

Arizona Ophthalmological Society Foundation Report
Jeff Edelstein, MD – June 4 2022

The AOSF awarded a \$10,000 grant to the Arizona Lions Vision & Hearing Foundation (501c3) for operational expenses on March 11, 2022. The Phoenix Ophthalmological Society awarded the AOSF a \$15,000 donation on September 9 2021 and has expressed willingness to continue annual AOSF grants in the future. Since its inception (2012), the AOSF has cumulative grants to the Arizona Lions Vision & Hearing Foundation of \$119,500.

Jeannette Russell, the long-term Executive Director of the Arizona Lions Vision and Hearing Foundation retired February 2020, but recently returned to her position on a temporary basis until a search for a new Executive Director can be completed.

The Arizona Medical Eye Unit (AMEU) is back in business after a long COVID break hosting eye clinics throughout rural Arizona! Many thanks to the AOS Ophthalmologists that donated their time to staff the first post-pandemic clinics thus far for 2022: Ajay Sanan, MD (Wilcox), Jeff Maltzman, MD (Kearny), Brian Hunter, MD (Patagonia), Brock Bakewell, MD (Oracle), Denise Garcia, MD (Gila Bend), Steve Mortensen, MD (Aguila), Anuradha Paturi, MD (Salome), Karl Rosen, MD (Arivaca), Ricardo Aviles, MD (Sunsites), Joann Shen, MD (Tonto Basin), Norman Ahl, MD, (Douglas), Tom McPhee (Overgaard), Jeff Edelstein, MD (Holbrook).

AOS action item:

- 1. Authorized additional 2022 AMEU funding (\$5000) for failing rear truck springs and operational funds for AZ Lions Vision and Hearing Center**

Arizona Ophthalmological Society Foundation Mission Statement

The Arizona Ophthalmological Society (AOS) Foundation is a 501c3 with the mission to improve access to eye care for underserved populations in Arizona. Through the use of a mobile Arizona Medical Eye Unit (AMEU), the AOS Foundation provides financial support to allow low-cost medical eye exams, patient education/awareness about eye disease and donated eyeglasses. AOS members (ophthalmologists, also known as Eye MD's) have volunteered their time to staff the AMEU since its inception in 1976 and have pledged to continue their support.

The primary focus of the AOS Foundation is to deliver high quality medical eye care for rural and underserved communities that may have limited or no access to an Eye MD. To this end, the AMEU works with local community health centers, health fairs, school vision screenings for children, rural hospitals, homes for the elderly and with multiple Indian Tribal Reservations throughout Arizona. In cases that need medical or surgical follow-up, the AMEU refers to the most appropriate nearby eye care professional. The goal of the AOS Foundation is to ensure all Arizonans have access to medical eye care to reduce the burden of eye disease and improve their quality of life.

Since 2008, the Arizona Lions Vision Center (a 501c3) has collaborated with the AOSF to provide support staff, donated glasses, and to help manage the unit. As a component of the Arizona Community Foundation, a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization, the AOS Foundation was created to continue the mission of the Arizona Medical Eye Unit. Please visit us at: <http://www.aosfoundation.org>

AOS Foundation Goals

In combination with the Arizona Lions Vision & Hearing Foundation, we were able to replace the aging mobile eye unit, which was becoming a danger on the road. The original customized trailer, outfitted with the same equipment used in any eye doctor's office, was built in 1976. The AMEU exhausted its useful service after 39 years of eye exams across rural Arizona. The cost to build and equip the replacement trailer, approximately \$450,000, was reached through the combined generosity of AOS, AOSF and Lions membership.

AOSF remains committed to provide funding and resources to expand the project and services. The AOS/Lion's Vision & Hearing Center continue to support the daily costs of the program and ophthalmologists volunteer their time performing the exams. We are grateful to all donors, large or small, and will acknowledge any support in our newsletter and website. Thank you.

A brief history of The Arizona Lions' Medical Eye Unit

The story begins with the Oddfellow's and Rebekah's, worldwide groups that began as English fraternal organizations in the 18th century. They are non-sectarian and apolitical humanists who approached the Department of Ophthalmology at University of Arizona (UA) in 1974 with the idea of creating a mobile eye unit. The goal was to improve access to medical eye care in rural Arizona. The Oddfellow's and Rebekah's raised funds for an endowment to build and maintain the AMEU. In 1976, ophthalmic technician Martin Lian was enlisted to help with trailer design and to develop eye clinics in rural Arizona.

The project was immediately successful, requiring additional ophthalmologists. The AOS membership quickly agreed to volunteer their time to help the AMEU allowing the program to expand. In 1978, Greg King became Director of the AMEU. Greg worked with rural community health centers to develop eye clinics that included Indian reservations where diabetic eye disease is rampant. In 2005 the AMEU, including Director Greg King, were transferred from UA to the Arizona Lions' Vision Center as the mission better aligned with the Lions' goals.