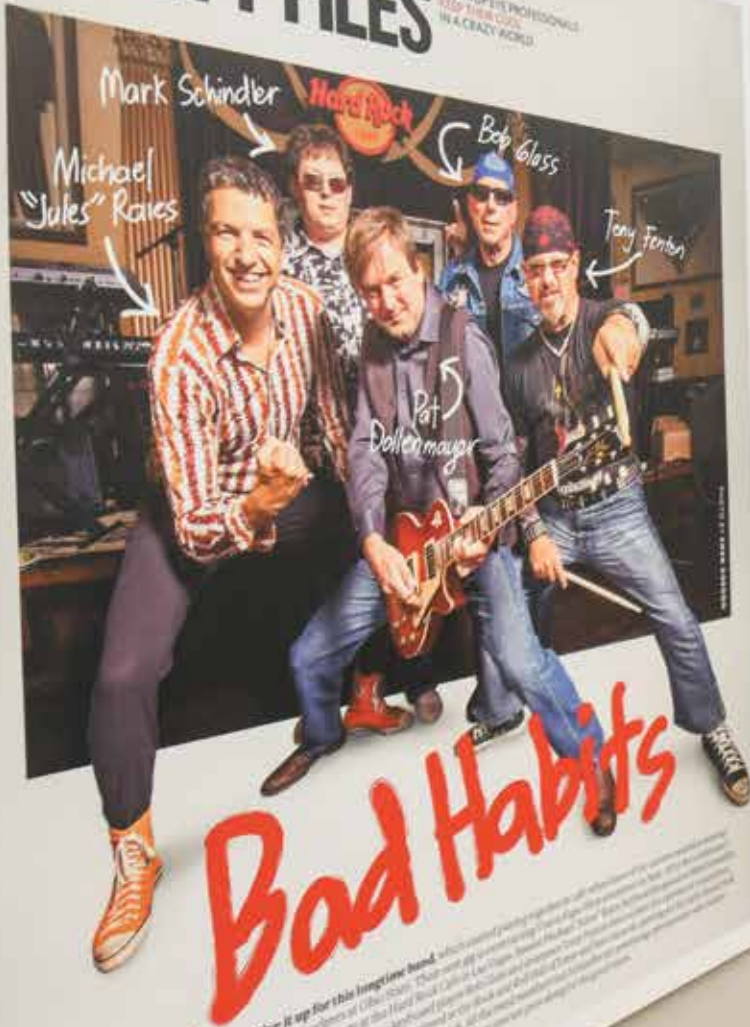


BUCKEYE OPTOMETRY

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

THE SANITY FILES

HOW TOP EYE PROFESSIONALS
KEEP THEIR COOL
IN A CRAZY WORLD



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Low Vision Education
Success

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BuckEYE Docs in
the Military

Bad Habits Lounge

NEW SPACE IS A CROWD PLEASER

Spring 2022

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On the Cover: The new Bad Habits Lounge is one of the highlights of the new clinic and is enjoyed by optometry students, faculty and staff.

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Low Vision Education at the College

Optical and digital low vision devices are organized to support student learning in the new clinic.



Dean's Message

*"To be interested in the changing seasons is a happier state of mind
than to be hopelessly in love with spring."*
– George Santayana

OK, Dr. Santayana, but I do like spring ... I write this the day before St. Patrick's Day and the day after the Ides of March. I like thinking about my schedule and life being partly driven by seasons and holidays and calendar dates. I enjoy planning for family birthdays way ahead of time and figuring out special dinner menus like my mom used to make.

I think one of the many problems created by the pandemic over the last two years was the suspension of those seasonal rhythms. Each day started to seem more and more like the one before and the one after. Celebrations were suspended. It was even tough to be hopelessly in love with spring, or any other season!

And now we're back. The new clinic building is still beautiful and busier than ever. Our work schedules are of our own design as dictated by the kind of work we do. At Ohio State Optometry, we are teaching in classrooms without masks, while retaining mask adherence in our clinics. I hosted an in-person Executive Committee meeting this morning where everyone had to wear work-appropriate clothing; I had to find a nice pair of shoes to wear.

Under normal circumstances, higher education has a seasonal rhythm that especially appeals to me. Right now it's spring break week. Students are gone, and some staff and faculty are on vacation too; others take this week as a time to catch their breath and get ready for the rest of spring semester. The Class of 2023 is taking their Part I national board examination this week.

March Madness and our own "Macular Madness," a fundraising competition among graduating classes, are underway. The Class of 2026 will be completely filled by the time this is published.

Faculty and staff annual reviews swing into full gear next. We look ahead to spring celebrations of the Class of 2023's transition to full-time patient care in fourth-year rotations and externships and the Class of 2022's graduation.

I'm determined to let this spring lead to a summer and autumn of teaching, research, and service at work and grandchildren, travel, and college sports at home.

Go BuckEYES,

Karla Zadnik, OD, PhD

Dean

Glenn A. Fry Professor in Optometry and Physiological Optics



President's Message

It's been many years since my grandfather passed away. After that, my grandmother, a woman who could hear a pin drop from a mile away, went to live with her sister. It wasn't until recently that I was able to once again see their home on Arch Street in Chillicothe, Ohio. I remember the many Sunday afternoon family dinners devouring the best roast beef, sweet tea, and some of the finest desserts any sweet tooth could enjoy. Even more memorable was the recurring conversation of everyone's ailments (insert eye-roll and replay scenes from Christmas Vacation movie). Can you relate? When the topic shifted to someone's new eyeglasses or contact lenses, my interest level spiked. I'm pretty sure that was the first sign that I might be interested in a career in optometry. What was your first memory of interest in optometry? We would love to hear it!

My cousin once removed (cousin's daughter) was able to enjoy some of those fine family meals and interesting conversations when she was very young. Maybe that is what started her interest in optometry too, because she is now in The Ohio State University College of Optometry Class of 2025. Her parents and her late grandfather (my uncle) would be prouder than anyone could ever know.

Last August, at the start of the school year, she posted the following on social media . . .

"Tonight I finally got to meet the rest of my Ohio State Optometry Class of 2025, and I genuinely feel like happy crying because I had one of the best days ever ... for the first time in years I feel like I've found my people ... and I've only known them for a day. I've never been so excited to start school!"

Do you remember that moment too? She was able to feel and verbalize in a brief moment of first meeting her optometry class something many of us have felt ever since we started optometry school at Ohio State. Optometry friends became friends for life. Ohio State Alumni became family for life.

That small home on Arch Street was the house that built my family and sparked my interest in optometry; however, it was the many great professors in Fry Hall and Starling Loving Hall who built us professionally. The future of Ohio State Optometry is now being built by many great faculty and staff at 1664 Neil Ave., as well as in Fry Hall! The homes that built us tie us with a common bond ... Ohio State Alumni! Go Buckeyes!

In that spirit, as we enter what is hopefully the ending of this pandemic, I have two asks ...

1. Don't hide behind computer continuing education this year. Attend an in-person professional meeting, or, better yet, attend our Alumni Reunion/Homecoming Weekend. I can promise any financial cost will be worth the emotional healing of reconnecting with colleagues in person.
2. If there is an optometry classmate you haven't heard from for a while, reach out and connect. Check in with them and see how that person is doing. I'm sure they would love to hear from you. More importantly, what could be better than reminiscing about the past? My mind is spinning with the many stories and laughs!

How firm thy (Ohio State Optometry family) friendship, O-HI-O!

