

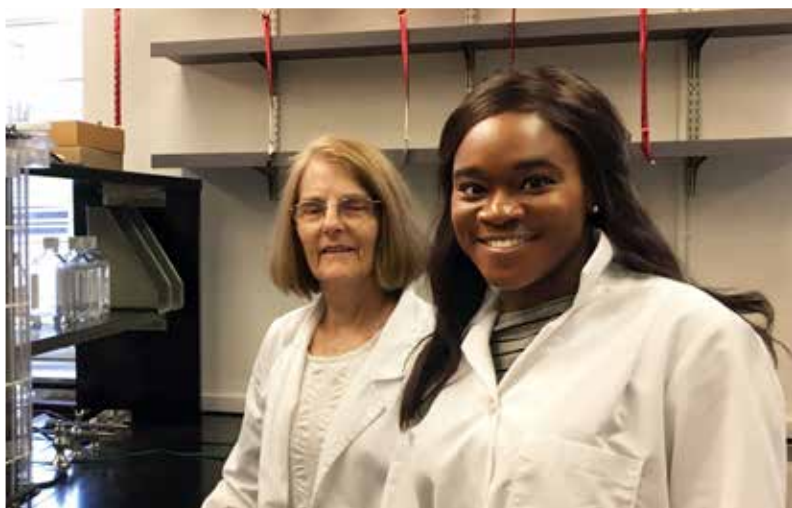
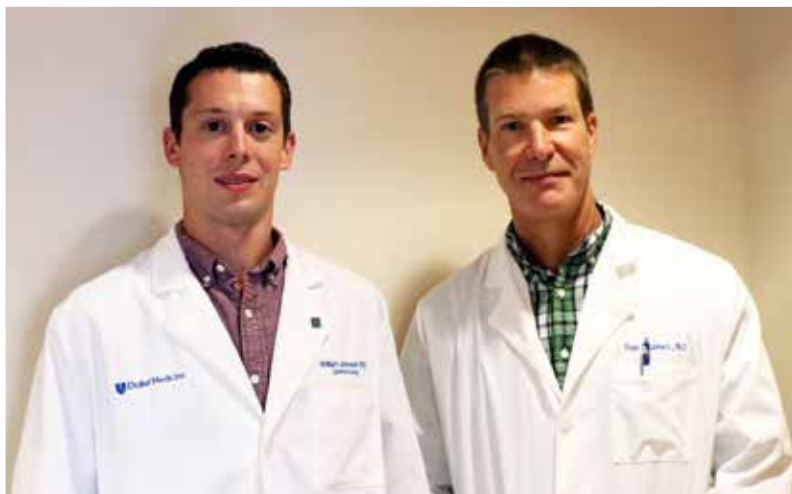


FIGHT FOR SIGHT

# FIGHT FOR SIGHT 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Investing in Eye and Vision Research Since 1946

## Scientific Relationships Built Through *Fight for Sight* Grants





#### On the cover:

Grantees are shown with their mentors. These are scientific relationships developed through the *Fight for Sight* grant program.

Clockwise from upper left;

1. Adanna Udeh (left) with mentor Abigail Hackam, PhD
2. William M. Johnson, PhD (left) with mentor W. Daniel Stamer, PhD
3. Ganiru Anunike (right) with mentor Carol B. Toris, PhD
4. Corinne Renner (right) with mentor Osamah Saeedi, MD

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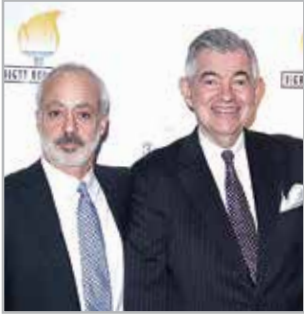
[www.fightforsight.org](http://www.fightforsight.org)



In 1980, while a Resident in Ophthalmology at the University of Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, I received a *Fight for Sight* Grant-in-Aid to study the early receptor potential (ERP) in several human hereditary retinal diseases. Like many others, this helped me in establishing my credentials in eye and vision research. Later, as a faculty member at the University of Michigan and now in my current role as Director of the National Eye Institute, NIH, I have come to appreciate and respect *Fight for Sight's* grant program even more for a variety of reasons: among them that it serves as an entry point for fledgling researchers, many of whom go on to international

prominence. This program also creates life-long linkages between giants in ophthalmology and those on the cusp of their careers. I dare say my own career might have taken a different trajectory without early support from *Fight for Sight*. I applaud the organization for its role ensuring the development of world-class eye and vision scientists for over seven decades.

