



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **PREVENT BLINDNESS OHIO AWARDS VISION RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS**

**COLUMBUS-**To encourage female scientists to enter the critical field of vision research and to address the growing public health concern of vision loss among Ohio's aging population, Prevent Blindness Ohio initiated the Young Investigator Awards for Female Scholars in Vision Research.

There are 1,259,000 older Ohioans affected by vision problems that if not detected and treated early, could lead to blindness. Because of the growth in the aging population, there will be more than 2.5 million Ohioans affected by vision-robbing conditions by the year 2030, largely resulting from the eye diseases of diabetic retinopathy, cataract, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration (AMD). The burden on our health care system, social/rehabilitative service programs, and quality of life will be staggering.

The Fellowship Program is designed to provide training support for future generations of outstanding female scientists committed to pursuing biomedical, behavioral or clinical research careers relevant to the mission of Prevent Blindness Ohio – to prevent blindness and preserve sight.

Prevent Blindness Ohio is pleased to announce the five fellowship grant recipients for 2008:

**Katherine Trueblood Doreian** from Case Western Reserve University's Department of Physiology and Biophysics is studying how high blood glucose levels and the initiation of an inflammatory response contribute to the development of diabetic retinopathy. Diabetes is the leading cause of new blindness among adults.

**Reyna Martinez De Luna** from The Ohio State University's Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology is seeking to understand the function of the Retinal Homeobox (Rx) gene in the regenerating retina which will provide key insight that could lead to the stimulation of regeneration in the diseased human retina.

**Elizabeth McDonald** is pursuing a PhD in the Molecular & Developmental Biology Graduate Program, Division of Developmental Biology and Department of Pediatric Ophthalmology, at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Research Foundation. Her research is aimed at dissecting the genetic pathways that play a role in retinal degeneration, a leading cause of blindness in adults.

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**Holly Moose** from The Ohio State University Integrated Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program is studying how FoxO3, a protein involved in insulin signaling, functions in the developing retina. Her studies will contribute to the understanding of insulin signaling in the retina, and will be relevant to the understanding of the mechanisms underlying the pathogenesis of diabetic retinopathy.

**Jennifer Stanke** from The Ohio State University Integrated Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program is investigating the regenerative properties of the retina and neuronal survival. The long-term results of her study could eventually lead to the survival of neurons and therefore preserve vision in degenerating retinas. This could be of importance in the treatment of both diabetic retinopathy and age related macular degeneration which are among the leading causes of vision loss among adults.

Prevent Blindness Ohio is accepting applications for its **2009 Young Investigator Student Fellowship Awards for Female Scholars in Vision Research**. Grants will be awarded for the summer 2009 session. The deadline for receipt of applications is February 15, 2009. Applicants must be post-baccalaureate students enrolled in either a Master's or Doctorate program, female citizens and permanent residents of the United States and conducting their fellowship project with a recognized academic institution in the State of Ohio.

The Young Investigator Student Fellowship Award Program is supported by a grant from the Charlotte R. Schmidlapp Fund, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee; The Reinberger Foundation; and The Sarah E. Slack Prevention of Blindness Fund of the Muskingum County Community Foundation.

For more information about the Fellowship Grant and/or to access an application form, contact Prevent Blindness Ohio at 800-301-2020 or [info@pbohio.org](mailto:info@pbohio.org). To download the application, go to [http://www.preventblindness.org/Ohio/research\\_award.html](http://www.preventblindness.org/Ohio/research_award.html)

For more information on the Prevent Blindness Ohio Fellowship Award, or for free brochures on vision research and various eye diseases, call Prevent Blindness Ohio at 1-800-301-2020 or visit [www.pbohio.org](http://www.pbohio.org).

*Prevent Blindness Ohio, founded in 1957, is Ohio's leading volunteer nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight. We serve all 88 Ohio counties, providing direct services to more than 800,000 Ohioans annually and educating 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](http://www.pbohio.org) or call 800-301-2020.*

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