



pediatric
retinal
research
foundation

2020 Annual Impact Report





Dear Members of the Pediatric Retinal Research Foundation Community,

It is a distinct pleasure to introduce the PRRF's inaugural Annual Impact Report. Of the analogies invoked to characterize the events of the last year, one of my favorites is "curveballs" – tougher to hit, more satisfying when well done. As you read through the report below, I think you'll agree that we hit this one pretty well thanks to the tenacity and commitment of our Board and community.

Our PRRF Board worked hard in 2020 to develop and roll out a strategic plan with the goal of defining progressive steps to fortify our infrastructure and engender growth. With the help of our newly assembled core management team, this report is evidence of the growing momentum of our young foundation. In parallel, we pursued ongoing fundraising initiatives in support of our dual focus on research and community. Our team put forth a stunningly rapid response to operating under pandemic conditions as we pivoted to hold our "Hope for Vision Walk" virtually along with another highly successful year end fundraising initiative. We continue to make impressive strides in the laboratory as well.

This first report is a starting point for many great things to come. I am proud of the PRRF community's culture of aspiration and action. Thank you all for your continued support.

Respectfully,

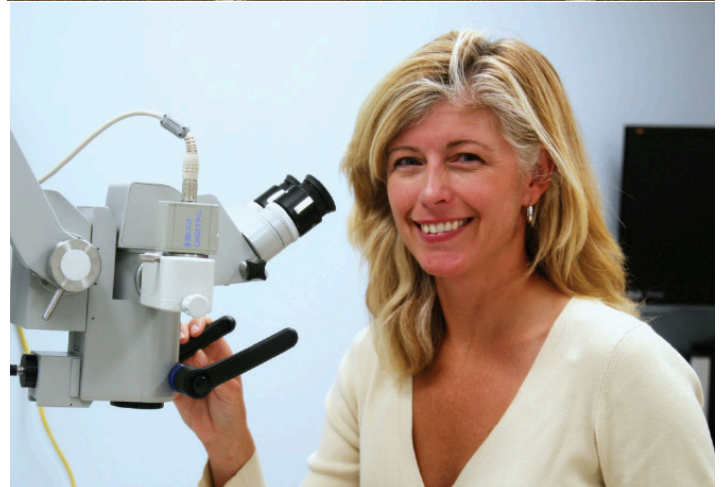
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Antonio Capone, Jr.".

Antonio Capone, Jr., MD
President, PRRF Board of Directors



2020 Highlights and Accomplishments

- **Developed Foundation's operational infrastructure** to foster growth and expansion including hiring a Foundation Manager and Community Outreach Coordinator
- **Expanded educational advocacy program** with a focus on teens and young adults impacted by vision loss
- **Hosted second annual Hope for Vision Walk (virtual in 2020)** Walk participants, represented from 18 states and two countries, raised nearly \$30,000 to advance Foundation research and programs!
- **Raised funds for purchase of a handheld optical coherence tomography (OCT) device.** This device scans a patient's retina and could aid in the early detection of a host of retinal diseases. This device will allow physicians to screen for diseases before vision loss occurs or progresses.
- **2020 year-end campaign was a smashing success** to support community-oriented initiatives designed to build upon our network of resources, enhance our online informational portal and offer virtual opportunities for parents and caregivers to connect.
- **Furthered the development of Noregen™ research.** Thanks to early support from the Foundation, a research team at the Oakland University Pediatric Retinal Research Lab earned two large grants to fund the continued investigation of Noregen™, a protein-based ocular therapeutic drug. Researchers believe the drug will promote regeneration and repair of damaged retinal blood vessels in the human eye.
- **Biobank research efforts will continue in 2021** to develop an early diagnostic marker that would allow for improved pre-natal care that could prevent per-term labor and ROP. (See "The Biobank on page 3)



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PRRF's Mission: To support the community impacted by blinding pediatric retinal diseases and champion the quest for cures through innovation.