Chris Smiley (OD'01)

President

The Ohio State University College of Optometry Alumni Society



Excellence in Low Vision Education

By Kathy Rudolf (OD'09)

Welcome to the College of Optometry's Low Vision Rehabilitation Service, where 20/20 is not always the norm and phoropters often sit idle. Patients seen in the clinic — both adults and children — live with limited or impaired vision, and may not be aware of the myriad options and services available to them. Whether they have conditions such as macular degeneration, albinism, retinitis pigmentosa or ocular injuries, many can benefit from better options for performing life tasks that most people take for granted.

The goal of the College of Optometry's Low Vision Rehabilitation Service is not only to provide specialized patient care, but also to train the next generation of optometrists to provide these valuable services. Often the focus is on greater independence with critical tasks such as reading, computer use, writing, driving, household activities, and job performance.

The clinic is also one of only two sites in Ohio where patients can be evaluated as candidates for bioptic driving. The bioptic program provides an opportunity for some individuals with mild-to-moderate visual impairment to earn driving privileges that require the use of a bioptic telescope device. Driving means increased independence as well as career opportunities, which can be especially crucial for younger patients, particularly in rural areas of Ohio where alternative transportation is limited.

Roanne Flom, OD, has led the Low Vision Rehabilitation Service since 2000, coming to the college in 1995. Dr. Flom graduated from the University of California, Berkeley School of Optometry and later worked at Johns Hopkins University, Wilmer Eye Institute, and Lions Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation Center. Over the years, she has trained over 1,300 optometry students in the key elements of optometric low vision practice, has framed multiple optometrists in advanced low vision practice, and has participated in the graduate, fellowship, and interdisciplinary studies of many more students.

Dr. Flom reports that she loves working with interns who are learning to provide low vision services and is delighted to be able to collaborate with faculty with shared interests in low vision, including **Rebecca Deffler (OD, MS'19)**, **Bradley Dougherty (OD/MS'07, PhD'13)**, **Greg Hopkins (OD'10/MS'14)**, **San-San Cooley (MS, OD'09)**, Teng Leng Ooi, PhD, Thomas Raasch, OD, PhD, and Deyue "Dion" Yu, PhD.

The rotation through the Low Vision Rehabilitation Service for fourth-year students can be an eye opener for many. The fact that all students rotate through our low vision clinic is one of the strengths of Ohio State's program. The program started as a collaboration with the Vision Center of Central Ohio, and the first student to rotate through the Low Vision Service was **Cheryl Reed (OD'82)**. It was here that Dr. Reed found her passion that led to a 40-year career serving the needs of the visually impaired, having recently retired as the Director of Low Vision Services at the UDS Judith A. Read Low Vision Services in Akron.

"An opportunity that influenced my career was my experience with the bioptic driving program," said Dr. Reed. "**Gregory Good (OD'75, MS'79, PhD'81)** was a leader in the development of the Ohio Bioptic Driving Program during the late 80s and early 90s. At that time, I was the Director of the Low Vision Clinic at the Vision Center of Central Ohio. I had the opportunity to work with the first two individuals with impaired vision who sought a driver's license through the new Ohio bioptic driving program. At that time, the program was considered a pilot program, and my role was evaluation and fitting of the bioptic telescope glasses. In 1991, I relocated to Northeast Ohio but continued my interest in bioptic driving, eventually establishing Ohio's second bioptic driving program."

Like many optometrists who specialize in low vision, Dr. Reed not only focused on helping her patients, but also excelled in teaching educators, doctors, residents, families of children with visual impairments, therapists, and other professionals in the field of rehabilitation.

"I encourage optometrists who don't provide low vision services to establish a network for referrals to other optometrists who provide low vision services or to tertiary care facilities that specialize in low vision care, such as the college," she said.



Roanne Flom, OD



Cheryl Reed (OD'82)



Gregory Good (OD'75, MS'79, PhD'81)



Many other graduates have also incorporated low vision services into their practices and can attest to the benefits of their low vision training at the college, not only in learning skills to provide low vision services, but also in learning skills that carry over broadly in their clinical work. Other Ohio State Optometry alumni who are leaders in this space offer further reflections.



Staci Anderson (OD'02)

Staci Anderson (OD'02)

“One of my favorite things about being an optometrist is that we can have an immediate positive impact on our patients’ quality of life. Whether it’s removing a foreign body from the cornea, treating a stye, or simply prescribing a stronger pair of glasses. As rewarding as that is, it’s so much more satisfying and humbling when you can play a role in improving the quality of life for someone with low vision, especially when they have been told there is nothing else that can be done for them.

One patient in particular had been sent to me from our local retina specialist’s office. She was stable after several rounds of injections for her age-related macular degeneration (AMD). She had an old pair of glasses with a progressive add but could not see well enough to read for the past few years. After a trial frame refraction and lots of talking and listening, my patient got a pair of single vision reading glasses and a pocket magnifier to carry in her purse, and she understood the importance of task lighting. Two weeks later my optician was so excited to tell me about the huge smile on my patient’s face when she picked up her glasses. She was thrilled to be able to read again. I trust her retina specialist to treat her AMD, and I am fortunate to be able to listen to how that AMD affects her life and to work with her to develop a plan to improve her life experience despite her AMD diagnosis.

Not only have I been able to apply the lessons of patience, compassion, and understanding learned in the Low Vision Rehabilitation Service and from Dr. Flom’s and Dean Karla Zadnik’s classes in my career as an optometrist, but also in life as a mom to my own Leah, who suffers from catastrophic epilepsy.”



Sloane Rudolf (OD/MS'20)

Sloane Rudolf (OD/MS'20)

“The problem-solving skills that you need to utilize for the low vision clinic are different from the other clinics. It’s not as much about binocular indirect ophthalmoscopy or other skills you learn and practice in labs, although those are still used. It’s more about educating patients and showing them practical solutions to their problems that they may not have been aware of before that point. It’s a good place to learn how to really listen to patients’ needs and coordinate care by providing other resources and services to help them meet their goals.”

Liz Cockerill (OD/MS'09)

"I found that my rotation through the low vision clinic reinforced my intentions of implementing low vision services in my office upon graduation. So many of these patients showed up in our clinic, being told by their eye doctors that 'Glasses can't help their vision.' What the patient heard was, 'Nothing will help.' But, when we could get them back to reading regular size print with a simple, inexpensive magnifier, you could see their faces light up with excitement and gratitude. Dr. Flom taught us that sometimes basic things can make such a big impact in helping a patient maintain some independence and functionality. Later in my own practice, a woman accompanied her sister for a low vision evaluation as a 'supporter' because they weren't sure what to expect. A few weeks later, this 'supporter' ended up in my chair, seeing what we could do for her moderate vision loss issues, as she claimed that no one had ever told her that this type of vision care existed. She found a handheld magnifier very helpful and even returned a few years later when her vision had further declined--to update her devices. I think if you're not referring these patients to a colleague who does low vision, you're doing your patients a disservice."



Liz Cockerill (OD/MS'09)

San-San Cooley (MS, OD'09)

"I served as a clinical attending in the Low Vision Rehabilitation Clinic from 2010 to 2016 and throughout my time there saw many patients and taught many students. It was a great experience, as each patient had visual challenges they were struggling with and each encounter was a learning opportunity for the students. My time at the college showed how knowledge, clinical skills, and creativity can improve an individual's visual abilities and maximize their remaining visual function. It's a rewarding experience for both the patient and the practitioner when a visual hurdle is overcome. I've also incorporated low vision care in private practice at EyeCare Professionals of Powell to provide low vision services to the community and improve the quality of life for those patients who struggle with vision impairment."



