Catherine and Walter Lindsay Fund grant supports collaborative eye imaging program

A charitable fund with a history of helping the visually impaired is providing $100,000 to the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) Eye Institute to further develop a research program that is turning new discoveries into improved treatments for patients. The grant from the Catherine and Walter Lindsay Foundation Fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation is supporting the Advanced Ocular Imaging Program (AOIP), which the Fund’s generous generosity helped establish at MCW.

One of the challenges in treating eye disease is that people are usually diagnosed only after they begin experiencing vision problems. By the time this occurs, however, the disease has often already caused significant damage at the cellular level. Technology developed in the AOIP is many times more sensitive than any tool currently available in an ophthalmologist’s office, so it can advance understanding of the earliest symptoms of eye disease and help target personalized treatments to prevent the disease from affecting a person’s eyesight.

“The Advanced Ocular Imaging Program at MCW is a unique collaboration between our research scientists and clinical ophthalmologists that integrates innovative research technology with the detection, diagnosis and management of vision disorders,” said MCW President and CEO John R. Raymond, Sr., MD. “The Catherine and Walter Lindsay Foundation Fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation is helping us have an immediate impact on patients here while establishing relationships with leading institutions throughout the world.”

At the heart of the program are three, custom designed adaptive optics ophthalmoscopes, which are used to observe cells in the living human eye. They have allowed MCW faculty to take pictures of the eye at unprecedented levels of detail, allowing for early disease detection as well as examination of the fundamental properties of eye disease, which aids in research.

The Eye Institute is one of only a handful of locations in the world to possess such equipment, and the AOIP team is in the process of developing a fourth device with additional capabilities. Now that they are nearing completion of the construction phase of their technology, AOIP faculty led by co-directors Alfredo Dubra, PhD, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, and Joseph Carroll, PhD, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, say the need for funds to recruit new team members and start new projects is growing.

“This new grant will help ensure the long-term viability of the AOIP,” Dr. Carroll said. “One of the most difficult resources to procure is talented people. They are not a one-off expense like a piece of equipment; rather, they warrant a long-term investment to bring value to the program.”

The Catherine and Walter Lindsay Foundation was established in 1963 to help the ailing and underprivileged in the community, including the visually impaired. Walter Lindsay was the founder of the Lindsay McMillan Oil Company and helped found Goodwill Industries. Family members converted the Foundation into a Greater Milwaukee Foundation fund in 1994.

“My family has been privileged and delighted to support the excellent work of the Eye Institute for many years,” said Catherine Mayer, MD, successor advisor to the Fund and granddaughter of Walter Lindsay. “As a physician, I am especially impressed and pleased by the efforts of the Eye Institute to address the prevention of vision disorders in addition to their treatment. Our vision is such a remarkable gift, so easily taken for granted. We are extraordinarily fortunate to have the skilled and dedicated staff of the Eye Institute, recognized leaders in their field, working on the behalf of all of us to preserve this very great blessing.”

Boston Store engages the community in fundraising

Since 1998, Boston Store and its parent company, The Bon-Ton Stores, Inc., have teamed up with their own customers to raise money for breast cancer research. In Milwaukee, Boston Store’s fundraising events have led to nearly $700,000 in donations to the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). This year alone, the events raised $17,700 with $15,600 resulting from October Pink Shop sales and the Charge Against Breast Cancer initiative, and the remainder coming from the Cut-A-Thon.

Investigators in the MCW Cancer Center use these funds to conduct research that is leading to new knowledge and more effective treatments for breast cancer. At MCW, there are more than 260 cancer-focused physicians and scientists who serve in multidisciplinary groups and are involved in more than 225 adult and pediatric cancer-related clinical trials. These experts publish about 100 scientific papers in major medical journals annually.