

WRAPPING UP 2010 AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 2011 • BY TONI BRISTOL

Have you ever thought of the fact that there is a wealth of inspiring and newsworthy stories occurring every day in your practice? While most parents are willing to spread the word to their friends, family, and acquaintances, there are those special people who want to tell the whole world.

Doctors will often ask, "What do I tell these parents? What should they do?" A lot depends on their knowledge, skills, and connections. One parent might be very involved in the local PTA and is also well connected to the national PTA. For example, Mrs. Janet Hughes is an active PTA parent who went on to found the VISIONFirst Foundation (www.visionfirstfoundation.org). Or, a parent might have a background in writing and be willing to write a book, such as Robin Benoit, who wrote Jillian's Story along with her daughter (www.jilliansstory.com).

These parents are motivated by their own stories and the desire to make sure other parents and their children don't have to struggle the way they did. Most importantly, they have the resources, foresight, and drive to make things happen.

Another great example: on December 26, 2010, one of the top stories featured on AOL had the headline, "Could Your Child Have a Learning-Related Vision Problem?" This article occurred as a result of COVD associate member, Dr. Kimberly Walker, treating a patient whose mother, Michele DeLiso, is a freelance writer for AOL (<http://tinyurl.com/2wfau8m> or go to www.covd.org, "In the News" archives).

When parents have tried everything to help their children prior to arriving in your office, they have no doubt that optometric vision therapy works. These parents are perfect to be spokespeople for vision therapy. When you find parents like these who want to share their story with the world, we can help them through the COVD "Making VT Visible Campaign."

In the November 2009 issue of VISIONS, Volume 40 Issue I, "Let Your Patients Do the Talking," I outlined the steps necessary to gather success stories from parents. This issue is available in the Members section of the COVD website. Please take a moment to re-read this and implement it.

Once you have a good outcome from vision therapy, plus a parent or patient who is willing to share their story through the media, send the information to: info@covd.org. Please be sure to include some information about the parent. For example, the parent could be a medical professional (please specify what type), a member of the PTA or PTO, a freelance writer, etc.

The type of patient does not have to be a learning-related case. For example, the patient may have come in because of a sports-related visual problem and aside from doing better in school, his batting average has improved dramatically. Now baseball scouts are interested in the boy which gives us

a sports angle to the story. The patient could also be an adult. The key here is the story should have an interesting angle or be inspirational.

As a reminder, if you are contacted by the media, COVD has a wealth of information prepared to help you. Much of it is located in the Public Awareness section of the Members section of the COVD website. This information is updated periodically. If you happen to get national media, internet or other large opportunity, please don't hesitate to contact the COVD office right away.

Thanks to the internet, good stories spread quickly and great stories spread even faster. Please help us to keep these stories coming!

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APPLY NOW for 2011 Research Grant Awards

Applications for COVD 2011 Research Grants for optometrists, optometric educators, and other vision scientists are now available on the COVD website or by contacting the COVD office.

Thanks to the generous donation from the Jacqueline Clark Trust in 2010 we were able to create the Research Reserve Fund. Interest from that fund and donations made to the Presidents Research Fund are used to pay the research grants awarded. Thanks to the foresight of Jacqueline Clark and our regular donors, we're able to increase funding available.

This year grants of up to \$6,000 are available to support research related to oculomotor, binocular vision, visual information processing and learning-related vision problems and vision therapy. Grants can be used to initiate new research or support continuing active research programs.

***** Deadline for receipt of grant applications
is April 11, 2011*****

Funding will be provided beginning July 31 for research to be conducted during the 2011-2012 academic year. All applications are reviewed by the COVD Research Committee, which makes recommendations to the Board of Directors for the selection of grant recipients.

Questions regarding the grant application process can be directed to the COVD office at info@covd.org.