

**Your Support
Makes an
Impact on the
World Stage**



**FBC-Funded Scientists
Shine at ARVO 2019
in Vancouver**

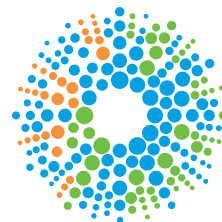
PG 4 & 5

**FBC Enters a
New Frontier in
Vision Research**

PG 2-3

**Making a
Difference Through
a Legacy Gift**

PG 6



**FIGHTING
BLINDNESS
CANADA**

WELCOME TO FIGHTING BLINDNESS CANADA

YOUR SUPPORT HAS OPENED A NEW FRONTIER IN VISION RESEARCH

Thanks to you, the Foundation Fighting Blindness has supported essential sight-saving research into blinding eye diseases for 45 years.

The discoveries made possible by your generosity have had significant implications for our understanding of eye diseases and blindness. Indeed, recent advancements in gene therapy, stem cell research, and other promising treatment methods have brought us to a turning point in vision research. At this very moment, some eye diseases are closer than ever to being curable – or, at a minimum, treatable. You have helped to open a new frontier in vision research!

Inspired by the far-reaching impact of our earlier research investments, our Board of Directors voted to expand the organization’s research scope to include

all blinding eye diseases. To communicate this exciting growth, we are announcing a new name: Fighting Blindness Canada! Removing the term “Foundation” better reflects our action-oriented nature and emphasizes our need to prioritize vision research. Adding “Canada” illustrates our national focus and distinguishes us from organizations in other countries.

We recently announced our new name in Vancouver to coincide with the largest international vision research conference. For the first time, the annual meeting of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) was held in Canada. We were incredibly proud to see that the vision research you are supporting is world renowned (read more about this research on pg. 3-4), and we were excited to communicate our research mission at ARVO, the largest gathering of vision researchers in the world.

\$40 MILLION

invested in sight-saving research and education thanks to your support



Why Expand Our Research Mission to Include All Blinding Diseases?

The interconnections between different areas of vision research have led to a natural evolution and expansion of our research scope. A new therapeutic approach to treat retinitis pigmentosa, for example, might also work to treat glaucoma. New knowledge about diabetes-related vision loss has the potential to change how we treat age-related macular degeneration. A discovery about age-related macular degeneration could open a new treatment strategy for Stargardt disease. Indeed, many of the incredible vision scientists who receive funding from Fighting Blindness Canada (FBC) are exploring how their research could impact different eye diseases (read more on pg. 4-5).



5.59 MILLION

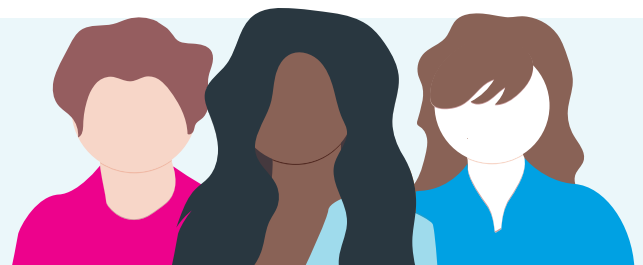
Canadians have an eye disease that puts them at risk of vision loss

Blindness In Canada

Did you know that 5.59 million Canadians are at significant risk of developing a blinding eye disease? A 2017 study estimated that there are 1.5 million Canadians living with vision loss. These numbers are projected to increase dramatically as our population ages, doubling, according to one study, over a period of 25 years. Given these numbers, it's clear that expanding our mandate to find treatments and cures for all blinding eye diseases is the right thing to do!

Throughout its history, Fighting Blindness Canada has always been, and will always be, an inclusive community dedicated to the common goal of developing treatments and cures for blindness. You will see that goal reflected in everything we do: raising and directing research dollars, providing crucial information to prevent and treat blinding eye diseases, and advocating to bring new treatments and cures to Canadian clinics. You'll also see that goal reflected in our updated website (fightingblindness.ca), which we hope you will visit!

