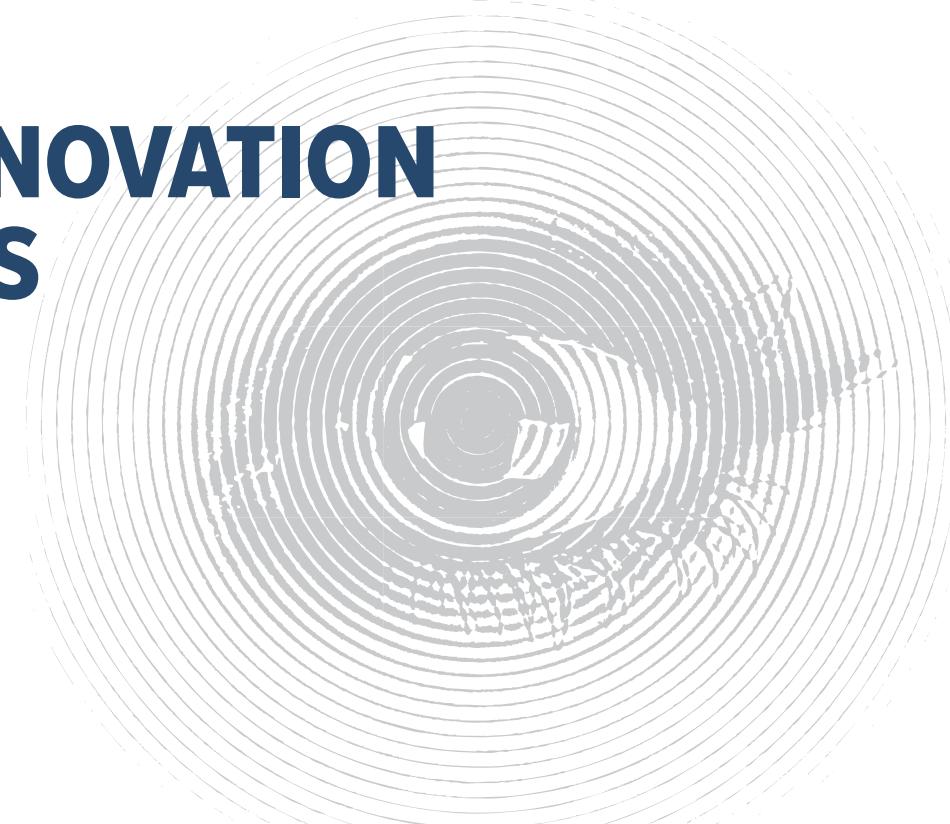
*L to R: Dr. Karl Csaky, Diane Boddy, Jeanne Klein and Laurie Dotter*



*L to R: Dr. Karl Csaky, Lyda Hill and Wayne White*

# EYE ON INNOVATION THE SERIES

**Highlighting the groundbreaking work of the Retina Foundation**



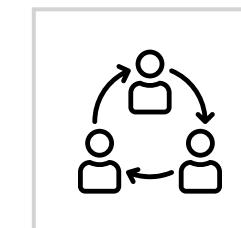
Each fall, a cross-section of leaders from the region's business, civic, philanthropic and medical communities gather to delve into current issues related to the latest innovations in ocular research and treatments that have an economic impact on the region and the state.



Doubled number of Eye on Innovation events



Expanded into Austin and Northwest Arkansas



Engaged current and new donors



*L to R: Randall Harriman, Mike Stevens, Dr. Mark Pennesi, Dr. David Birch, Jenny Schisler and Tia Tomlin*

## A VISION OF HOPE: Advancing Treatments for Rare Eye Diseases

### Northwest Arkansas – March

Arkansans, many battling rare and incurable eye disease such as retinitis pigmentosa (RP), heard about the latest advancements and clinical trials currently underway or on the horizon. The event raised \$15,000, which was presented to the Scientists Fund of the Retina Foundation. Donors further enable the Foundation to conduct groundbreaking research while never charging patients for care.