San-San Cooley (MS, OD'09)

Greg Hopkins (OD'10, MS'14)

Dr. Hopkins is a clinical associate professor at The Ohio State University College of Optometry who teaches in the Low Vision Rehabilitation Service and operates the new Bioptic Design and Training Service. He is also the staff optometrist who manages the low vision care delivered with the Columbus/Chillicothe VA residents, plus he serves as the preceptor for fourth-year externs providing optometric care for students at the Ohio State School for the Blind. He observes, "The Low Vision Rehabilitation Service at the college offers expert doctors who are internationally known, a well-organized and effective clinical service for the entire spectrum of visual impairment, and individualized and comprehensive services thanks to the academic practice setting and strong leadership."



Greg Hopkins (OD'10, MS'14)



Optometrist on a Mission

Q & A with Sarah Nigh-Bruner (OD'06)

By Sylvia Jones (OD/MS'06)

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a lot of mission trip plans to a screeching halt, but the need for eye care in underserved parts of the world did not stop. Now, as travel restrictions are lifted, more and more optometrists are packing their bags and resuming mission trips. **Sarah Nigh-Bruner (OD'06)** shares her experience in the Q&A below.

Q: What was the name and purpose of your most recent mission trip?

A: I traveled with Medical Missions Outreach out of Georgia. We went to the Mayan villages in the Yucatan Peninsula. There were 28 volunteers in our group. We provided eye and health care.

Q: What was your best memory of the trip?

A: I fit an 84-year-old woman with a pair of glasses so she could see to read and sew again. The only pair of glasses we had in her prescription was an “old man farmer frame,” but she didn’t care that the frame was not stylish. She was moved to tears and so beyond grateful just to be able to see again. The pure joy and gratitude the patients had was absolutely life changing!

Q: Why did you decide to go on this particular trip?

A: I chose to travel with Medical Missions Outreach because one of our ophthalmic technicians had traveled with them in 2019 and sang their praises. She kept telling me, “It will change you, you will have fun, and they are amazingly organized!” She was right!

Q: What was the overall impact of the trip?

A: We passed out over 500 pairs of glasses and helped treat many eye diseases. Patients would walk miles to come see us and wait for hours, never complaining! We also were able to provide vitamins and basic health care to over 250 people.

Q: How did this trip transform you as a person?

A: I will be forever changed by this trip! I find I want less. I have realized that a simpler life can be a better life. I try to be more patient and grateful.

Q: What advice would you give to an optometrist who wants to go on a mission trip?

A: If you are thinking about going on a trip, just do it! I was scared and almost backed out, but I had one of the most amazing, life-changing weeks. I feel I gained more than I was able to give. It’s hard to put in words, but as we work day in and day out, we sometimes lose the joy of what we do and get frustrated by the everyday shuffle. But taking a trip to help others who are so grateful and in need is beyond rewarding! Even better, you’ll be in a group of people with the same common goal - to help others!





The Vision to Learn van parked and ready at a school in the Appalachian Ohio Region

Eye Exams on the VTL Van

By Tom Quinn (OD'79, MS'81)

September 29, 2021 was a red-letter day for school-aged kids residing in the 32 counties described as Appalachia Ohio. It was the first day vision exams were conducted in the region on the *Vision To Learn (VTL)* traveling van.



The *VTL* mobile unit is fully outfitted to conduct comprehensive eye examinations. Immediately following examination, those needing eyeglasses choose from a wide selection of frames. Approximately two weeks later, *VTL*'s optician returns to the school and dispenses the filled prescriptions. If glasses are lost or broken, replacements are provided for up to one year at no charge.

Vision To Learn, created by the Beutner Family Foundation, is a non-profit organization that currently serves children in 14 states and 500 cities. The *VTL* Appalachia Ohio project is the first to provide service in a rural area. The region served is largely in southeast Ohio but extends as far north as Ashtabula County and as far west as Clermont County, just east of Cincinnati.

“The kids have been great. From kindergarten up to 12th grade, they have all expressed appreciation for what we are doing for them. It’s very satisfying work.”

Dana Gillum, Ohio Project Optic Tech

The *VTL* Appalachia Ohio project receives funding from the Foundation for Appalachia Ohio (FAO), the Ohio Optometric Association (OOA), the Ohio Optometric Foundation (OOF), ResultsOHIO, the Essilor Vision Foundation, the Deerbrook Charitable Trust and The Studio@Blue Meridian.

The mission to bring the *Vision To Learn* program to Ohio began with a single grant from the FAO for a vision screener for the Cadiz Lion’s Club in Harrison County, according to Kelly Morman, Director of FAO Programs. This request prompted further investigation into what happens to kids who do not pass vision screenings.

“Ohio has a pretty good vision screening program, but 77 percent of those failing the screening have no follow-up,” according to Loni Maughan, Ohio Project Manager for *Vision To Learn*. **Shane Foster (OD’08)**, current OOA President and Past-President of the OOF, shared “The Ohio Department of Health recognizes this is a problem.”

“One of the biggest barriers to providing eye care to kids in Appalachia Ohio is lack of doctors,” according to Maughan.



Optic Tech Dana Gillum assists a child with eyewear selection on the *VTL* van.

Mark Scaramuzzi, *VTL* Director for Ohio and Western/Central Pennsylvania, agrees. “Our mission is to serve kids where resources don’t exist.”

While lack of follow-up care was being recognized, an anonymous donor became aware of what *VTL* was doing in Baltimore, MD and wondered if they could be part of the solution. The FAO approached *VTL*, who sought to get Ohio optometry on board. They approached Keith Kerns, Executive Director of the OOA and Steve Dorman from the OOF, which is currently chaired by Dr. Katherine Fisher (OD’18). From this *VTL* for Appalachia Ohio was born.

The *VTL* Appalachia Ohio project initially offered service two days per week, but in 2022 expanded to four days, according to Dana Gillum, the project’s Optic Tech. She shared “The kids have been great. From kindergarten up to 12th grade, they have all expressed appreciation for what we are doing for them. It’s very satisfying work.”



The back of the VTL van highlights the area served by the mobile unit.



Susan Quinn (OD'82) examines a child on the VTL van.

"Each district conducts vision screenings prior to our arrival, so a large portion of the kids we see need intervention," according to Maughan. "Of the kids we've seen so far, 81 percent have needed some form of visual assistance."

Optometric care is currently being provided by Drs. **Nicholas King-Smith (OD'14)**, **Susan Quinn (OD'82)**, **Tom Quinn (OD'79, MS'81)**, and **Erica Shelton (OD/MS'18)**. Dr. Shelton also serves as co-medical director with Dr. **Tracey Needham (OD'02)**. Dr. Needham and Dr. **Cheryl Archer (OD'84)** are chairs for the OOF's flagship *in School Eye Exam (iSEE)* program.

"The goal for 2022 is to examine up to 4,000 kids," according to Scaramuzzi. "This is roughly half the need in Appalachia Ohio. Our long-term goal is to get two clinics running, one located in the northern portion and one in the southern portion of our region."

**"Of the kids we've seen so far,
81 percent have needed some
form of visual assistance."**

Loni Maughan, Ohio Project Manager

Maughan sums up the program well with "When you give someone something they may not realize they need, all of a sudden their world just opens up. Here comes their confidence. Here comes the foundation to help them succeed in life. It's very rewarding."

For more information on the *Vision To Learn* project in Appalachia Ohio, contact Loni Maughan at **361-673-2652** or **loni.maughan@visiontolearn.org**



The Secret Lives of Deans

No embellishment necessary – Dean Karla Zadnik’s latest publication is top notch



By Sarah Cupples, *Director of Marketing and Communications*

Dean Karla Zadnik, OD, PhD, has more than 170 scientific publications to her credit, and although her latest piece might not line up with her established pattern of vision research, it’s spectacular in its own right.

The April 2022 issue of *American Patchwork & Quilting* featured a 10-page spread on *Stitched Together*, an original pattern Dean Zadnik wrote from scratch for the local Common Threads Quilt Guild, of which she was president in 2020 and 2021.