**Paul A. Sieving, MD, PhD**, Director, National Eye Institute, National Institute of Health



Norman J. Kleiman, PhD,  
President of the Board,  
and Arthur Makar,  
Executive Director

Dear Supporters, Alumni, Mentors and Friends,

We are pleased to share *Fight for Sight's* (FFS) 2017 Annual Report with you. It documents a journey of more than over seven decades since our founder, Mildred Weisenfeld, first sought to support and inspire eye and vision research by funding promising scientists early in their careers. In 2017, your support funded 20 new clinical and academic researchers hailing from some the nation's most prestigious institutions, including Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, University of Miami and Duke University, to cite but a few. Descriptions of our 2017 grantees, whom we fully expect to blossom into the next generation of academic leaders in eye research for the 21st century, are included in this report. Your continued support and generosity has helped and will continue to enable their future successes.

That is only part of our story. *FFS* grants provide an opportunity for grantees to work under the tutelage of world-renowned senior scientists; it is actually a requirement for our Post-Doctoral Awards and Summer Student Fellowship applicants. The relationships that begin with a *FFS* grant often develop into professional collaborations and friendships. Quotes and anecdotes from our 2017 grant recipients and their mentors, found throughout this report, underscore the importance of these lifelong scientific and personal connections to our *FFS* alumni.

In addition to exciting research initiated by *FFS* investigators, other 2017 highlights include:

- New partnerships with the Curing Retinal Blindness Foundation and individual donors
- Augmenting existing *FFS* alliances with the American Macular Degeneration Foundation, International Retinal Research Foundation and Aniridia Foundation International, to name a few.
- Continued expansion of our **Lights-On** gala and **Strike for Sight** bowling events. Photos, links and event information can be seen on *FFS's* Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages.
- Growing awareness of and support for *FFS* among members of professional organizations including the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology and the American Academy of Optometry.

Since its inception, *FFS* has been blessed by the generosity of those who have included us in their estate planning. Planned gifts are critical to increasing *FFS's* endowment, an essential element to ensuring our continued financial health. Please consider making a bequest to *FFS* or including us as a beneficiary in your planned giving. Remembering us in this way will help us fulfill Mildred's passion and vision for eye and vision research for many years to come.

As always, we thank you for your partnership with us during 2017 – as a donor, grantee, Scientific Review Committee member, fundraising volunteer or friend. We look forward to continuing our work together as we find treatments and cures for vision disorders and eye diseases.

Sincerely yours,

Norman J. Kleiman, Ph.D.  
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Arthur Makar  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## 2017 Grants-in-Aid

**Grants-in-Aid (GIA)** are intended to fund pilot projects and generate preliminary results for investigators who have limited or no other research funding. Grants-in-Aid are awarded to junior faculty members who are developing their independent scientific skills. A majority of Grant-in-Aid recipients go on to successfully compete for larger, multi-year awards from NIH or other governmental and private sources, utilizing preliminary results generated by their FFS-funded GIA award.



**Eleftherios Paschalis Ilios, PhD**

A novel titanium keratoprosthesis  
Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary,  
Harvard Medical School

*FFS* – Eye Bank for Sight  
Restoration Grant-in-Aid award



**Francois Lebreton, PhD**

Bacterial conjunctivitis  
Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary,  
Harvard Medical School



**John T. Pena, MD, PhD**

Diabetic retinopathy  
Weill Cornell Medical College

*FFS* – International Retinal  
Research Foundation  
Grant-in-Aid award

## 2017 Post-Doctoral

**Post-Doctoral Awards** support individuals with a doctorate (PhD, MD, DrPH, OD or DVM) who are interested in academic careers in basic or clinical research in ophthalmology, vision or related sciences. Awardees typically spend a year or more engaged in vision and eye research under the supervision of a senior scientist/clinician mentor.