#### DAVID BIRCH, PhD

Director of the Rose-Silverthorne Retinal Degenerations Laboratory, Retina Foundation

#### MARK PENNESI, MD, PhD

Director of Ophthalmic Genetics, Retina Foundation; Kenneth C. Swan Endowed Professor in Ophthalmology; Chief of the Paul H. Casey Ophthalmic Genetics Division, Casey Eye Institute

#### TIA TOMLIN

Past President of the Retina Foundation Board of Directors; RP patient at the Retina Foundation

#### MIKE STEVENS

Franchisee at H&R Block Springdale; Director of Automation at Quadrivium, Inc.; RP patient at the Retina Foundation

#### RANDALL HARRIMAN

Senior Vice President of Development, Signature Bank of Arkansas

#### JENNY SCHISLER

RP patient at the Retina Foundation from Springdale, Arkansas

## SPACE FLIGHT: Vision for Mars

Dallas – September

In a conversation about space travel and the effects of weightlessness on the body, panelists covered the possibilities, economic impact, progress, health implications and what the future holds for long-duration space missions. This fascinating panel discussion highlighted the leadership of private industry in space exploration and how we can mitigate gravity's impact on vision and overall health to help ensure a safe mission.



*L to R: Dr. Benjamin D. Levine and Dr. Steven Laurie*



*L to R: George Peinado, Dr. Mark Pennesi and Julie Peinado*



### **KARL CSAKY, MD, PhD**

Chief Executive & Medical Officer, Retina Foundation

### **LINDA SILVER, EdD**

Eugene McDermott Chief Executive Officer, Perot Museum of Nature and Science

### **BENJAMIN D. LEVINE, MD, FACC, FACSM, FAPS, FAHA**

Professor, Department of Internal Medicine; Member, Division of Cardiology, UT Southwestern Medical Center

### **STEVEN LAURIE, PhD**

Technical Lead, Cardiovascular and Vision Laboratory; Discipline Lead, Spaceflight Associated Neuro-ocular Syndrome (SANS), NASA Johnson Space Center

### **LOU GRABOWSKY**

Chair, Retina Foundation Board of Trustees

## GROUNDBREAKING AMD SIBLING STEM CELL STUDY: What Mini Eyeballs Could Reveal

Austin – October

As the medical destination for innovative research and treatment for retina diseases, the Retina Foundation is leading a first-of-its-kind sibling study utilizing stem cells to uncover impactful solutions for age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Jeanne Klein and her sister Diane Boddy are the first participants in the sibling study to determine why both sisters have a genetic factor for AMD but only Jeanne has been diagnosed with the disease.

Inspired by Jeanne's story and her trust in the Retina Foundation, the Buena Vista Foundation and the Tapestry Foundation generously offered a \$250,000 matching challenge to support efforts in finding solutions for AMD—the AMD Challenge Match. The first Austin Eye on Innovation was hosted by Doug and Laurie Dotter as a thank you to the Buena Vista Foundation and the Tapestry Foundation as well as the Austin donors who helped us successfully meet the generous \$250,000 AMD Challenge Match.

### KARL CSAKY, MD, PhD

Chief Executive & Medical Officer,  
Retina Foundation

### SRINIVASA R. SRIPATHI, PhD

Director, Henderson Ocular Stem Cell  
Laboratory, Retina Foundation

### JEANNE KLEIN AND DIANE BODDY

Sisters and AMD Sibling Study Participants

### LAURIE DOTTER

Retina Foundation Board Chair



*L to R: Jeanne Klein and Diane Boddy*



*L to R: Dr. Srinivasa Srivaths and Patricia Pratchett*



*L to R: Cheryl Hall, Dr. Karl Csaky and Jay Rosser*

## TRANSFORMING DALLAS HEALTH: The Legacy of T. Boone Pickens

Dallas – November

The panel discussion honored the philanthropy of T. Boone Pickens and forecast future innovations to come. Fifteen years ago, Pickens invested in the future of the Retina Foundation by endowing a chair for the recruitment and hiring of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) expert Dr. Karl Csaky, who is the inaugural T. Boone Pickens Chair.

