



The NightLighter™ ©

A Newsletter of RP International

Special Edition 2011



The King
speaks at the
Vision Awards



**RPI's
faith in
the adult
stem cell
pays off!**



**More
news
coming
this
summer!**

***Check our
Website***

www.rpinternational.org



**Will.i.am, Helen Harris and
Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong**

Letter From the President

The year 2010 was economically difficult for all of us. However, we continue to search and find physicians and other scientists whose life's work is searching for a cure for degenerative eye diseases and other causes for sight loss in children and adults.

As we look back at the early beginnings for RP International, it is hard to believe that the words "incurable, go home, learn Braille and get used to being blind" were even spoken. Now, with persistence and resolve we have seen and funded the first stem cell transplant in the early 80's when most of the medical community were unaware of its possible reversal of blindness. The years and numbers of hours we have spent on working for the cure have now begun to show success as trials have begun for some diseases including macular degeneration and now RP with success for some people and hope for others. Still, these trials, similar to the trials we hear about for cancer and other diseases, continue until the final cure is here for all.

We owe a great deal of thanks to those of you who have supported the efforts of RP International for these many years and ask that you continue your support until the job is done.

As you look through the web sites of RPI and turn the pages of our newsletter, featuring many attendees of the Vision Awards, you will find many fine physicians, scientists, the entertainment industry, and other outstanding individuals who have walked the stage of the Vision Awards to accept the honor on behalf of ending blind-



Helen and Stanley Jaffe

ness. We honor their very special vision that each year has brought joy and hope to the families affected by vision loss.

The Jules Stein Living Tribute: UCLA Award and the Estelle Doheny: USC Research Award have been handed to medical professionals whose interest in ending blindness is superb, along with that of the honorees in film, television, music and technology. Over a forty year period, they are all applauded for their fine personal work and their efforts on behalf of fighting blindness.

Our message long ago was, and still is, that even your smallest efforts count. We need your help now to cross the finish line for the millions who wait for that happy phone call that says: "Today, Ms. Smith, the doctor has great news for you...."

Thanks again to all of you!

Helen J. Harris
President and Founder
RP International

The 2010 Vision Award Honorees

HUMANITARIAN OF VISION
PATRICK SOON-SHIONG, M.D.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
TELEVISION
GEORGE SCHLATTER

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
MEDIA
DAN RATHER

LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT
FILM
STANLEY JAFFE

PRODUCER OF
VISION
CHRIS WEITZ

WOMEN OF VISION
BUSINESS LEADER
**MELINDA
BENEDEK**
BUSINESS LEADER
MOLLY SMITH

DIRECTORS OF
VISION
**LEE DANIELS
TOM VAUGHAN**

COMPOSER OF
VISION
ROLFE KENT

STEVE ALLEN GIFT
OF SIGHT
NORM CROSBY



LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT
TECHNOLOGY
**STEVE JOBS
APPLE, INC.**