**Brian A. Allen, PhD**

Visual cortex reorganization in  
individuals with partial blindness  
University of Washington, Seattle  
Mentor: Ione Fine, PhD



**William M. Johnson, PhD**

Exfoliation Glaucoma  
Duke University  
Mentor: W. Daniel Stamer, PhD

*FFS* – Glaucoma Research  
Foundation Award



**Scott J. Neal, PhD**

Retinal development  
and function  
Upstate Medical University, SUNY  
Mentor: Francesca Pignoni, PhD



**Selina S. Solomon, PhD**

An optogenetic study of feedback  
pathways in visual cortex  
Albert Einstein College of  
Medicine  
Mentor: Adam Kohn, PhD



**Roy S. Chuck, MD, PhD**, Chair, Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences, Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Since 2014, Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine has received five Fight for Sight grants. One of the significant non-financial benefits of the program is in how former *FFS* grantees mentor their younger colleagues. Rebecca McGreal, PhD, who received a 2016 Post-Doctoral Award, was mentored by Alves Cvekl, PhD, recipient of a 1998 Grant-in-Aid. Other faculty, myself included, have also served as mentors, learning more about *FFS* in the process. This institutional peer support is often the beginning of rewarding professional affiliations and lifelong friendships.

## 2017 Summer Student Fellowships

**Summer Student Fellowships** are awarded to undergraduates, graduate and medical students interested in pursuing eye-related clinical or basic research. For most students, this is their first exposure to eye or vision research, and the experience has helped influence many students to choose academic ophthalmology or eye and vision research as a full-time career.



**Davis Uzo Anugo**

Corneal diseases  
Albert Einstein College  
of Medicine  
Mentor: Roy S. Chuck, MD, PhD  
FFS – Millicent Bellah  
Summer Student Fellowship



**Ganiru Anunike**

Glaucoma  
Case Western Reserve University  
Mentor: Carol B. Toris, PhD



**Sandeep Aryal**

Lens development and cataract  
University of Delaware  
Mentor: Salil A. Lachke, PhD  
FFS – Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye  
Research Foundation Award



**Charles Gallagher**

Pediatric amblyopia  
Cleveland Clinic  
Mentor: Fatema Ghasia, MD



**Zachary Goldsmith**

Retinoblastoma  
University of Tennessee Health  
Science Center  
Mentor: Vanessa Morales-Tirado, PhD



**Ishita Gupta**

Glaucoma  
Case Western Reserve University  
Mentor: Padmanabhan  
Pattabiraman, PhD



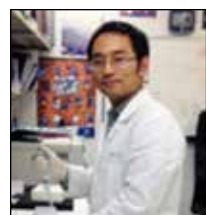
**Alexandra Hunt**

Radiation cataract  
Columbia University  
Mentor: Norman Kleiman, PhD  
FFS – Basil Worgul Lens  
Research Award



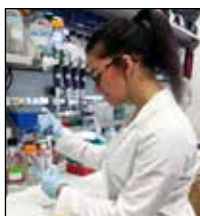
**Phuong-Thi Lam**

Diabetic keratopathy  
University of Oklahoma Health  
Sciences Center  
Mentor: Dimitrios Karamichos, PhD



**Yuan Liu**

Neurodegenerative eye diseases  
University of Miami  
Mentor: Richard Lee, PhD



**Danielle Pellack**

Glaucoma  
University of Iowa  
Mentor: Michael Anderson, PhD  
FFS – John & Anita LaSpina  
Summer Student Fellowship



**Corinne Renner**

Glaucoma  
University of Maryland  
Mentor: Osamah Saeedi, MD  
FFS – Glaucoma Research  
Foundation Award



**Mahbulul Shihan**

Secondary cataract  
University of Delaware  
Mentor: Melinda K. Duncan,  
PhD



**Adanna Udeh**

Optic nerve regeneration  
University of Miami  
Mentor: Abigail Hackam, PhD  
FFS – Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye  
Research Foundation Award

## Scientific Review Committee (SRC)

The **Scientific Review Committee (SRC)** is charged with reviewing and evaluating grant applications for Summer Student Fellowships, Post-Doctoral Awards and Grants-in-Aid. It is composed of prominent research scientists, academic ophthalmologists and clinician scientists representing a broad range of disciplines in ophthalmology, vision and eye research. Many received a *FFS* grant earlier in their career and/or have served as *FFS* mentors to the next generation of awardees.