### KARL CSAKY, MD, PhD

Chief Executive & Medical Officer,  
Retina Foundation

### JAY ROSSER

Senior Advisor, Concordia; Former Chief of Staff for the late T. Boone Pickens; Former Vice President of Public Affairs for BP Capital; Co-Chair of the Retina Foundation's 2025 Visionary Luncheon

### CHERYL HALL

Business Columnist, *The Dallas Morning News*

# DONORS

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all of our donors who have generously given to the Retina Foundation to advance innovative research for new treatments and cures to save vision.



## ACCELERATOR | \$10,000 – \$24,999

Jerry and Emy Lou Baldridge Foundation  
Susan and Pryor Blackwell  
Communites Foundation of Texas  
Peggy Dear  
Frank Fletcher, Jr.  
Donna and Louis Grabowsky  
Sue and William Hutton  
Chase Joseph  
Angela and Marc Klein  
The Elizabeth Born Linz Foundation  
Bobbi and Richard Massman  
Drs. Susanna and James Merritt  
Judy and Charles Shelton  
Bob Smith  
Craige and Sally Stout  
The John and Bonnie Strauss Foundation  
Harriett Swager  
Texas Retina Associates  
Robert C. Wang  
Jill and Stephen Wilkinson

## INNOVATOR | \$100,000 – \$500,000

Bright Focus Foundation  
Buena Vista Foundation  
Fichtenbaum Charitable Trust  
Debbie and Steve Gray  
Jill and Grant Henderson  
James Jagielo Family Trust  
The Quincy and Estine Lee Charitable Foundation

Helen K. and Robert G. McGraw  
Nancy and Stephen Rogers  
The Rosewood Foundation  
Still Water Foundation  
Tapestry Foundation  
The Jasper L. and Jack Denton Wilson Foundation

## TRANSFORMER | \$5,000 – \$9,999

David Alexander  
Amegy Bank of Texas  
Stephen Baird  
John B. Bartling  
Vickie and Walter Beebe  
Patsy Bonner  
Marta J. Bowling  
James Burke  
Sandy and David Callanan  
Minnie and Bill Caruth  
Brian Coughlin  
Peter W. Cramer  
Barbara Hunt Crow  
Nathan Crow  
Eva and Karl Csaky  
Evelyn M. Davies Foundation  
Suzanne Deaderick  
Nancy and Gary Fish  
Mark J. Fritz  
H & R Block  
Martha and Douglas Hawthorne  
Drs. Lannie and Linda Hughes  
Miles Hunt  
MacRae Family Fund  
Todd Marshman  
Susie and Sandy McDonough  
Steve McKnight  
Karen B. McPhaden Living Trust  
Michelle and Mickey Munir  
Oncor  
John Pollack  
Stephen Polley  
Paula and Wally Rhines  
SpartanNash  
Karen and Rand Spencer  
Stephen Thomas  
Cathy Thompson  
Sue Tomlin  
Jo and Mitchell Voss  
Anna Lee and Justin Wahls

