May is Healthy Vision Month

May is the month to remind you to make your eye health a priority, by protecting your sight, scheduling an eye exam, and learning about eye health to be sure you and your family understand the importance of maintaining healthy vision. Many people in our community have undetected vision and eye conditions. Please take some time and encourage your family and neighbors to schedule an eye exam. Through a comprehensive eye exam, eye care professionals can detect common vision and eye diseases, and other health issues that you may not have known about. Early detection is the key in preventing vision loss and blindness. Save your sight, and make your eyes last a lifetime.

Board inSight

Q&A with FLEC Board Member Dr. Timothy Diegel

Dr. Timothy Diegel, board member and the Clinic’s Medical Director, is a retired eye surgeon, USAF flight surgeon, neuro-ophthalmologist, Colonel, and a semi-retired clinical professor at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Diegel shares with us some of his insights...

Q What is the most important thing you hope to accomplish as a FLEC Board Member?
As a board member (and medical director), my most important plan is to update and explain the medical issues and clinic needs in order to fulfill our main vision of taking care of our patients.

Q What do you think is your best attribute you bring to FLEC?
My main attribute, as a medical director, is to develop meaningful relationships with all the eye doctors in order to retain and recruit the best for our patients.

Q What do you see in the future for FLEC?
The future of FLEC, as I see, is to grow the clinic to see more of the hundreds of unserved patients with eye problems. This will require more locations, doctors, and staff, which will be all based on supportive fund raising.

Q What is the best piece of advice you’ve ever given?
Q What’s on your bucket list?
To take my wife to Bali (so she says)
Take vitamin D

Q If you were a superhero, what would your superpower be? Persistence

Q Do you have any skills or talents that most people don’t know about? Magic tricks

Q How do you think your friends would describe you? Witty, thoughtful, and has interesting personal experiences

Q What’s your favorite hobby? Boating in Wisconsin, keeping my cars in pristine condition

Q If you could meet one person (dead or alive) who would it be? Johnny Cash

Q If you were stuck on an island what three things would you bring? Blueberries, mixed nuts and my stack of unread nature journals

Q What is the one thing, you can’t live without? My wife (so she says)

Q Where is the best place you’ve traveled to and why? Antarctica (including the South Pole) to work for 3 weeks as a general physician for the Air Force pilots flying to the research sites

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Meet the New FLEC Team

The Florida Lions Eye Clinic welcomes Robin Goldstone Garcia as its new Executive Director. Robin has extensive executive-level managerial experience and has served the vision initiative in Florida for the last several years as the Deputy Director of the Division of Blind Services, FDOE and the Executive Director of Lighthouse of Collier. Additionally, she has more than 20 years of business experience in financial services, contract administration, human resources and operations.

Robin holds a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration and Psychology from the State University of New York, College at Oswego, and has pursued a master’s in holistic nutrition from the Clayton College of Natural Health.

“I am so proud to be part of the Florida Lions Eye Clinic. It serves a need in the community that can only be accomplished with the passion and hard work of the doctors, board of directors, staff, donors and volunteers coming together for a common purpose, to restore sight and improve the quality of life for those treated,” said Robin.

Olivia Pena
Clinic Supervisor

Olivia joined FLEC in December 2020. She brings 15 years of experience in the medical field, both in management and surgical scheduling. “Creating a positive environment for the Clinic’s staff and volunteers, along with a welcoming and comfortable experience for the patients, is an important goal for me,” said Olivia.

Jennifer Cody
Marketing & Development Coordinator

Jennifer joined FLEC in February 2021. She brings over 25 years of marketing and event planning experience. “I love the opportunity to be
involved with the local community, and to help make a difference in people’s lives,” said Jennifer.

Carmen Soto
Surgical Referral Coordinator
Carmen joined FLEC in June 2020 and brings years of experience in the field of customer service. “I love helping the patients and making sure they are able to get the surgical help they so desperately need," said Carmen.

Camila Ramon
Front Desk Administrator
Camila joined FLEC in April 2021. She is extremely efficient and organized and greets the patients with a beautiful smile. “Being able to help people is so important to me. Plus, all the staff and volunteers are great to work with,” said Camila.

Rebecca Torres
Clinic Technician
Our newest addition, Rebecca, joined FLEC in May 2021. She brings 21 years experience as a Certified Ophthalmic Assistant and Surgical Assistant to the Clinic. “It's a privilege to work here,” said Rebecca. “Everyone is so nice and I love giving back to my community where I grew up.”