*FFS* strives to create a diverse group of reviewers representing many of the best academic and clinical institutions across the country, who help us choose the best and brightest young students and scientists for our awards. Our review process is modeled on the peer review system utilized by the National Institutes of Health, which evaluates and ranks each application on scientific merit, strength of institutional resources and clinical relevance. The SRC meets annually to review award applications. We are extremely grateful for their assistance, dedication and hard work.

### 2017 Reviewers

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Tammy M. Martin, PhD	Oregon Health & Science University
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Louise A. Mawn, PhD	Vanderbilt University
Tonia Rex, PhD	Vanderbilt University
Rebecca M. Sappington, PhD	Vanderbilt University
Ashok Kumar, PhD	Wayne State University
Robison V. Paul Chan, MD	Weill Cornell Medical College
Thomas Grippo, MD	Yale University

## How Can You Help *Fight for Sight*?

For over seven decades, *Fight for Sight* has been dependent on individuals, the scientific and medical communities, foundations and corporate philanthropy to advance our mission to support and inspire eye and vision research by funding promising scientists early in their careers. We need your help more than ever today.

Here are some very specific ways for you to help us:

- Make a donation to *Fight for Sight* on our website, [www.fightforsight.org](http://www.fightforsight.org), or mail your contribution to *Fight for Sight*, 381 Park Avenue South, #809, New York, NY 10016. If you, your spouse or significant other works for an employer with a matching gift program, your gift could be doubled.
- Consider joining the Mildred Weisenfeld Society, a group of individuals who have included *Fight for Sight* in their estate plans. For specific information about membership in the Mildred Weisenfeld Society or to discuss other planned gift options, please contact Arthur Makar at (212) 679-6060.
- If you are a past *Fight for Sight* grantee, consider joining our Scientific Review Committee. Membership applications for this critical group of scientist/educators are available on our website, [www.fightforsight.org](http://www.fightforsight.org). Go to the "About Us" tab, then to the Scientific Review Committee section.
- Past grantees are the best mentors to future *Fight for Sight* grant recipients. Encourage your best and brightest younger colleagues to apply for the various grants for which they are eligible.
- *Fight for Sight* is active on social media including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Please follow us and share your achievements in eye and vision research.
- *Fight for Sight* needs volunteers to assist with fundraising and with general office duties. If you live or work in the Metro New York area, please call (212) 679-6060 if you wish to become a volunteer.

[www.fightforsight.org](http://www.fightforsight.org)

## Financial Highlights

Generous donors and prudent financial management are critical to *FFS*'s success. The numbers from our 2017 audit underscore our expertise in this area. *FFS*'s program spending ratio was 68%. This means that for every dollar spent, 68 cents went towards program services.

### SOURCE OF FUNDS

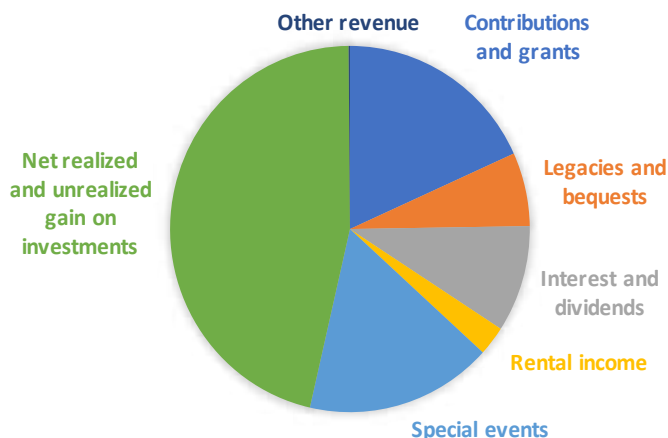
Contributions and grants	\$88,498
Legacies and bequests	\$31,584
Interest and dividends	\$45,746
Rental income	\$12,611
Special events	\$81,569
Net realized and unrealized gain on investments	\$224,703
Other revenue	\$571
<b>Total operating revenue</b>	<b>\$485,282</b>

