

The Power of Philanthropy: Bringing Vital Eye Care to SW Washington

For many Southwest Washington families, accessing quality children's eye care is a major challenge. Driving the distance to the Portland area and its busy urban setting can be challenging for some families. Fortunately, Casey Eye Institute has operated satellite clinics in Vancouver and Longview for years. These bring world-class ophthalmology services much closer to home for many area residents.

"Having these locations is really important and valuable," says Leah Reznick, M.D., head of the Pediatric Ophthalmology at Casey. "Parents often tell us that without a local clinic, they might not seek the medical care or follow-up their child needs. Having ophthalmologists in their own community makes a tremendous difference."

However, not all children's vision services are fully covered by insurance. That's where donors like Mike Clark and the Bedrosian Foundation have stepped in to fill critical gaps in funding. That's where donors like Mike Clark, the Bedrosian Foundation, and the anonymous donors behind the Washington Children's Ophthalmology Fund have stepped in to fill critical gaps. The generosity of these philanthropic champions ensures all children can receive essential vision services, regardless of their families' insurance coverage or ability to pay.

The Need for Philanthropic Support

One of the most common eye diseases affecting children is amblyopia, or "lazy eye." Caught early, this vision disorder is easily treated by patching the stronger eye to improve sight in the weaker eye. If

left untreated, it can cause permanent vision loss in that eye.

But there is a surprising problem. “Insurance doesn’t cover patches,” Dr. Reznick says. “So, for patients who were unable to purchase, whether they had insurance or not, we provided boxes of Band-Aid patches using funds from the Bedrosian Foundation. This has really improved people’s access to eye care and made a life-changing difference for so many children.”

Another major issue in Southwest Washington is lack of access to affordable glasses for kids on Medicaid plans like Molina Health. Very few optical shops contract with these plans. This policy leaves hundreds of children without the corrective lenses they require after surgery or to treat conditions like strabismus (crossed eyes).

“More than half the kids I see in Southwest Washington have WA Medicaid insurance, and they are unable to get glasses,” Dr. Reznick says. “Thanks to the Washington Children’s Ophthalmology Fund, we can give out vouchers to the Casey optical shops in Longview and Portland for families who cannot afford glasses. This generosity has helped hundreds of children.”

Dr. Reznick estimates that she provides five or six vouchers a day in the Vancouver clinic. “We spend the fund down,” she says. “Then we have to pause giving out glasses because there are no more funds.” The Washington Fund provided the first pair of glasses to a child in 2022, when a total of 55 pairs were given out. Last year, 58 pairs were funded and so far, 29 pairs have been provided in 2024.

Life-Changing Impact

The clinics in Vancouver and Longview treat the full spectrum of pediatric eye conditions, from common refractive errors to rare childhood cancers. No matter how routine or complex the case, access to children’s eye care is transforming lives across Southwest Washington.



▲ Eye care providers in the Elks Children’s Eye Clinic provide kids with patches and glasses, despite their ability to pay.

One young patient came in with severely blurred vision, which turned out to be caused by a subluxated lens – the lenses inside his eyes had shifted due to an undiagnosed case of Marfan syndrome. After corrective surgery, he received glasses courtesy of Washington Fund donors that helped him see clearly for the first time.

A little girl whose eyes had been crossing for months regained her vision and depth perception with patching supplies and glasses funded by donors. “She had 20/200 vision in one eye and was quickly losing sight,” Dr. Reznick recalls. “Thanks to donor funds, we were able to provide glasses and patches, and the child’s vision improved to 20/30 in both eyes. It was life-changing.”

Dr. Reznick explains that vision is a fluid sense. In children, it is developing so rapidly that seeing poorly for just a few months can cause serious vision problems. “Kids can actually lose their sight from lack of treatment, which creates an enormous personal cost and is very costly for society.”

The Southwest Washington clinics are well equipped to provide comprehensive eye care. Although some families do need to travel to the Elks Children's Eye Clinic in Portland for specialized imaging or other care, it is incredibly important to provide care in our communities. The generosity from the donor community has made a huge difference in making quality eye care available to children from across the southern half of Washington State.