At the project’s inception in January 2020, the original name of the quilt pattern was *Girls Just Wanna Have Fun*, but evolved to *Stitched Together* as the project picked up steam in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. The intricate pattern featured diverse girls and evoked feelings of teaching and helping. Detailed step-by-step instructions were revealed to guild members monthly, and quilters

met over Zoom to share their progress and talk about challenges and lessons learned.

“I am a huge believer in hobbies as wellness – something beyond work and family that you deeply care about,” explained Dean Zadnik, who began quilting in 1998.

“Activities like this bring quilt guild members together to work on a common project,” Dean Zadnik said. “Probably 30 people have made the quilt already, and the feedback I’ve received throughout the project has been wonderful. *American Patchwork & Quilting* is like the *Science* or *Nature* of the quilting world, and it is humbling to know that this pattern will reach its extensive readership.”

Copies of the April 2022 edition of *American Patchwork & Quilting* may be purchased at go.osu.edu/quilt.





Military Optometrists

Share Perspectives on Service



**Nathan Garlick
(OD'20)**

Lieutenant, U.S. Navy

*U.S. Naval Hospital
Okinawa, Japan*

I have enjoyed the opportunity to work as an active duty Navy optometrist for the last two years. The foundational clinical knowledge and experiences I gained at

The Ohio State University College of Optometry are being applied in unique ways to help military members throughout the Indo-Pacific region. Navy Optometry's motto is "Providing the Sight to Fight," and having this focus in my daily work helps give a deeper meaning to the optometric care we give. I am very grateful for the foundation that Ohio State Optometry provided to my professional life, and I look forward to continuing to improve and develop as an eye care provider.



Derek Gresko (OD'12)

**Lieutenant Commander,
U.S. Navy**

San Diego, CA

When I decided to commission in the Navy in 2013, one of the main reasons was related to the Navy helping me pay back my student loans. Several years in, it became apparent that the great benefits also came with a pretty nice way

to practice optometry in general. The Navy worked with my wife Victoria Piamonte (OD'13) as well, who commissioned in 2015. Some of the highlights have been the diversity of locations to live, the ability to work in large team settings with ophthalmology, and to have a diverse working environment between primary care, recruit processing, and even specialty contact lens clinics. I was fortunate enough to complete an Ocular Disease Residency with the Navy in 2017, and I have always been in commands with a strong student extern program where giving back to the education of future optometrists has been very rewarding as well. There are ups and downs with the military career for sure, but joining the Navy after graduation has been a great decision overall, and I am proud to serve our country!



**Katherine L
(Wingate) Herron
(OD'14)**

Major, U.S. Army
Fort Bliss, TX

When I joined the U.S. Army, I was only committed to three years of service. But after seven years, I'm still passionate about what I do. Through the Army, I completed my residency

in specialty contact lens and have had the opportunity to practice in Missouri, North Carolina, and now Texas, working with many dedicated individuals along the way. In my current job as Chief of Optometry at Fort Bliss, I'm proud to say over half our optometrists are talented BuckEYES!

The Army has challenged me. I'm a soldier, mentor, leader, and follower. My favorite advice to offer is: Take ownership and responsibility for your position even if you're only there for a little while, and it's not that you can't do something, it's just that you haven't yet!



Danae Johnson, OD

Major, U.S. Air Force

*Vision Science PhD Student
(2023 expected graduation)*

I started optometry school (at the Michigan College of Optometry) thinking that I would join my uncle and practice optometry at a private practice in Michigan; however, a recruitment letter from the

Air Force altered my career path when I decided to accept a scholarship and commit to three years of service in the Air Force upon graduation. Now, after almost nine years of service, I tell students interested in serving in the armed forces that it was the best career decision I could have made. Serving in the Air Force allows me to have two careers at once. I am first an officer and second an optometrist. It also pushed me to excellence in my optometric career by encouraging me to earn my American Academy of Optometry fellowship and by giving me the opportunity to earn my PhD in vision science in the Graduate Program in Vision Science at The Ohio State University College of Optometry. I look forward to serving in the Air Force as a vision science researcher at an Air Force research lab upon completion of my PhD degree.



**Yumes (Yuming)
Li (OD'20)**

Captain, U.S. Army
Fort Bliss, Texas

As Army optometrists, we take care of the best patients in the world. Our soldiers and their family members rely on us to provide the highest quality of care at the highest scope of practice

each and every day. While the four years in Fry Hall passed by quickly, the knowledge and friendships gained are truly enduring. Especially in the military, no matter where you go or where you're deployed, someone always knows a BuckEYE optometrist.



**Julie Long
Miavez (OD'90)**

**Captain, Medical
Service Corps, U.S.
Navy (Retired)**

After serving 26 years in the U.S. Navy, I retired as a captain and now raise my two sons.

After attending The Ohio State University College of Optometry, being commissioned in the Navy by Dr. Bob Newcomb (OD'71, MPH) along with three classmates, and leaving Columbus, my beloved hometown, I was one proud Buckeye. I was fully prepared to serve my country honorably and become the best optometrist possible. While on active duty, Ohio State Optometry invited me to present my perspective on Navy life, to inspire students at the college.

My educational experience at Ohio State gave me confidence to practice "full scope" optometry for warfighter readiness. Through support from my friends, family, faculty and staff, I also obtained non-optometry leadership skills to excel in my Navy jobs. I was selected as officer in charge of Navy Health Clinics in Hawaii, Key West, and while deployed to Djibouti, Africa.

I credit my successes to my experience, education, and long-lasting relationships made while at Ohio State.



Victoria Piamonte (OD'13)

**Lieutenant, Medical
Service Corps, U.S. Navy**
San Diego, CA

I didn't have plans to join the Navy after I graduated, but that changed when my husband, Derek Gresko (OD'12), who is also an optometrist, was stationed in San Diego

for his first tour. We knew the needs of the Navy wouldn't allow us to stay in San Diego for a 20-year Navy career, so I commissioned in March 2015 to continue practicing wherever we are stationed. Being in the military has its challenges, but it has also been very rewarding, from providing our warriors the sight to fight to taking care of their dependents and the veterans who served before us. I have been a mentor to young sailors and assisted optometry students who want to serve. I am proud to be a Buckeye and honored to serve my country with the skill set and education I received from Ohio State!



Richard Wan (MS'21 '22)

**Ensign, Medical Service
Corps, U.S. Navy Reserve**

As an upcoming optometry graduate and lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, I am humbled and excited to serve my country and to embark on a new journey. The military has provided professional and personal development opportunities in many ways

already. After the first year of my optometric education, I attended Officer Development School in Newport, Rhode Island. My basic naval training had an emphasis on mental, physical, and leadership training. I also had the opportunity to complete a clinical rotation at Great Lakes Naval Station, where I received invaluable clinical and leadership mentoring from senior officers.

Throughout these last four years, The Ohio State University has equipped me with a strong clinical and research background, which will make for a smoother transition into active-duty service. I am excited to soon begin direct patient care as an independent provider. Simultaneously, as a Medical Service Corps officer, I am also thankful for the opportunity to expand my responsibilities in management and non-clinical domains as well.



John Stehulak (OD/MS'07)

U.S. Army, Retired

As a first-year optometry student, I would never have predicted that I would join the military, but I can say that serving as a U.S. Army optometrist was the opportunity of a lifetime! I was able to use what I had learned at The Ohio State University

College of Optometry to provide comprehensive eye and vision care in eight different countries, on three continents. The breadth of experiences varied from working in the clinic, to humanitarian aid, to eye care for military working dogs, to providing hospital care during a deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. I was able to care for prisoners, generals, and everyone in between, which is a true testament to how much everyone, regardless of status, values their eyesight.