As Fighting Blindness Canada, we're proud to carry the legacy of the Foundation Fighting Blindness forward, and we are excited to build our community. Together, we will shape a future without blindness. Thank you for your ongoing support!



1.5 MILLION

Canadians who are blind or partially sighted will benefit from your support

FROM BENCH TO BEDSIDE & BACK AGAIN

THANK YOU FOR FUNDING RESEARCH ON THE WORLD STAGE

The phrase “from the bench to the bedside” is often used to describe the path to new treatments, beginning with a discovery at the laboratory “bench” and finishing when patients can be treated at the “bedside.” In 2019, the theme of ARVO, the world’s largest international vision science conference, was “from the bench to the bedside and back again.” Adding the words “back again” is meaningful because it challenges a common misunderstanding about medical research: the path to new treatments is not linear. Instead it is a circular dynamic, where patient experiences at the bedside continually drive new discoveries at the bench.

Driven by this exciting premise, the atmosphere at ARVO was electric! The pace of research has undeniably accelerated in recent years, especially in the field of gene therapy. Twenty years ago, scientists were making discoveries at the bench that demonstrated it was theoretically possible



to treat genetic eye diseases using gene therapy. Today, one gene therapy is approved for use at “the bedside,” and more than 50 clinical trials are underway. Dr. Robin Ali, a member of Fighting Blindness Canada’s Scientific Advisory Board, received the prestigious Champalimaud Vision Award along with six exceptional scientific pioneers, who were recognized for contributing to the world’s first gene therapy to treat a form of childhood blindness!

Thanks to you, Fighting Blindness Canada (FBC) was proud to be representing the patient community at ARVO, and proud to be supporting a diverse range of research projects featured on the international stage (see pg. 5 for some of the FBC-funded scientists who shared their work).

The treatment road doesn’t end at the bedside: it always leads back to the bench, where research discoveries – driven by your support – are transforming the future of care.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR SUPPORT SHINES AT ARVO

Dr. Orson Moritz, University of British Columbia, reported his laboratory's effort to understand the biochemistry and cell biology of genetic eye diseases.

Ruanne Vent-Schmidt, University of British Columbia, was awarded the ARVO Science Communication Training Fellowship! Ruanne is part of Dr. Moritz's research team. One thing that sets Ruanne apart from other vision researchers is that she lives with retinitis pigmentosa (RP), the disease she studies, and is going blind. We were honoured that Ruanne shared her experiences and expertise with our community at our recent Vision Quest education event in Vancouver.

Dr. Elise Héon, Hospital for Sick Children, shared her team's effort to identify a new inherited retinal disease! Additionally, together with her colleagues and lead author, Vaishnavi Batmanabane, Dr. Héon reported on the positive results of obtaining genetic testing and diagnoses for children living with blinding eye diseases.

Dr. Brian Ballios, University of Toronto, and recipient of FBC's Clinician-Scientist Emerging Leader Award, shared his research focused on identifying critically important molecular markers in retinal stem cells.

Dr. Mike Sapieha (pictured on front cover), Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont, accepted the prestigious ARVO Cogan Award, which recognizes an outstanding researcher under the age of 45 who has made significant contributions to vision science. In his acceptance lecture, Dr. Sapieha discussed how his research opens up new treatment avenues for the many different eye diseases that involve the abnormal growth of blood vessels, such as diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration.

This is only a snapshot of what happened at ARVO: there were many more FBC-funded scientists presenting their work! Congratulations and thank you to all of them for their extraordinary dedication.



ARVO, the Association for Research in Vision and ophthalmology, is the largest vision research organization in the world.

In 2019, the annual ARVO meeting was held in Vancouver.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH A LEGACY GIFT | BY LORNA ROSENSTEIN

Retinitis pigmentosa. For years, I have lived with the disease and until recently it was considered incurable. Thanks to research there is now hope.