PIONEER IN
TECHNOLOGY
AWARD
RAY KURZWEIL

AMERICAN SPIRIT
AWARD
BUZZ ALDRIN

VISIONARY
CORPORATION
**SUBWAY
DAVE KENNY**

AGRAMA HARMONY
GOLD AND LIGHT
AWARD
**FATHER BONI
WITTENBRINK,
OMI**

ATHLETE OF VISION
STEVEN HOLCOMB
OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST –
BOBSLED

JULES STEIN
LIVING TRIBUTE AWARD – UCLA
**BRIAN BOXER WACHLER,
M.D.**

2010 FILM OF VISION
**JAMES CAMERON'S
"AVATAR"**
CHANGING THE ART OF
FILMMAKING FOREVER

The 2010 Vision Award Honorees

**Helen, Dr. Soon-Shiong
and Lily Tomlin**



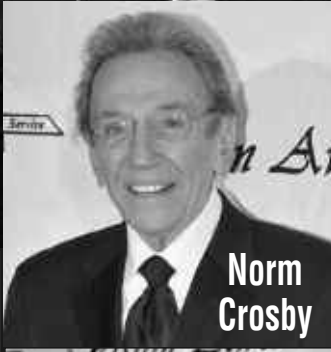
**Buzz
Aldrin**



**Melinda
Benedek**



**Norm
Crosby**



Helen Harris and Dave Kenny



**Brian Boxer Wachler
and Helen Harris**



Molly Smith



Steve Holcomb and Tristan Gale



**Jerry Zucker
2010 Presenter**



**George Schlatter, Jolene
Schlatter and Lily Tomlin**



**Lee
Daniels**



The 40th Anniversary presentation of “The Vision Awards™” took place Sept. 23, 2010 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, CA. The event presented its 2010 awards to a number of pioneering visionaries across the fields of film, television, music, research, technology, sports, and leadership. The event was produced by Helen Harris, founder of Retinitis Pigmentosa International, the presenting organization behind those awards.

2010 “Vision Awards” were presented to legendary TV news journalist Dan Rather, renowned music producer Quincy Jones, Apollo 11 moonwalking astronaut Buzz Aldrin, hu-

manitarian/businessman Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong, longtime entertainment industry figures Stanley Jaffe (producer, “Kramer Vs. Kramer” and “Fatal Attraction,”) and George Schlatter (creator, “Laugh-In”), Steve Jobs & Apple, Inc., “Precious” director Lee Daniels, “The Blind Side” producer Molly Smith, Showtime executive Melinda Benedek, world renowned inventor Ray Kurzweil, comedian Norm Crosby, U.S. Gold Medal winning athlete Steve Holcomb, and Dr. Brian Boxer Wachler, the Beverly Hills-based doctor who restored Holcomb’s vision from near blindness, and others.



**Dr. Bruce Hensel and
Dr. Bill Dorfman**



**John Fugelsang
and Helen**



**Billy Bob Thornton
and Helen**



**Sherry
Lansing**

Celebrity Presenters for the 2010 “Vision Awards” included Black Eyed Peas founder Will.i.am, Billy Bob Thornton, Lily Tomlin, actor John Cho, director/producer Jerry Zucker, Sherry Lansing, writer/producer Clyde Phillips, director Luke Greenfield, “Sideways” director Alexander Payne, athlete Tristan Gale, and “Extreme Makeover” dentist Dr. Bill Dorfman, among others.



**Maria
Shriver**



**Mario
Grigorov**



**Alexander
Payne**



John Cho

The 2010 Theatre Vision

**Blind Olympians and
Escorts Arriving at
Frank Agrama's
Harmony Gold
Preview House**



**Blind Olympians
Salute Subway**

**Wes Parker,
Dave Kenny
and Helen**



Screening For The Blind Olympics

For many years now, we have supported the blind Olympians by screening a TheatreVision described film for over two hundred plus participants and their escorts. We also team with Subway to provide a yummy super luncheon. We are doing it again on April 9, 2011, due to a gracious donation by Frank Agrama for The Harmony Gold Preview House at 7655 Sunset Blvd. in Hollywood, California. Last year, Los Angeles Dodger great Wes Parker was cheered by the blind youngsters who come from Utah, Arizona and Los Angeles for this event.



In the Winner's Circle with Subway, RP International and the Los Angeles Dodgers

Our gratitude goes out to all who participate, donating their time, effort, and everything else that makes this a perfect day for these hopeful children and young adults who are

blind and visually impaired. If this is an effort you would like your donation to support, please note this item on your donation.

Remember, your largest and smallest efforts count!