Dianne L. Williams (OD'04)

**Staff Optometrist, U.S.
Army**

Reservist, U.S. Air Force

I am a proud 2004 Buckeye graduate, with a variety of experiences. Upon graduation, I completed a family practice residency in Oklahoma. Never did I think I would ever live

in Oklahoma, and I ended up going there twice. After my residency, I joined a private practice in Hilton Head, SC, owned an orthokeratology specialty practice, and worked as a contractor for the U.S. Army. I had four assignments as an active duty optometrist for the U.S. Air Force, and now I am still serving the military population as a federal employee and as a reservist for the U.S. Air Force. If you asked me which was my favorite job, I would probably answer, "This one," regardless of which one I was in. In the Air Force, we have a saying, "Bloom where you're planted." My pearl of advice? Try it all. You might be surprised by what you'll like best.





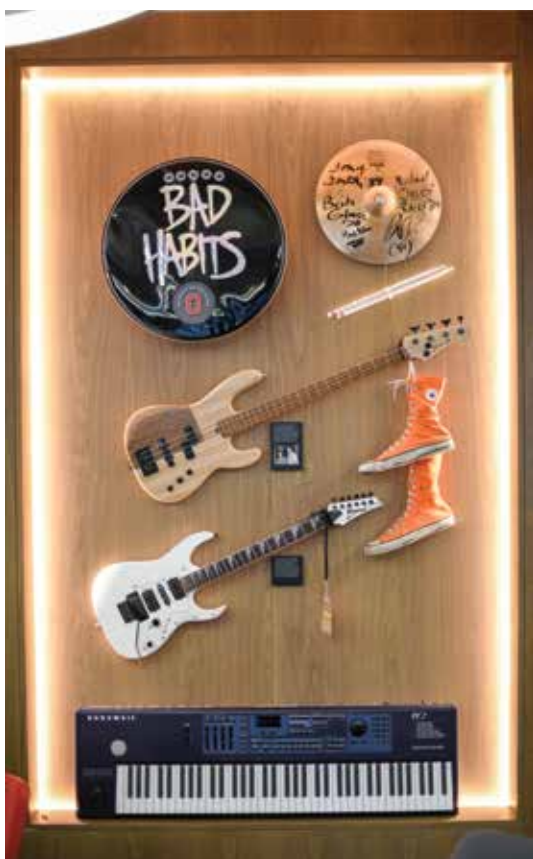
Bad Habits Lounge



Bad Habits bandmates **Tony Fenton (OD'89)**, **Michael Raies (OD'89)** and **Pat Dollenmayer (OD'91)**.

Bad Habits: The EyeDocs of Rock, **Pat Dollenmayer (OD'91)**, **Tony Fenton (OD'89)**, Bob Glass, OD, **Michael Raies (OD'89)** and Mark Schindler, regularly bring together crowds of fans who cut loose to the dynamic group's pop rock covers.

At The Ohio State University College of Optometry's new clinic, they're bringing together optometry students, faculty, and staff at a somewhat tamer tempo in the "Bad Habits Lounge." This photospread provides a visual tour of this space, generously donated by the band.



The Bad Habits Lounge is located on the first floor in the northeast corner of The Optometry Clinic. It is accessible to optometry students, faculty and staff, who must swipe their BuckID to enter from 11th Avenue. The lounge also is accessible via a staircase from the second floor.

As you'd expect, the color theme for the room is decidedly scarlet and gray. Modern, comfortable furniture provides an opportunity to rest, interact or enjoy a bite to eat. The lounge's well-appointed kitchenette is quite popular.

The show-stopping highlight of the lounge is its spirited, thoughtful décor. Bad Habits bandmates lovingly chose to donate memorabilia – items of personal significance they've used on stage over the years. The band and the College of Optometry team were thrilled to work with Tom Webster, Rich Rinsma and Lisa Waite (all Ohio State Industrial Design, Visual Communication grads) of EyeThink, as well as Shawn Bourk, a designer and fabricator. They truly brought our vision to life.

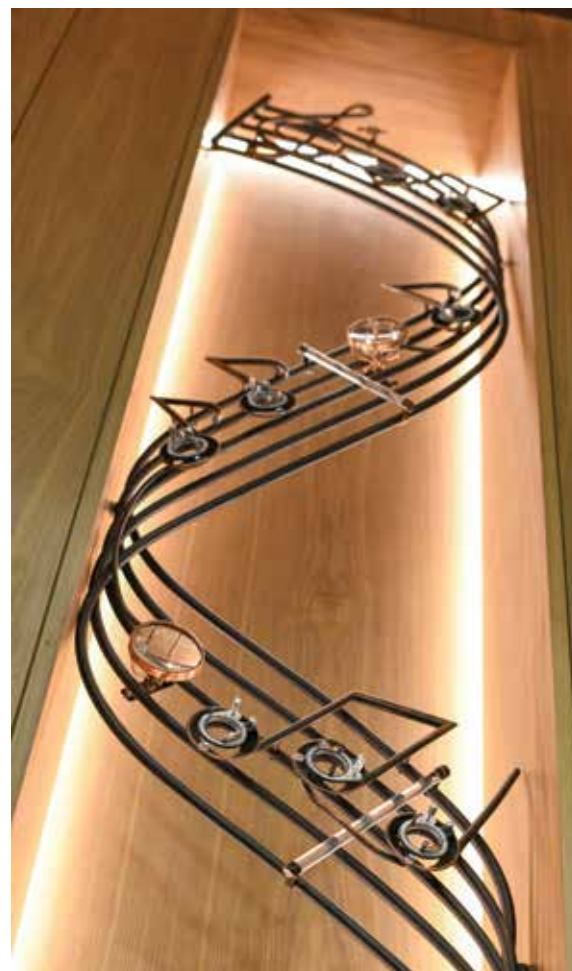


The south wall of the lounge, made of quarter sawn oak, contains three insets. The first inset provides space for pertinent news, which is updated regularly. The middle inset showcases an original piece of art made by Robert Mullins, a local sculptor. This installation reflects the intersection of science and art, as well as light and music, combining a helical musical staff and optical trial lenses for notes. Fun fact – if played, the notes are an eye-themed tune! The band will provide a special on-stage experience for the first person to properly identify the tune via email to Rachel Childress. Mullins took the spark of a great idea by Senior Graphic Designer Kerri McTigue and created an original piece that will be enjoyed for years to come. The third inset contains noteworthy Bad Habits memorabilia, including a bass guitar, guitar, cymbal signed by the band, bass drum cover, keyboard, and a pair of Dr. Raies' iconic high-top Converse sneakers.



The room also features a framed Bad Habits concert t-shirt and poster. The west end of the lounge contains a “We are Ohio State Optometry” social wall that provides an opportunity for selfies or group photos to share on social media.

If you would like to visit the Bad Habits Lounge the next time you're on campus, please contact Rachel Childress, Senior Director of Development, at childress.35@osu.edu.



Development Update

By Rachel Childress, *Senior Director of Development*



Typically, our development and fundraising article shares information about significant donors and large gifts to the college – estate plans, naming opportunities and others. Recently I’ve heard from more and more of our alumni that they’d like to support the college but don’t have the ability or time to consider a gift at this point in their career. I thought I’d take this opportunity to remind all of our alumni and friends that the college is more than happy to receive gifts that are committed as pledges with payments over time. That could be either a set amount, such as \$1,200 over the course of a year with \$100 a month or could be something that remains an ongoing gift, maybe \$20 a month with no specific end date. These can be set up easily through the university’s online giving page and will simply be charged monthly to your credit card. It’s a great way to remain involved each month at any amount that works best in your budget.

