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Contact: Kira Baldonado
614-464-2020 ext. 106

PREVENT BLINDNESS OHIO AWARDS FELLOWSHIPS IN VISION RESEARCH TO CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

CLEVELAND –To bring awareness to the critical importance of vision research, Prevent Blindness Ohio (PBO) launched the **Prevent Blindness Ohio’s Young Investigators Student Fellowship Award for Female Scholars in Vision Research**. PBO is pleased to announce that Meera Shukla and Loretta Szczotka-Flynn, both of Case Western Reserve University, have been named fellowship grant recipients for 2007.

Meera Shukla from the School of Medicine is studying the retina and the effects of different drugs on treating retinitis pigmentosa (RP). Roughly 400,000 Americans and 18,000 Ohioans have RP which damages the cells in the retina that are sensitive to light leading to serious vision loss. “One of my future goals is to help educate the population and my classmates about age-related eye diseases and increase the exposure of these diseases to the community. I am also hopeful that I will be able to generate an interest within my field for other women to pursue research,” said Shukla.

Loretta Szczotka-Flynn from the Department of Ophthalmology, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, is studying contact lens safety issues for individuals wearing extended wear contact lenses. Infections caused by improper use of contact lenses can lead to damage of the cornea, the thin layer of tissue in the front of the eye. According to Szczotka-Flynn, “the grant helped in the funding of a project coordinator. My research consists of 200 patients that need follow up six times a year. The coordinator is an integral part of my research.”

Fellowship research projects will continue through the summer and conclude by September 30, 2007. Fellows will present the results of their projects at a research forum

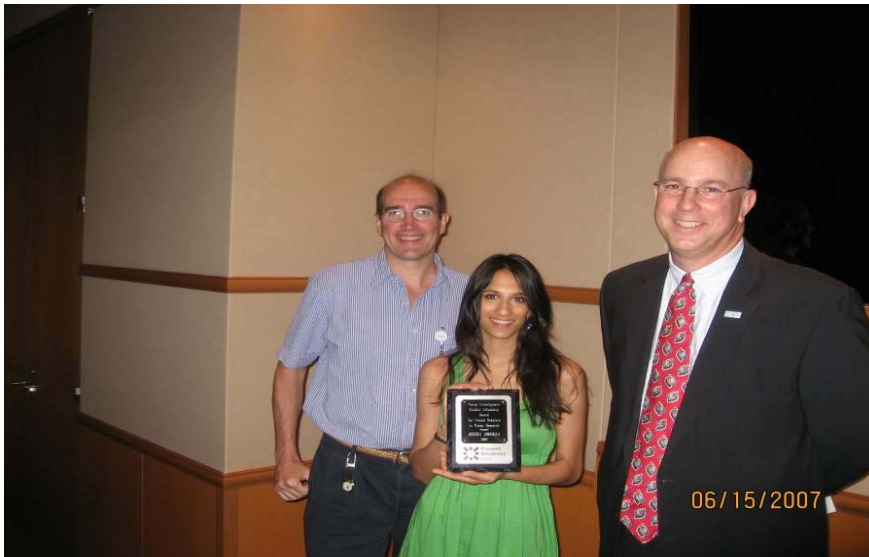
sponsored by Prevent Blindness Ohio and Ohio's Aging Eye Public Private Partnership in November. The Award Program is financially assisted by the Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee.

“For close to 50 years, Prevent Blindness Ohio has served as the voluntary, nonprofit advocate for the public on vision related issues,” said Sherill K. Williams, president and CEO of PBO. “But many may not know that we also provide research grants to those who are working to find the causes of and cures for vision loss. With the doubling of aging eye diseases in the next two decades, the need for research to find the causes of and cures for vision loss has never been greater. Early detection and prevention are key in our fight to preserve healthy sight for a lifetime.”

For more information on the Prevent Blindness Ohio Fellowship Award call Prevent Blindness Ohio at 1-800-301-2020 or visit www.pbOhio.org.



Pictured above: Dr. Jonathan Lass, Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at University Hospitals of Cleveland, Michelle Lin Prevent Blindness Ohio's Young Investigators Student Fellowship Award Recipient for Female Scholars in Vision Research for 2006, Dr. Eric Pearlman-Michelle Lin's Advisor, Dr. Loretta Szczotka-Flynn 2007 Student Fellowship Award Recipient for Female Scholars in Vision Research, and Julie Capuano –Prevent Blindness Ohio North East Ohio Executive Council Member.



Pictured Above: Meera Shukla, 2007 Student Fellowship Award Recipient for Female Scholars in Vision Research (center) with her advisor-Dr. Neal Peachey (left) and Stan Davisson-Prevent Blindness Ohio North East Executive Council Member.

Prevent Blindness Ohio is celebrating 50 years as Ohio's leading volunteer nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight. Founded in 1957 by U.S. Senator John Bricker and Lion's Club Member, Bob Morrison with support from Nationwide, the Ohio Department of Health and Delta Gamma Fraternity, PBO serves all 88 Ohio counties. We provide direct services to more than 800,000 Ohioans annually and educate millions of consumers about what they can do to protect and preserve their precious gift of sight. Prevent Blindness Ohio is an affiliate of Prevent Blindness America, the country's second-oldest national voluntary health organization. For more information or to make a contribution, visit our website at www.pbOhio.org or call 800-301-2020

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