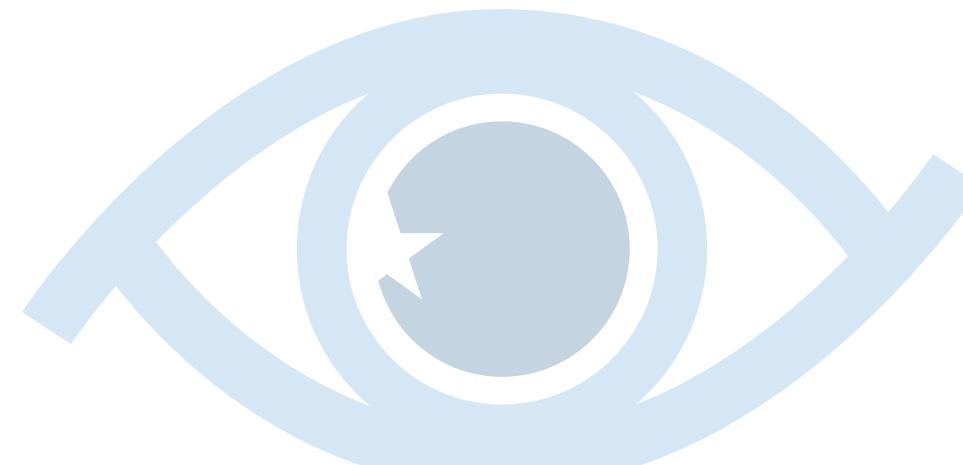
## ILLUMINATOR | \$25,000 – \$99,999

Barbara and Mason Brown  
Amon G. Carter Foundation  
Delta Gamma Foundation  
Laurie and Doug Dotter  
Barbara and Steve Durham  
Lyda Hill Philanthropies  
The Nancy and W. Herbert Hunt Family Foundation

Judy and Harold Kaye  
Jeanne and Mickey Klein  
Drs. Lotty and Bobby Lyle  
The Ray H. Marr Foundation  
Julie and George Peinado  
Margot Perot  
Elaine and Bradley Wolken

# 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Louis J. Grabowsky, Chair	Richard A. Massman
Rajiv Anand, MD	James H. Merritt, MD
Diane Boddy	Mickey Munir
Alex M. Cena	Evelyn J. Pulliam
Lori Dao, MD	Therese Rourk
Laurie Dotter, CPA	Richard J. Schaar, PhD
Steven Eisnaugle	Rand Spencer, MD
William Hutton, MD	Tia S. Tomlin



# STAFF

## MOLECULAR OPHTHALMOLOGY LABORATORY

**Karl Csaky, MD, PhD**  
Chief Executive and Medical Officer  
T. Boone Pickens Director  
Clinical Center of Innovation for AMD