Liz Cockerill (OD’09) has been supporting the college with a gift each month since February of 2020. She says, “Giving financially to the College of Optometry is an important, effective, and simple way to give back to the institution that helped develop me into the optometrist I am today. Rather

than have to remember to donate at a set time of month or year, or even click the donate button when I receive an email from the college, it is so easy to have The Ohio State University Foundation set up an automatic withdrawal every month so I don’t ever have to think about it, and my money is going straight to the College of Optometry. Easy peasy for this busy working mama.”

Imagine how much you could help the college by making a gift of only \$10, \$25, or more each month. Over time that really adds up. \$25 a month over five years becomes \$1,500, which is certainly no small amount. These ongoing gifts help to keep our facilities beautiful, support our students through valuable scholarships, and further innovative faculty research. We are truly grateful to all of our alumni and friends who make the college a philanthropic priority throughout their lives.

Please head over to go.osu.edu/eyegive and set up your gift today. As Dr. Cockerill said, “Easy peasy.”

A New Way to Communicate Practice Opportunities



By Jen Bennett, *Director of Student Services*

For many years, the college used our Practice Opportunities Network website to facilitate connections among students, alumni, and employment opportunities in practices. This spring, we retired the Practice Opportunities Network website and transitioned our job postings to The Ohio State University's centralized system called Handshake.

There are a great number of benefits to utilizing Handshake including the opportunity to reach all of our current students as well as students at other schools and colleges of optometry. Our residents and alumni may also use Handshake. Additionally, posting on Handshake is free and allows you to interact with students in a variety of ways, including online messaging and the well-established Ohio State career fair event.

If you would like to share a practice opportunity, please do so via Handshake. All Handshake instructions are available on the Buckeye Careers website at <https://careers.osu.edu/employers>. Additionally, our alumni may register to utilize Handshake to search for practice opportunities.

If you have questions about posting a practice opportunity on Handshake, or how to look for a practice opportunity, contact Mollie Workman in the Buckeye Careers office at workman.77@osu.edu. Questions specifically for the College of Optometry can be sent to Dr. Tim Fries at fries.17@osu.edu.

We hope this change enhances opportunities for you to make career connections.

First Eye Exams

By Jen Bennett, *Director of Student Services*

The distance between the first day of optometry school and performing your first eye exam in second-year clinic can feel like a very long journey. The early years of the program feel long in the moment, yet in retrospect, they pass in the blink of an eye. This spring, as the Class of 2024 performed their first eye exams, we asked a few students to reflect on the experience and the road traveled on the way to this important milestone.



Aaron Deese ('24)

February 3, 2021 is a day I will never forget. This was the day I not only saw my girlfriend, Kaley, as my first patient but also one of the rare days that classes at Ohio State were canceled. Heavy snow and ice made for a treacherous journey to The Optometry Clinic. Being from Florida, we were both a little apprehensive about driving in the storm.

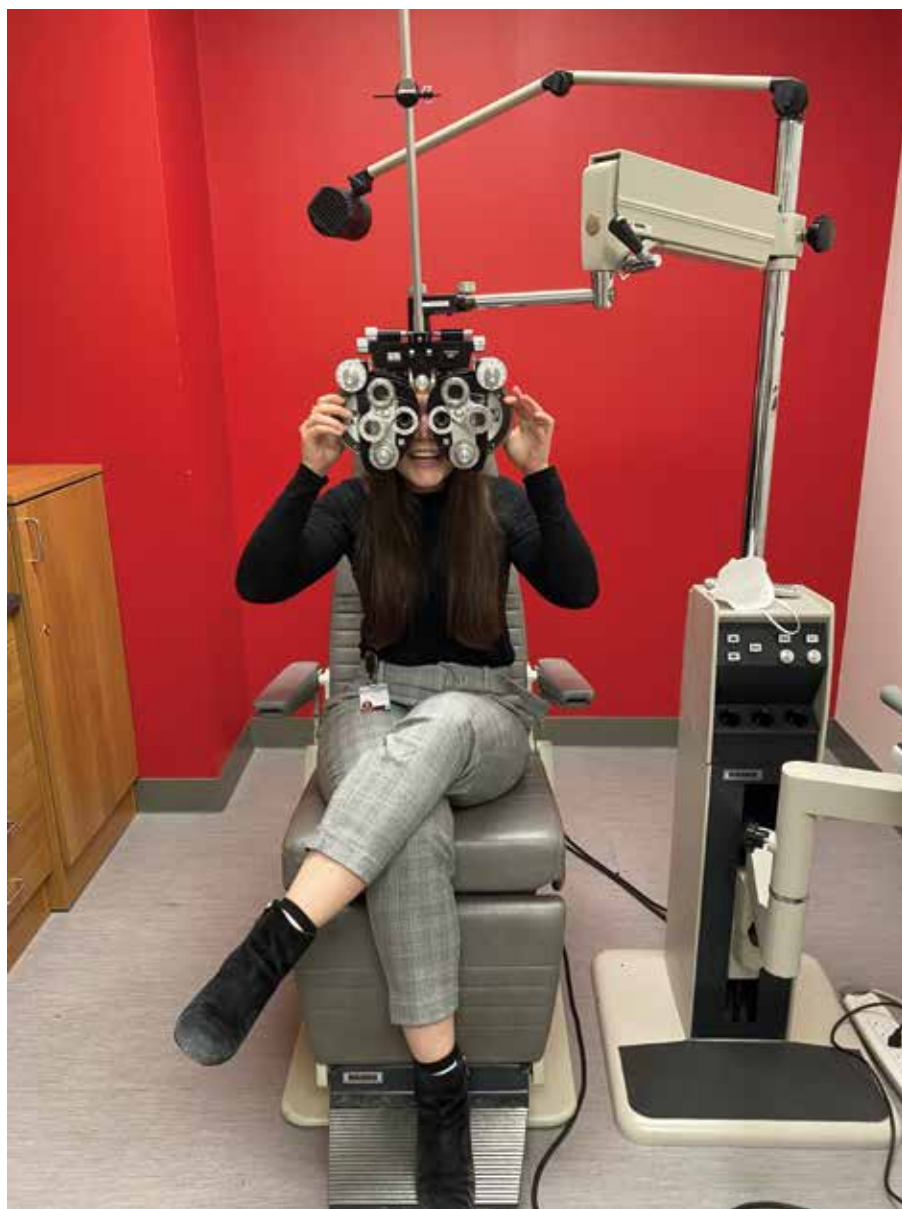
Although my nerves were getting to me, I tried to remain confident in myself. More than anything I wanted to show Kaley how much I had learned in the last 18 months of school, and I wanted her to be proud of me. As the exam progressed, I was able to calm down and trust my training. The exam ended up going smoothly, and we got through it without any (major) issues.

This first exam helped build so much confidence in myself and my skills as a clinician. I finally learned how to put everything together into one cohesive exam, and I'm excited to finish my second-year clinic rotation so I can confidently see patients in the Primary Vision Care Service starting this summer.