If she were granted one wish, Dr. Reznick muses, "I would wish for there to be better access so that kids in Washington can easily receive the glasses, patching, and basic treatments they truly need to develop their vision properly. With support from caring donors, we can make that wish a reality." ■

NEW FACULTY



◀ **Shazib Haq, O.D.**, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, Comprehensive Ophthalmology and Medical Contact Lens



◀ **Allison Bradee, M.D.**, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, Pediatric Ophthalmology



◀ **Michael Gale, M.D.**, Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology, Glaucoma

A Legacy of Vision: Honoring

The history of Casey Eye Institute stretches back nearly 80 years. In 1945, Kenneth Swan, M.D., founded the Department of Ophthalmology at what was then the University of Oregon Medical School, now OHSU. Leigh Campbell, M.D., was one of the pioneering faculty members. With a handful of colleagues, Dr. Campbell – himself a graduate of the UO Medical School – played a crucial role in shaping the department.

A former Navy flight surgeon, Dr. Campbell also had an interest in retinal detachment surgery. "Back then, there were not many subspecialists," explains David Wilson, M.D., past director and chair of Casey Eye Institute. "Leigh had more of a role in retinal surgery than some other general ophthalmologists." He was also devoted to educating medical residents in the Pacific Northwest's first three-year ophthalmology residency.

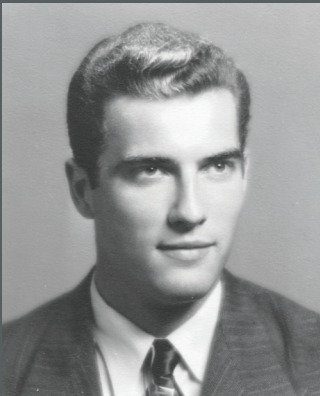
From Faculty to Community

In the late 1980s, Dr. Campbell and other colleagues left the UO Ophthalmology department, but ties to the university remained strong. Dr. Campbell continued to support the ophthalmology residency program while in private practice in Oregon City, Ore. He also practiced hands-on philanthropy, flying medical missions to provide eye care and supplies to communities in Mexico and Central America.

A Generous Legacy

In a remarkable act of generosity, Dr. Campbell and his brother, an obstetrician-gynecologist, donated approximately \$1 million to Casey Eye Institute, establishing a fund dedicated to cell-based therapy research in ophthalmology and ob-gyn. "Stem cells are derived and used a great deal in reproductive medicine as well as ophthalmology," Dr. Wilson explains.

Dr. Leigh Campbell



Leigh Campbell, M.D.

As with so much philanthropy, Dr. Campbell's was personally motivated. His son Wiley has a retinal condition called Stargardt's disease, also called juvenile macular degeneration. This circumstance fueled Dr. Campbell's passion for supporting macular

degeneration research. He met regularly with Dr. Wilson and others at Casey to discuss ongoing work with pluripotent stem cells for treating macular degeneration.

Enabling Groundbreaking Research

Support from Dr. Campbell and others like him has been essential to enable Casey Eye Institute researchers to maintain robust research programs and compete for National Eye Institute (NEI) and other federal grants. "It's an example of how private philanthropy has enabled us to build and maintain robust research programs," Dr. Wilson says. "Ophthalmology research demands significant funds. The largest source is the National Eye Institute, but to compete for NEI grants, you need background and results that show your work's importance" – the type of background and results that private philanthropy can help researchers develop.

The Campbell fund has also provided essential "bridge funding" during gaps between NEI grant cycles, so basic research does not have to stop while scientists wait to learn the results of their grant applications. "These types of funds are essential for maintaining grant-related research," says Dr. Wilson. "Without the support of generous donors like Dr. Campbell, many of the

"Leigh inspired his colleagues to maintain strong ties between academia and the community. Many academic institutes have something of a 'town and gown' divide, but we don't. The degree of collaboration and collegiality we have helps us provide better eye care and do better research."

– David Wilson, M.D., Past director and chair,
Casey Eye Institute

advancements in macular degeneration research would have come much more slowly."