### EXPENSES

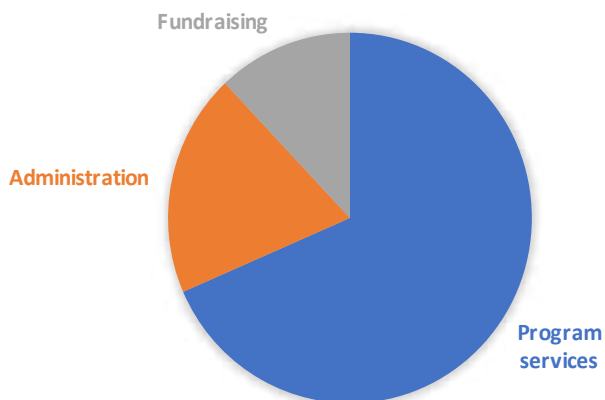
Program services	\$434,013
Supporting services:	
Administration	\$123,522
Fundraising	\$76,356
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$633,891</b>

**Change in net assets** (\$148,609)

### SOURCES OF FUNDS



### EXPENSES



In 1989, while a fellow at Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary, I received a Grant-In-Aid which, as it did for so many of my colleagues, helped launch my career as an ophthalmology researcher. A few years later, while at New England Medical Center - Tufts University, I had the opportunity to mentor Drs. Tamar Pedut-Kloizman and Lisolette Pieroth, who received a *FFS* Post-Doctoral Award (1995) and Summer Student Fellowship (1996) respectively. Dr. Pedut-Kloizman has gone on to a distinguished career at Bnai Zion Medical Center in Haifa and has also collaborated with me on scholarly articles relating to glaucoma. Dr. Pieroth has also gone on to a distinguished career in ophthalmology and, like Dr. Pedut-Kloizman, has been a collaborator on scholarly works. This is at the heart of a *Fight For Sight* grant, where someone who begins as a mentor, becomes a colleague and friend in the decades that follow. Mildred Weisenfeld would be proud of how her original vision has grown.

**Joel Schuman, MD**, Chair, Department of Ophthalmology, NYU Langone Health



## Partner Spotlight

*Fight for Sight* recognizes and thanks the organizations listed below as grant partners, allowing us to co-fund scientists in specialized areas of eye and vision research.



Since 2012, we have co-funded Summer Student Fellowships focusing on macular degeneration through our partnership with **AMDF**.



**Aniridia Foundation International**

*Fight for Sight* co-funds a Summer Student Fellowship focused on aniridia research in partnership with **Aniridia Foundation International**.



A Summer Student Fellowship, Post-Doctoral Award and Grant-in-Aid are eligible for funding in partnership with the **Choroidermia Foundation**.



A new Post-Doctoral Award was created in partnership with the **Curing Retinal Blindness Foundation**.



Two Summer Student Fellowships are offered annually through a partnership with the **Earl & Shirley Herbst Eye Research Fund**.



A Post-Doctoral Award and Summer Student Fellowship are funded in partnership with **Glaucoma Research Foundation**.



*Fight for Sight* funded its first annual Grant-in-Aid with the **International Retinal Research Foundation** in 2013. Two Grants-in-Aid are now funded through this partnership.



A Summer Student fellowship is available through a partnership with **Lirot**, the Israeli eye and vision research organization, restricted to students studying in Israel.



A partnership related to transplantation of eye tissue was brokered in 2012 between *Fight for Sight* and the **Lions Eye Institute for Transplant & Research**.



A Post-Doctoral Award or Grant-in-Aid with **The Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC)** focused on vision restoration after traumatic nerve injury.



In partnership with the **North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society**, we offer a special research fellowship for neurology or ophthalmology residents or fellows pursuing academic research in neuro-ophthalmology.



We have offered a Summer Student Fellowship focusing on ocular immunology in partnership with the **Streilein Foundation**.



Since 2011, we have partnered with **The Eye Bank for Sight Restoration**, co-funding a Summer Student Fellowship related to corneal transplantation research.



We have partnered with **Women'sEyeHealth.org** to fund a Summer Student Fellowship to study gender-based disparities in vision health, treatment and/or eye disease prevention.

## Basil V. Worgul Lens Research

*Fight for Sight* awards the **Basil V. Worgul Lens Research** Summer Student Fellowship to honor the memory of Professor Basil V. Worgul, who was internationally recognized for his work in radiation cataract.

## 2017 Donations

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#### \$5,000+

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Nicholas Cacciola  
Connecticut Community Foundation  
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