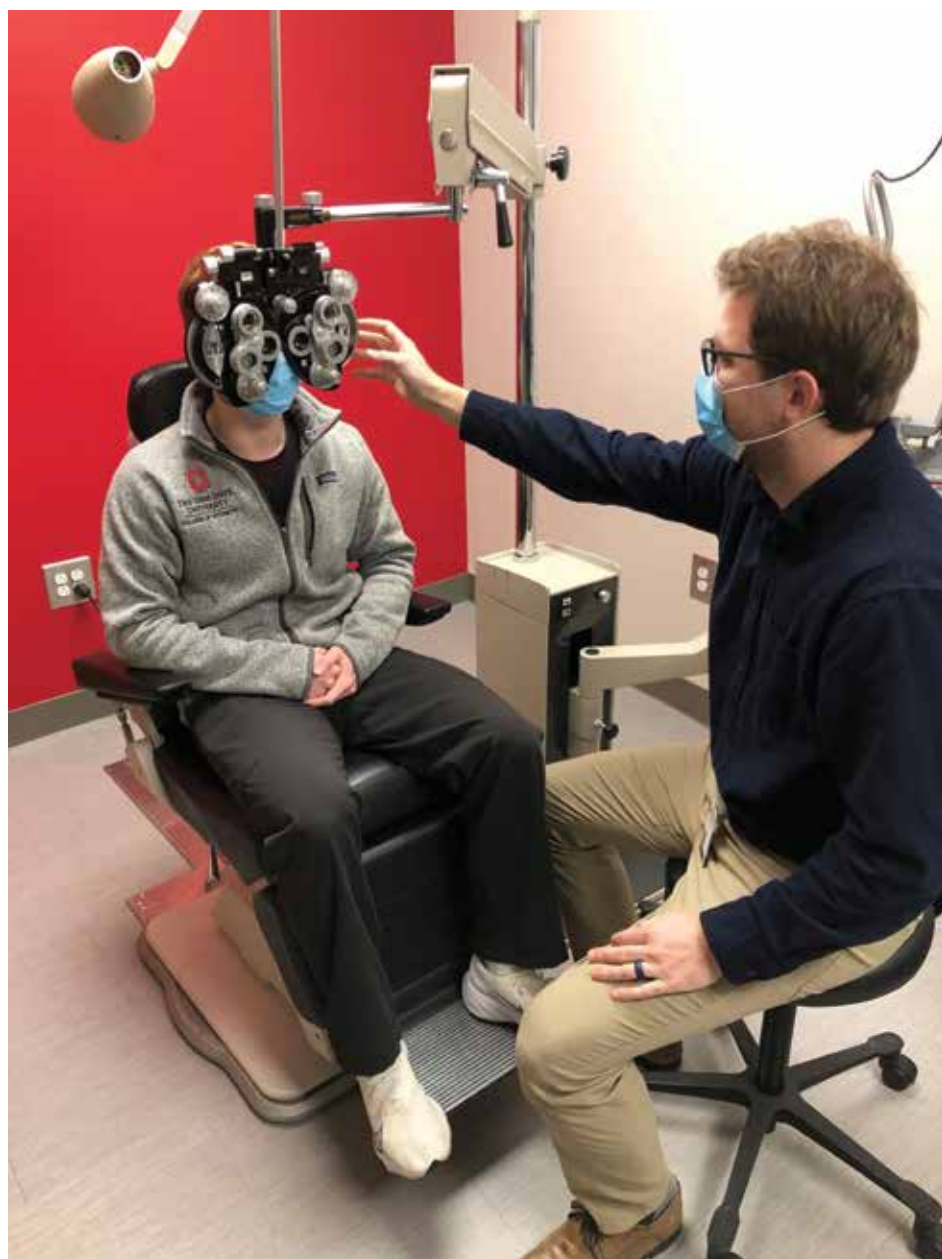
Chloe Foster ('24)

Reflecting back on the first year and a half of optometry school as we prepared for our first clinical experiences, there were many occasions where I imagined what giving my first eye exam would feel like. Whether it was during the first few days of class in the fall of 2020, shadowing third-year students during our spring semester of first year, or the exciting first few times using our newly purchased equipment on willing family members and friends, these were all moments in preparation for that milestone event of actually doing a complete eye exam. The buildup to that moment of transition is something I know my peers and I had been looking forward to for quite some time.

The moment I stepped into the hallway of empty exam rooms to prepare for my first patient, I felt the flutter of butterflies in my stomach. Nervous thoughts flooded my head that I would suddenly forget skills that we have been practicing diligently for months. The thought of translating what we have learned from our faculty and what we have practiced on each other to actually providing care in the clinical realm was simultaneously exciting and intimidating! The moment I started conversing with my patient, those nerves started to melt away. I was curious about what I was observing by applying the knowledge I've gained over the last 18 months. I loved the opportunity to discuss clinical ideas and treatment options with my attending, amazed at the contrast from just one year prior when I was the one sitting as a patient for a then second-year optometry student. I vividly remember the bright lights as she became mesmerized looking at my vitreous strands, and I couldn't wait to be the one on the other side. Now that we have learned the elements of doing a full eye exam and actually applied that didactic information to the clinical care of an actual patient, I am grateful for the instruction by the faculty and staff. I have been taught the essential building blocks for every patient encounter going forward as these practiced skills become almost second nature. My first patient was all the more memorable because I was able to see some real-life examples of a few things we had covered in our retinal disease class just the week before. I quickly realized how invaluable clinic experience is in tying knowledge together and being able to apply it, and how every patient care experience will provide an opportunity for further learning.



The countless hours of practicing and studying became immeasurably rewarding, and I left the exam room feeling excited for the next patient. This won't be the last time I feel nervous going into a patient exam, but having the first complete eye exam checked off my bucket list certainly was a huge milestone to reach. I look forward to joining the real clinic schedule this summer!



Adam Bayer ('24)

I was excited and nervous heading into second-year clinic. It's a different feeling when you know that you're going to be performing an exam on someone outside of optometry school versus performing one or two clinical skills on a fellow student. For me, knowing that the patient would leave with a fillable prescription and knowing that I'm the one making sure their eyes are healthy added more pressure. Nonetheless, I was anxious to put my clinical skills to the test. My first patient was my mom. She was a great first patient because I was able to refract my first presbyope, and I saw things for the first time including redundant conjunctiva, CHRPE, and drusen. I had a nice confidence boost when I was able to recognize some clinical findings without help but was also humbled when my attending pointed out some things that I missed. Learning has been the name of the game so far in school. I've been reassured in knowing that learning doesn't stop in clinic; the attendings do a great job reinforcing this idea. Overall, I was very pleased with my first exam experience and the amount that I was prepared to complete it. The best compliment I got from that exam was from my mom; she was very impressed with me and said, "You looked like you knew what you were doing." Whether that is true or not, I'm more confident after completing my first exam, and I know I will get better and better.

"I've been reassured in knowing that learning doesn't stop in clinic; the attendings do a great job reinforcing this idea."

Adam Bayer ('24)

Suha Ahmed ('24)

I went into my first eye exam feeling exceptionally nervous. Though I had practiced all the clinical skills for a basic exam dozens of times the previous semester, I knew what a strong tendency I have to choke under even casual observation. Moreover, we had just come back from winter break so I had not touched a slit lamp in more than a month. To make matters worse, I was unable to get any of my family or friends from my hometown in Michigan out in time for a Thursday morning exam. Luckily, my attending doctor managed to convince our optics professor, Dr. Don Mutti, to step in for a traditional three-hour eye exam. So it was safe to say any mistakes would not go unnoticed. All of this, adding in the amazing ability of Ohio's weather to time its worst blizzards, created literally the perfect storm for my first exam.

Through the entrance testing and retinoscopy, all I could think was "Shouldn't there be an adult watching me?" as I tried to remind myself that technically I was the adult. But as I progressed into my manifest refraction, it started to set in that I was not just pretending to know what I was doing; I actually knew what I was doing! It is hard to make the mental transition from practicing with your classmates to working with a real patient. Being so used to working with just my friends, I kept forgetting I needed to provide instructions to my patient and explain how the next test was going to work. It was gratifying to realize how much of what I had learned in our labs and lectures in the last two years has started to become second nature in an exam room. I can't pretend that my first exam went even close to perfectly. I knocked my patient in the face with a loose prism during the cover test and forgot to remove my working distance after retinoscopy. Even so, it does give me confidence that the dozens of hours I have spent in the practice clinic and the basement of Fry Hall are already paying off.