PRRF Programs and Services

Research

The Pediatric Retinal Research Lab at Oakland University, funded by PRRF, is the first of its kind - a state of the art facility with outstanding researchers solely dedicated to pediatric retinal diseases from bench-top to bedside. The research lab's goal is to conduct translational research that will help discover treatments or cures for retinal diseases which affect infants and children daily.

Some key projects lab researchers are currently working on include:

- **The Biobank** – This has served the premature infant community in elucidating an exciting correlation between factors associated with Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) and pre-term labor.¹ We found that the same pathway that regulates the development of the retinal also plays a role in a healthy placenta. This is the first genetic link to help us understand the link between miscarriages, pre-term labor, and eye disease (ROP). We start 2021 with an initiative to develop an early diagnostic marker to identify women in need of heightened pre-natal care in the interest of reducing the likelihood of premature birth.

¹Dailey WA, Gryc W, Garg PG, Drenser KA. Frizzled-4 Variations Associated with Retinopathy and Intrauterine Growth Retardation: A Potential Marker for Prematurity and Retinopathy. Ophthalmology. 2015 Sep; 122(9):1917-23

- **COVID-19 Research** – When non-COVID 19 research was suspended in most of the country for a few months, PRRF sponsored scientist Ken Mitton, Ph. D., at Oakland University to assist EpiGentek (a US company) in a human subject study to evaluate if a simple finger-poke drop of blood could be used in a very specific antibody-based test. This is done with the same finger lancets used for testing blood sugar.

Volunteers from the community have been very responsive by showing up to help evaluate the test's reliability, as it remains critically important that these tests only detect antibodies specific to COVID-19 to avoid "false positive" results. Testing must continue, but as of this report, about 30 people have been tested in the study and so far the test has not provided any false positives.

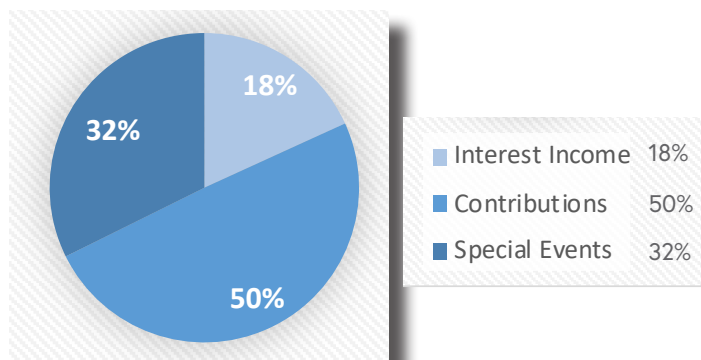
Community Outreach & Advocacy

The Foundation is dedicated to supporting children, their parents and the community by providing educational advocacy resources, connecting parents of those impacted by retinal diseases, and sharing our online information portal.

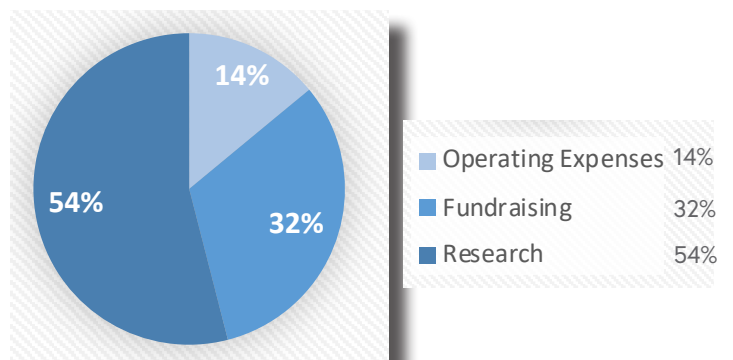
Coming in 2021, we're excited to introduce a Family Advisory Committee, as well as several virtual engagement opportunities. Check our website often for more information and event dates!

2020 Financials

2020 Revenue \$216,899



2020 Expenses \$88,323 (41% of revenue)



Thank you to our tremendous 2020 donors!

The list below represents gifts ranging from \$100 to \$25,000. An asterisk (*) denotes a Board Member.

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