**Doris Lambracht-Washington, PhD**  
Senior Staff Scientist

**Sancharika Dey, PhD**  
Staff Scientist

**Alison Takacs, MS**  
Staff Scientist

**Neha Tandon, PhD**  
Staff Scientist

**Jessica Clark**  
Clinical Research Coordinator

**Katherine Juroch, MS**  
Clinical Research Coordinator

**Paige Grona Kennedy**  
Clinical Research Coordinator

**Natalia Feliz**  
Clinical Research Coordinator

**Abigail Hernandez**  
Ophthalmic Technician

**Cindy Baillie**  
Project Manager

## CRYSTAL CHARITY BALL PEDIATRIC VISION LABORATORY

**Eileen Birch, PhD**  
Director

**Reed Jost, MS**  
Research Associate

**Christina Cheng-Patel, CCRP**  
Certified Clinical Research Associate

**Brooke Koritala**  
Research Assistant

## ROSE-SILVERTHORNE RETINAL DEGENERATIONS LABORATORY

**David Birch, PhD**  
Scientific Director

**Kirsten Locke, CRA, FOPS**  
Clinical Trials Manager

**Martin Klein, MS**  
Lab Manager

**Kaylie Jones, MS**  
Senior Research Associate

**Eric Vasquez**  
Clinical Research Coordinator

**Jennifer Herrera**  
Ophthalmic Technician

# DEPARTMENTS



## MACULAR FUNCTION LABORATORY

**Yi-Zhong Wang, PhD**  
Director

**Eric Vasquez**  
Clinical Research Coordinator

## HENDERSON OCULAR STEM CELL LABORATORY

**Srinivasa Sripathi, PhD**  
Director

**Adnin Ashrafi, PhD**  
Staff Scientist

## INHERITED RETINAL DEGENERATION CLINIC

**Mark Pennesi, MD, PhD, FARVO**  
Director

**Rachel Murray**  
Clinical Research Coordinator

**Georgia Durham**  
Ophthalmic Technician

**Chelsea Hamilton**  
Ophthalmic Technician

**Naresh Rajendran, PhD**  
Staff Scientist

## BUSINESS OPERATIONS

**Cindy Baillie**  
Business Operations Manager

**Shana Risinger**  
Finance & Administration Assistant

## DEVELOPMENT

**Amy Johnson**  
Chief Development Officer



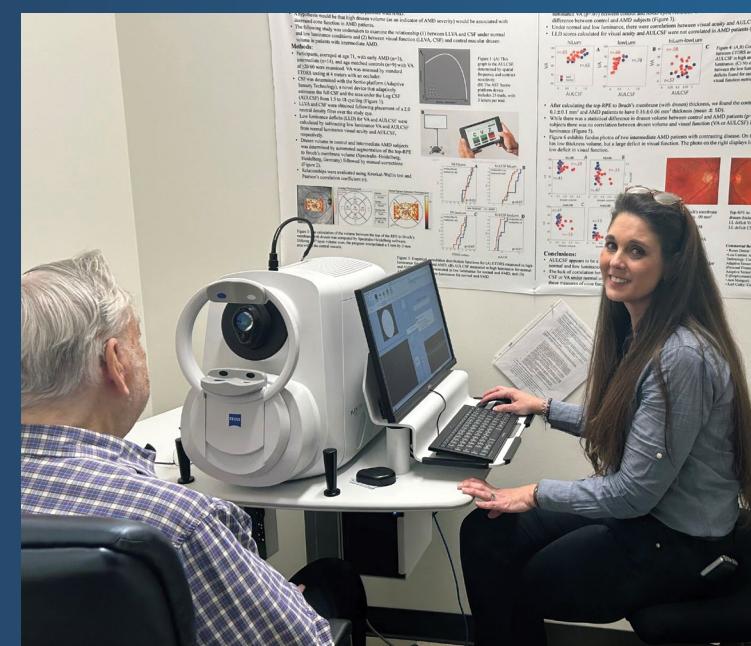
## FINANCE

**Naomi Emmett, MBA**  
Chief Financial and Business Officer

**Natalie Gilbert, CPA**  
Finance Director

**Jency John**  
Senior Accountant

**Shana Risinger**  
Finance & Administration Assistant



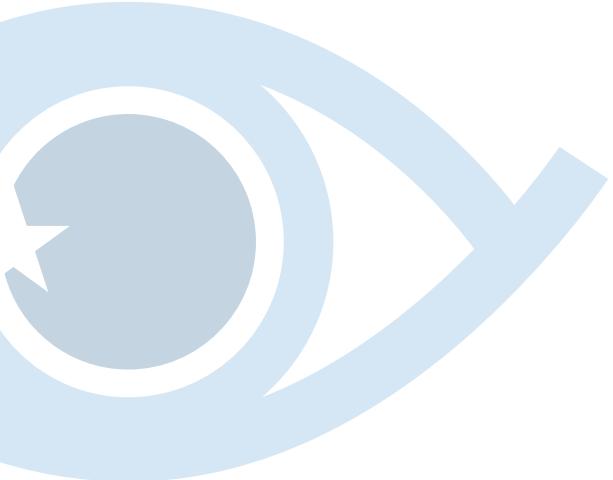
# DONATE

## Everyone Deserves the Gift of Sight.

Please join us in our mission to save vision. Your gift enables the Retina Foundation to provide care to more patients at no cost through innovative research and treatment. From pediatric patients to senior citizens, we believe everyone deserves good vision. With your help, we can offer patients and their families hope for a brighter future.



**DONATE NOW**



## Ways to Support the Retina Foundation



Donate today



Join the Rods & Cones Foresight Circle



Sponsor a Retina Foundation event



Direct your gift to a specific project, lab or area of research such as AMD, IRDs or pediatric eye conditions





**9600 North Central Expressway | Suite 200  
Dallas, Texas 75231  
214.363.3911**

---

Amy Johnson | Chief Development Officer  
[ajohnson@retinafoundation.org](mailto:ajohnson@retinafoundation.org)

Please visit **retinafoundation.org**  
to view our full financials.