A Lasting Legacy of Collaboration

Throughout his career, Dr. Campbell embodied a spirit of community that still marks the relationship between Casey Eye Institute and local ophthalmology practices. "Leigh inspired his colleagues to maintain strong ties between academia and the community," Dr. Wilson says. "Many academic institutes have something of a 'town and gown' divide, but we don't. The degree of collaboration and collegiality we have helps us provide better eye care and do better research."

Today, Dr. Leigh Campbell is remembered for being a pioneer in the Department of Ophthalmology, for his generous support, and for his lasting impact on eye care and research. His legacy should continue to inspire others to join together to benefit patients and future generations of physicians. ■

A Living Legacy: Dr. Fritz Fraunfelder's Gift of Success to Casey Eye Institute

When Frederick "Fritz" Fraunfelder, M.D., reflects on the landscape of ophthalmology in Oregon before the establishment of the OHSU Casey Eye Institute, he can't help but marvel at the remarkable transformation it has undergone.

As the founding director of Casey Eye Institute in 1991, Dr. Fraunfelder played a pivotal role in laying the groundwork for what has become a globally recognized powerhouse in innovation of eye care, research, education and community care. Now happily retired, he continues to be a presence at Casey through his influence, genial spirit, and philanthropy that is helping carry the institute into the future.

The Early Days and a Pioneering Vision

In the early days, Dr. Fraunfelder worked alongside Kenneth Swan, M.D., founder of OHSU's Department of Ophthalmology, to establish the Casey Eye Institute. With a clear vision and unwavering determination, Dr. Fraunfelder led an almost totally private fundraising charge to build the original Casey Eye Institute facility on OHSU's Marquam Hill campus and broaden its mission to include cutting-edge research capabilities.

Philanthropy: The Driving Force Behind Progress

Dr. Fraunfelder's commitment to the Casey Eye Institute has extended well beyond his tenure as director. So has his belief in the power of giving. Vibrant at nearly 90, he is convinced that philanthropy is a key to individual health as well as creating a better world for others.

"People feel good when they give," he says. "The scientific data tells us that philanthropy makes you feel better. People who give have increased



▲ Dr. Fritz Fraunfeld (right) with Dr. Andreas Lauer in the Elks Children's Eye Clinic.

longevity, decreased blood pressure, decreased depression."

No one knows the game-changing importance of giving back better than Dr. Fraunfelder. He has made a qualified charitable distribution from his IRA and included the Casey Eye Institute in his will, working with the OHSU Foundation to ensure a lasting legacy for the institute he worked so hard to establish.

Paving the Way for Future Advancements

As the field of ophthalmology continues to evolve with advancements in artificial intelligence, ophthalmic imaging, gene therapy and telehealth, the Casey Eye Institute is poised to inspire further innovation. Dr. Fraunfelder's philanthropic contributions play a crucial role in supporting advancement of cutting-edge research and innovative technologies that enhance patient care.

"I think my greatest happiness about Casey Eye is that, in a number of areas, we're one of the best in the world. We are — and I use 'we' because we're a Casey family — playing at that [global] level in so many areas," Fraunfelder said. "I'm just so proud of the Casey Eye Institute, its people and its impact."

Through his visionary leadership, unwavering commitment to progress, and ongoing generosity, Dr. Fritz Fraunfelder has left an indelible mark on the Casey Eye Institute, cementing its place as a global leader in ophthalmology and eye care. ■



P.O. Box 29017
Portland, OR 97296

503-228-1730 or 800-462-6608
www.ohsufoundation.org
www.ohsu.edu/casey-eye-institute

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Portland, Oregon
Permit No. 2888

MAKE A GIFT TODAY



CASEY EYE
Institute

To make a gift, please contact Liz Arrington, Senior Director of Development at the OHSU Foundation: arringt1@ohsu.edu or 503-552-0716

ohsufoundation.org/eye-vision

Please contact the OHSU Privacy Office at 855-257-4100 or optout@ohsu.edu if you no longer wish to receive fundraising information.