2011 Recap

International Division of Ophthalmology Launched on February 9, 2011
"It is with great excitement that we launch the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences' International Division and welcome Dr. Michael and Jessica Feilmeier to our UNMC team. This dynamic couple brings with them significant experience in global blindness prevention. Building upon their expertise, we will expand our mission to a global scale. Focusing on skills transfer education and eye care delivery, we plan to make a significant impact on global blindness." - Dr. Thomas Hejkal, Chairman.

A Night for Sight
On September 9th, the Department of Ophthalmology's International Division hosted a Night for Sight, a fundraising gala to support its mission of providing eye care relief within the developing world and helping facilitate subspecialty training of International Physicians who will visit UNMC between 2012 and 2013. "We'd like to extend our thanks to the 190 attendees in addition to those donors who were unable to attend that helped us to raise $38,500.00." - Jessica Feilmeier, Development Director.

International Ophthalmology Medical Student Elective
The UNMC medical school curriculum committee has approved the International Division of Ophthalmology's new medical student elective, which will allow students to spend a month abroad observing at a partnered eye hospital in the developing world as part of their 4th year medical school curriculum. "It was my goal to design an elective that would increase exposure of medical students with an interest in global health to the field of Ophthalmology. I simply hope this course will open the eyes of our medical students to what a career in Ophthalmology could offer." - Michael Feilmeier, MD Medical Director.

CRAVE Cares
This past September the International Division of Ophthalmology was featured through CRAVE Restaurant’s CRAVE Cares program with a portion of all sales from their CRAVE Cares menu being donated to support our work. On October 4th, we received a check for $1,155.12, which will be used to provide sight-restoring surgeries to 58 patients in Haiti in May of 2012.

A Look Ahead 2012

GHANA
Dr. Michael Feilmeier and team will be embarking for Kumasi, Ghana from January 21-29 in 2012. The team, comprised of UNMC volunteer faculty, Dr. Jess Boyesen, and UNMC 3rd year resident, Dr. Christine Larsen, will focus on residency education as well as teaching corneal transplant surgery, glaucoma surgery, and postoperative management. While in Ghana, the team will conduct a high-volume cataract surgery camp where 150 sutureless extracapsular cataract surgeries will be performed on patients who are living needlessly blind in one or both of their eyes. The International Division would like to thank Alcon Corporate Giving, Dutch Ophthalmic USA and Ahmed Valve for their generous support of this outreach effort and the Himalayan Cataract Project for their partnership in cultivating the residency program at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital.

Bike for Sight
On Saturday, April 14 the International Division of Ophthalmology will be the beneficiary of the 2012 Bike for Sight. Event sponsors The Bike Way and Nebraska Brewing Company have joined forces to offer Nebraskans the chance to restore sight to someone living needlessly blind. Ride registration will be $20, the cost of (1) sight-restoring surgery, with 100% of the registrations going to the International Division. Each registration will thereby represent one person who will benefit from a free cataract surgery at a camp to be held in Haiti in May. Visit www.bikeforsight.org for more information or to register for the ride.

ASCRS
Dr. Michael Feilmeier and Dr. Geoffrey Tabin, Director of International Ophthalmology at the University of Utah, will be co-hosting a course at ASCRS in Chicago this spring teaching sutureless extracapsular cataract extraction technique.

HAITI
With the help of a $5,000 Allergan grant a team from UNMC will travel to Cape Haitien, Haiti in May of 2012 to work at Justinien Hospital. The team will conduct an International IRB study on First Sight, a newly developed technique designed to enable eye care workers with limited ophthalmic training to provide glasses with the correct prescriptions to patients suffering from refractive error, the leading cause of visual disability worldwide. Initial study results done in Nebraska have shown that First Sight is equivalent to the gold standard of care. While in Haiti the team will also conduct a cataract camp and train local physicians phacoemulsification. The International Division would like to thank Allergan for their grant support of First Sight and Alcon Corporate Giving for the donation of a laureate phaco device to be used for teaching purposes.