Helen Harris addressing blind theatregoers

Kids enjoying TheatreVision screening



The 2009 Vision Award Honorees



Kim Moses



John Ottman



Stephen Nemeth



Glenn Kessler



Dr. Shalesh Kaushal



Greg Mooradian



Guy Oseary



Todd A. Kessler



Mark Morgan



Matthew Weiner



Grant Nieporte



Jim Walton



Tom Wilkinson



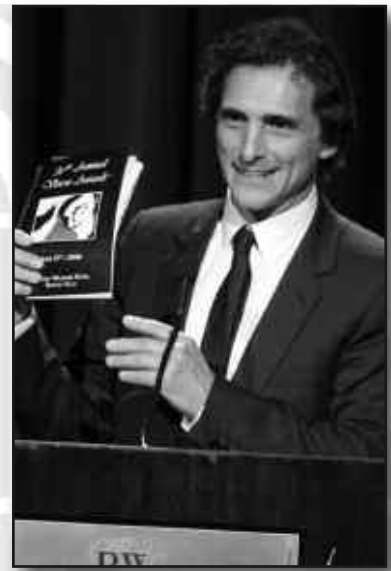
Wyck Godfrey



Shonda Rhimes



**Ian Sander, Kim Moses,
and Camryn Manheim**



Lawrence Bender
2009 Producer of Vision



Jillian Michaels
Woman of Vision



2009 Film of Vision Twilight
**Wyck Godfrey, Taylor Lautner,
Greg Mooradian & Guy Oseary**



**Honoree Diane Ladd with
Helen, Frances Fisher and
Bruce Davison**



Shawn King
Performs

The Visually Handicapped Adults of the Valley Center



VHAV class in progress

If you were to come by the VHAV, at 9:00 AM on Monday and Tuesday, you would see between 75 to 100 senior blind make their way precariously down the steps of vans. They then head to the warm dining room where they are greeted by happy volunteers, who give their time to make another day a little better, for someone whose life has been impacted by long days of bleak darkness. Later, they go from classroom to classroom, greeting their friends and the LA Unified School District teachers who are there to provide classes in ceramics, macramé, braille, current events, and mobility instruction. The Visually Handicapped Adults of the Valley even has a bowling team, and recently 13 of the students received an award from the Department of Recreation and Parks for outstanding bowling scores at the local Woodlake Bowl.



VHAV also serves those afflicted with Down's Syndrome

It takes a lot of nerve to leave your home when you're a visually impaired person. It takes a lot more when you are elderly and blind. However, the VHAV facility makes it possible for people who are blind to have the courage to get up, get dressed, and enter the world that is filled with light, though their steps are steps of darkness. As they enter the vans, they hear conversations and can only count on these verbal signals to maintain reality. All of this, combined with the efforts put forth by donors like you, makes these lives worth living every single day that the school is open.



VHAV students enjoying holiday party

The past year has been very difficult for the Visually Handicapped Adults of the Valley Center. Funds are needed desperately to make sure that the facility continues to provide quality of life programs for our dearest citizens and sometimes forgotten elderly blind. Please make your best effort to make a contribution to VHAV once again. Your smallest efforts count. Please send your tax-deductible contribution to:

**Retinitis Pigmentosa International
P.O. Box 900
Woodland Hills, CA 91365**

Thank you on behalf of the visually handicapped clients who benefit from your generosity.

RP International Mission Statement

RP INTERNATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

RP International seeks to fund and develop the Institute for Degenerative Eye Disease. The Institute will be responsible for the funding and coordination of global research into degenerative blindness, and the collection, evaluation and dissemination of information regarding its causes, treatment and availability of services.



*Walking In The
Footsteps of the
Blind Is Not An
Easy Task*

To be located in Los Angeles, the Institute will underwrite its own specific research, information and referral programs; follow, evaluate and promote promising research projects wherever they may be happening; sponsor professional educational seminars; and provide a comprehensive library and counseling service for any individual seeking help.

Funding for the Institute will come from foundation and corporate support, annual telethon, special events, deferred giving programs, endowment funds and its own direct marketing campaign.

Other ways you can help.

Everyone has holidays to celebrate, birthdays, graduations and special events that might be enhanced by a donation to fighting blindness. We will send a beautiful card in your name to everyone you wish. Memorial remembrances are welcomed by families and friends who have lost someone in their lives, and we send your

Proposed Plan to Accelerate Research in Retinal Transplantation

With significant reductions in federal funding to support research across this nation, even the well established scientists are spending more and more of their time seeking and generating support for their research. This focus has reduced the amount of time that they are able to spend in their laboratories doing what they do best: searching for solutions to fight the diseases that afflict us, our families and friends. One of the most tragic afflictions that impact the lives of the very young and old alike, is blindness.