*All patients named in this article consented to the use of their name and exam details.



“It started to set in that I was not just pretending to know what I was doing; I actually knew what I was doing!”

Suha Ahmed ('24)

Save the Dates



..... 

Online Continuing Education 2022

..... optometry.osu.edu/onlineCE



Golden Graduates Weekend

September 23 - 25



Optometry
Homecoming Weekend

September 30 to October 1

Research Roundup

By Karla Gengler-Nowak, PhD, CRA, *Grants and Contracts Administrator*

Dr. Steele receives Barr-Stiegemeier Award

Kelsy Steele (OD'16, MS'18), a PhD student in the Vision Science graduate program, has been selected as this year's recipient of the Barr-Stiegemeier Award. This award will provide Dr. Steele with funds to pursue research related to corneal health in pediatric orthokeratology lens wearers as part of her PhD dissertation project conducted under the mentorship of Dean Karla Zadnik, OD, PhD. The Barr-Stiegemeier Award was established by Drs. **Joseph T. Barr (OD'77, MS'79)** and **Mary Jo Stiegemeier (OD'83)** to support the research of graduate students who have specific interest in cornea and contact lens education and knowledge.

Rebecca Deffler receives Arene T. Wray Fellowship

Rebecca Deffler (OD, MS'19), a PhD candidate in the Vision Science graduate program, has been selected as the 2022 recipient of the Arene T. Wray Fellowship. The Arene T. Wray Fellowship was created to promote optometric research and is specifically designated for graduate students who "can do the best work in optometry." Dr. Deffler's work with the low vision community stands out through her patient care and clinical teaching, as well as her excellent research to understand bioptic driving safety and the utility of driver assistance systems for individuals with vision impairment. As the winner of this award, she will receive a monetary scholarship.

Plageman Awarded AOA Funding


TJ Plageman, PhD, was awarded \$50,000 from the American Optometric Association for his proposal, *Identifying the functions of the cortical cataract and high myopia associated gene Ctnnd2 in the mouse*. Although the development of cataracts is extremely common, the underlying factors that cause cortical cataracts are not well understood. Dr. Plageman reports, "Insight into these etiological mechanisms has been gained from our previous

research efforts analyzing the function of proteins that make up the junctional structures between lens fiber cells and from other genetic studies. A mutation in a gene known as *CTNND2* is associated with cortical cataracts, and we have found that its gene product (a protein called δ -catenin) is strongly and specifically localized to a junctional structure that joins three lens fiber cells together. This project will test the hypothesis that δ -catenin is required for maintaining lens transparency through its function in lens fiber cell junctional structures using genetically modified mice and high-resolution fluorescence microscopy."

VanNasdale and Crews Team Up for VisionServe Reports

In an effort to better understand the determinants, comorbidities, and outcomes associated with blindness and low vision, VisionServe Alliance contracted with Dean VanNasdale, OD, PhD, in the College of Optometry and Dr. John Crews, a retired Senior Scientist from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to develop eight state-specific reports using national health surveillance data. VisionServe is a leadership collective of organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with blindness or low vision. VisionServe recognized that population health surveillance data would provide a critical evidence-based foundation for more effective strategic planning and advocacy. These reports are based on previous analyses from the college that have been highlighted by the CDC's Vision Health initiative (<https://go.osu.edu/cdcvisionhealth>) and will include additional variables that provide further insight into blindness and low vision in individuals 65 years old and older. The eight reports are scheduled to be released during the VisionServe Alliance Executive Leadership Council Meeting in early April.


Alumni Notes

1  **1968 John Heiby (OD'68)**, has retired from his St. Clairsville practice after more than 40 years of service to his community. Known to some in Epsilon Psi Epsilon as “Baron” and as “Dr. Clockdial” to some in the Ohio State Optometry clinic, Dr. Heiby worked to promote the fogging method among his colleagues and students in order to keep the legacy of Elsworth Reese from being lost.

1984 Carol Burns (OD'84) received the G.N. Getman Award at the annual meeting of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD). The Getman Award is presented to a developmentally-oriented optometrist with clinical expertise and application in office structure and professional activity. The recipient must demonstrate a personal and professional concern for all patients, especially children, which exceeds all else.

1991 Marjean Kulp (OD'91, MS'93), Lynn Mitchell, MAS, and **Julie Preston (OD'98)** were co-authors on a paper by the *Correction of Hyperopia in Children Study Group*, which won the Article of the Year award from the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD). Their article appeared in 2021 Vol. 7 Issue 3 of *Vision Development and Rehabilitation*. Dr. Kulp accepted the award on behalf of her co-authors at COVD's Annual Meeting in April.


1992 Loretta Szczotka-Flynn (OD/MS'92, PhD) is now an endowed professor in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences at Case Western Reserve University. She is now the Searle-Huang Professor and was honored at a virtual celebration in March.

5  **2012 Bryce Brown (OD'12)** and family welcomed new baby Calla Quinn (pictured with big sister Violet).

4  **2012 Jocelyn Daniel (OD'12)** and family welcomed new baby Logan Terry.

2012 Danielle (Wilhelm) Dreslinski (OD'12), and family welcomed new baby Henry James.

2012 Robert Kress (OD'12), and family welcomed new baby Cora.


3  **2012 Yukiko Oda (OD'12)** and family welcomed new baby Leah.

2014 Kaitlynn Bock (OD'14) and family welcomed new baby Addison.

2014 Jonathan Andrews (OD'14) and family welcomed new baby William Blake.


2015 Tayla Meade (OD'15) and family welcomed new baby Theodore.

2015 Laura (Hydeman) Krak (MS'14, OD'15) and family welcomed new baby Jacob Michael.

2  **2015 Linda Nguyen Du (MS'13, OD'15)**, her husband Kefu, and daughter Marie welcomed new baby Mariet.

2016 Claire (Steensma) Diekema (OD'16) and family welcomed new baby Brooks Henry.

2016 Danny Hagee (OD'16) and family welcomed new baby Grace Katherine.

6  **2017 Nicole (Wenman) Klotzbuecher (OD'17)** and family welcomed new baby Claire Ann.

In Memoriam

1952 Spenser Mecktroth (BS'52), age 92, passed away on October 18, 2021.

1955 Ronald Myron Gilbert (BS'55), age 91, passed away on January 26, 2022.

1956 Robert Leslie Byars Jr. (BS'56), age 90, passed away on March 23, 2022.

1960 Timothy “Tim” Houldsworth (BS'60), age 84, passed away on December 5, 2021.

1966 Nicholas Parthenakis (OD'66), age 83, passed away on October 27, 2021.

1967 George Atanasoff (BS'67, OD'91), age 76, passed away on December 25, 2021.

1979 William J. “Joe” Benjamin (OD/MS'79, PhD'82), age 67, passed away on March 24, 2022.

1980 J. Craig Dally (OD'80), age 66, passed away on January 2, 2022.

2019 Alicia (Ali) Borer (OD'19), age 30, passed away on April 18, 2022.



Alumni News Updates



Francesca Fuerman-George has been promoted to The Ohio State University College of Optometry's Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement. She replaces Michael Haddock, who left the college for a position with Ohio State's Knowlton School of Architecture. Contact Francesca with any alumni relations questions, concerns or ideas at fuerman-george.1@osu.edu or 614-688-1674.

- Share your news in an upcoming edition of the BuckEYE Alumni Magazine!
- Use our easy online form at go.osu.edu/ShareYourNews
- or email Francesca Fuerman-George at fuerman-george.1@osu.edu



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