Double Your Dollars in Saving Eye Sight

We have great news! FLEC, in partnership with the United Way, has issued a challenge match toward our Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT/YAG Laser) campaign. For every dollar our community donates toward this sight saving glaucoma treatment, an anonymous donor, through United Way Lee County, has committed to matching up to $20,000. We already received a generous 50% discount from the laser supplier, Lumenis Vision, bringing the cost of the equipment down to $40,000. Once we raise the additional $20,000, with the match, it brings our total to $40,000, enough to cover the price of the laser!

Please consider a financial contribution to support the purchase of the SLT/YAG Laser. We hope you share our vision, to improve the quality of life for those who cannot afford eye care through the exemplary and comprehensive vision care the Florida Lions Eye Clinic provides. If you’ve already given - thank you!

To donate, click the button below or if you prefer, mail a check to: Florida Lions Eye Clinic, 10322 Pennsylvania Ave, Bonita Springs, FL 34135

DONATE NOW

Don't Forget to Follow Us on Facebook
Healthy Summer Eyes

Summer, a time of vacations and enjoying all that the great outdoors has to offer. However, the strong summer sun can be damaging to your eyes. While you can be impacted by the sun’s UV at any time during the year, it is especially important to be cautious during the summer months. If your eyes have a lot of exposure to the sun’s UV rays, it can cause both short-term and long-term problems to your vision. Some of these issues include photoconjunctivitis, cataracts, and cancer.

Two important ways to protect your eyes from the harmful exposure of the sun are by wearing sunglasses and a hat when you go outside, especially where sunlight shines off water, sand or other highly reflective surfaces. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is much stronger in summer so choose sunglasses with full UV protection. Look for glasses labeled either UV400 or 100 percent UV protection, which means that the lenses will block the full spectrum of UVA and UVB rays.

Pools can also be tough on the eyes. Chemicals used to keep the water clean, such as chlorine, can affect the natural tear film that keeps our eyes moist and healthy, resulting in red, gritty-feeling eyes and irritation.

The Mighty Red Pepper

Red bell peppers are a healthy food rich in vitamin C, beta-carotene and other carotenoids. They contain high levels of lutein and zeaxanthin, which are two antioxidants that are a major contributor to keeping your eyes healthy. Lutein is a great natural treatment for macular degeneration. These peppers also pack eye-friendly vitamins A and E, and help to boost your immune system.

Heat will break down vitamin C, so go raw when you can, it is by far the most nutritious way to enjoy your red peppers. Eat them as an on-the-go snack, toss them into a light salad, or slice them up and dip them in hummus. There is nothing better than the crispy, sweet crunch of a raw red pepper. Enjoy!

A few more tips from our doctors to keep your peepers healthy!

> For retina health, including macular degeneration, maintain a healthy diet with a generous amount of fresh greens such as
blurry vision. Wear swim goggles in the pool and splash your closed eyes with fresh water immediately after getting out of the pool.

Finally, lower your risk of eye sun damage by avoiding outdoor activities during the hours when the sun is strongest. Schedule outdoor activities for the early morning or late afternoon/early evening hours when the sun’s rays are not quite as intense. Avoid sun in the middle of the day, from about 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

As you prepare to enjoy the outdoors this summer, don’t forget a plan for keeping your eyes happy as well.

> Take vitamin C (500 mg) twice a day. This is an antioxidant that slows cataract formation.

> Wear safety glasses while using power tools and for other dangerous tasks.

> Look away from the screen. Decrease eyestrain by following the 20-20-20 rule, rest your eyes every 20 minutes by looking 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

> If your eyes are dry, blink more or try using artificial tears.

> Give up smoking to help prevent macular degeneration. There is a high correlation between the two.

**THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!**

The Florida Lions Eye Clinic was proud to present the **Eye Angel Award** to four of its amazing volunteers in appreciation of their generosity of time, talent, and treasure. These volunteers worked tirelessly to advance the mission of the Clinic, and because of their exemplary service, many have been given **The Gift of Sight**.

From Left to Right, Volunteers Tom Porte, Dr. Alfonse Cinotti, Anita Shapiro and Darlene Faulconer
Far Right: Robin Goldstone Garcia (Executive Director)

The Florida Lions Eye Clinic is now an approved provider with Collier CARES, a mobile & web app for the purpose of connecting people in need with critical resources and services available in Collier County, Florida.

The Collier Cares app, which serves Collier County’s most vulnerable...
populations, is free, bilingual, and provides users with information about critical resources and services in Collier County.

Learn more at https://colliercares.org/cc/page/about-collier-cares

Did You Know...

Amazon Smile is a simple way for you to support the Florida Lions Eye Clinic every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.com

You’ll find the exact same low prices, selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the Florida Lions Eye Clinic. Amazon Smile is also available on the Amazon Shopping app on your phone. You can find it in the App Store for iOS or Google Play for Android.