Scientists are preparing to move to the next level in the research. Despite all of the advances, there is still much to be done.

Proposed Solution

In order to provide the environment in which these researchers can excel and expedite their scientific pursuits, RP International proposes to raise \$12 million dollars. These named endowment research funds or professorships would provide the stable financial base which would allow the researchers to devote their talents totally to the research into the cause and possible treatments of blindness, and provide enhanced programs and facilities of RP International.

thoughts with our special memorial card for these occasions too.

Please remember RP International when you need this service. You will be doing something wonderful for all. We can find beautiful programs for the blind while helping you satisfy your holidays or other occasions that require your thoughtfulness.

“How To Survive Losing Vision”

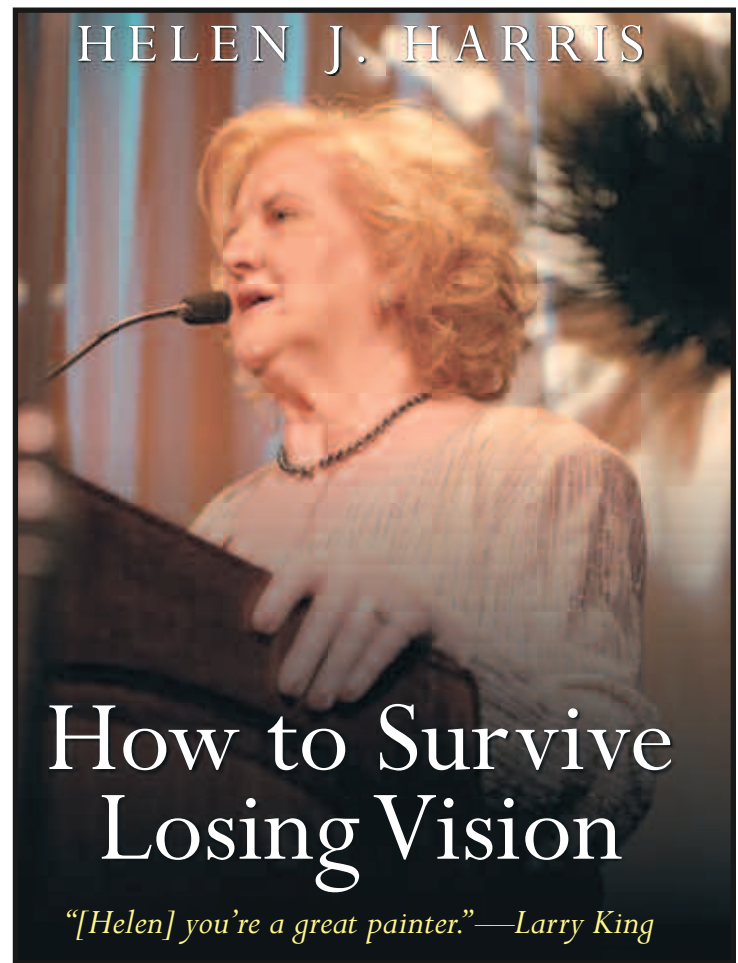
By Helen Harris

Donate \$100 for soft cover, or \$150 for hard cover, to RP International and we will send a beautiful, author signed copy of this vital book to those suffering from blindness, and/or to the person(s) of your choice.

For more information, call 818.992.0631, or Visit us at www.RPInternational.org.

Tax ID#95-3707483

Make your tax deductible contribution today and give hope to the vision impaired.



**Free
Matter
for the
Blind**

**Retinitis Pigmentosa International
P.O. Box 900
Woodland Hills, CA 91365**

Address Correction Requested

**Go to www.rpinternational.org or call
800 FIGHT RP for further information.**