That's why I am a monthly donor to Fighting Blindness Canada (FBC) and that's why I've remembered FBC with a gift in my estate plans.

Retinitis pigmentosa (RP) is a genetic disorder, generally inherited from your parents. RP causes progressive vision loss. You can't see at night. Your peripheral vision decreases. You get tunnel vision and detail work becomes more and more difficult. Retinitis pigmentosa is a life-limiting disease.

My own symptoms started when I was in my late twenties and by the time I reached adulthood, my vision was almost gone. However, our gifts to

Fighting Blindness Canada can fund the research needed to find treatments that will lead to cures.

To me, leaving a gift of life insurance to Fighting Blindness Canada just made sense. The process was simple and convenient. My insurance professional helped me determine the type of policy best for me. I receive an annual tax receipt for the premiums I pay. Most of all, I am able to leave a much larger gift without depleting my assets and leaving my estate intact.

Really, it's all about making a difference. I want my gift to help develop treatments and ultimately cures for blindness. I am confident it will.

Please join me and remember Fighting Blindness Canada with a gift in your own estate plans. FBC is the only Canadian charity solely dedicated to vision research. To date, over \$40 million dollars has been invested in research and education to better understand, preserve, and restore sight. With every dollar we give, we are that much closer to finding treatments and cures.



Mike Colle, Lorna Rosenstein & Sharon Colle at the FBC Visionary Dinner



Lorna Rosenstein receiving the prestigious Volunteer Toronto Legacy Award



Lorna Rosenstein, volunteering at Cycle for Sight

You too can leave a legacy gift to Fighting Blindness Canada.

For information, please contact
Ann Morrison 1.800.461.3331 x 232
amorrison@fightingblindness.ca



Imagine the hope you can give by joining our Monthly Giving Program.

Join today!

You can fuel discoveries that will change the lives of people living with blindness.

For information, please contact
Josie Koumandaros, 1.800.461.3331 x 262
jkoumandaros@fightingblindness.ca

AMI-tv's summer schedule heats up.

AMI heads into summer with a plethora of new programming guaranteed to entertain, empower, and inform.

Among the projects to debut in the coming months are episode two of Level Playing Field, featuring Para-cyclist Keely Shaw; Double Tap Canada TV, which brings the popular AMI-audio brand to a new platform and audience; and You Can't Ask That, a documentary series where Canadians who live with different abilities confront the awkward, inappropriate or uncomfortable questions they hear all the time. Additionally, look for new episodes from AMI-tv's Postcards franchise as we visit B.C.'s Haida Gwaii and Northern Ontario.

Visit AMI.ca for more details

VISION QUEST EDUCATION SERIES

Join thousands of patients, clinicians, researchers, industry experts, and low-vision specialists as we share the latest breakthroughs in vision science.

Upcoming Vision Quest 2019 Events

Kingston	Lunch & Learn: AVL	June 20
Halifax	Symposium: AVL & IRD	September 14
Calgary	Conference: AVL & IRD	October 26
Toronto	Symposium: IRD	November 9

AVL: Age-Related Vision Loss

IRD: Inherited Retinal Diseases

GET INVOLVED

Visit
fightingblindness.ca
or call us at
1.800.461.3331
to learn more!

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Join our incredible nationwide community at one of our many events!

Comic Vision

Canada's favourite comedy fundraising tour, spreading hope and humour coast to coast since 1999. Help us restore hope and sight!

comicvision.ca



Cycle for Sight

Join hundreds of sighted, blind and partially sighted cyclists on the Perfect One Day Ride!

cycleforsight.ca



Ride for Sight

From its humble beginnings as a local fundraising event, it has become a great Canadian motorcycle tradition raising funds to end blindness!

rideforsight.com



Host Your Own Event

Whether it's a road hockey tournament or a party, put your unique mark on supporting vision research!

Call April Watts, Senior Manager of Events
416.360.4200 x 231