IHF partners with Rotary to create The Rotary Hearing Center of San Felipe, Mexico

By Robert Margolis, Ph.D., IHF Board

In 2016, the International Hearing Foundation (IHF) approved a request for $5,000 to establish a hearing clinic in San Felipe, Mexico. With assistance from Rotary International, the new Rotary Hearing Center of San Felipe, which opened March 2018, is located in the Women’s Cancer Clinic of San Felipe, which is also founded and managed by Rotarians.

It was our intent for the San Felipe project to be different from other service projects in developing countries. Many health-related outreach projects are based on what is known as a “mission model.” A mission model is where a group of professionals travels to a project country and spends days or weeks providing service and then returns to their home country. While admirable, the mission model does not lend itself well to sustainable services that continue beyond the period of the service visit.

Dr. Michael Paparella is fond of citing the wise allegory, “you can give them a fish or you can teach them how to fish.” This is a particularly apt reference in this case because the Mexican government shut down the fishing industry in San Felipe, contributing to the poverty of the region. In this project, we are teaching them how to fish.

The idea began when audiologist Dr. Jerry Yanz and I visited San Felipe in October 2015 to meet with Rotarians and physicians. We also visited a hearing mission that has been providing service annually in Guaymas for 26 years.

Dr. Robert Margolis trains a technician to clean ear canals on a model of the ear. Technicians now clean ears routinely at the Rotary Hearing Clinic of San Felipe.

In 2017, we acquired the equipment, set it up, and calibrated and tested it for use in telehealth mode. The equipment was shipped to Mexico in October. In December, Yanz and Arizona State University (ASU) audiologists Dr. Ingrid McBride and Dr. Dave McBride traveled to San Felipe to begin setting up the clinic. In January 2018, Yanz and I travel to San Felipe to complete set-up and begin training technicians. We returned with the Starkey grants and IHF support along with donations from three Rotary clubs were leveraged into a grant of $141,000 from the Rotary Foundation. The grant will support the program for one year, after which the program will be self-sustaining.

In 2018, the International Hearing Foundation (IHF) approved a request for $5,000 to establish The Rotary Hearing Center of San Felipe, Mexico

Senegal, Africa clinic welcomes Starkey Hearing Foundation visitors

Dr. Malick Diop (third from right), who was an IHF fellow in 1989 with Dr. Michael Paparella, along with assistants and supporters, welcomes William Austin (far right) and Tony Austin (center) of the Starkey Hearing Foundation to the new mission clinic in Senegal, Africa, built by the Starkey Foundation and Starkey Technology.
The work that is made possible by the International Hearing Foundation adds to the critical research and training that is required to continue the fight against hearing loss. Through the generous contributions of Dr. Michael and Mrs. Treva Paparella and many others, IHF has helped train doctors from around the world and support the teaching lab, which is home to one the world’s largest collection of temporal bones. At our board meetings, we discuss ways in which we can spread our message and get the word out about the significance of this work.

When my children were young they thought it was funny when their grandfather couldn’t hear what they were saying and would answer a question with something completely unrelated to what had been asked. It seems funny to a child, but to the person who can’t hear, it’s a stigma that is far from humorous. Hearing loss can make one feel isolated or depressed. The humor completely disappears when you understand the seriousness of dizziness or nausea caused by Meniere’s Disease.

The research will continue and it needs your support. Our nonprofit does a tremendous amount of good and has an impact around the world. The phrase “Think Globally, Act Locally” comes to mind. Contributions to our nonprofit have an impact on hearing health from remote villages in underdeveloped countries to right here in our own back-yard. International research fellows train at the University of Minnesota, and they can take those skills back to their home countries and pay it forward.

As the organization’s current president, I urge you to become an ambassador for our organization. We need your donations and your support. Take a look around you today and notice the people with hearing aids and consider the number of people suffering in their own silence or those who could not get themselves out of bed. As you look at a group of people, do you wonder how many may have a loud ringing in their head or have just given up on trying to hear a conversation? We will continue to do our part and appreciate everything you can do to help.

—Rich

MISSION STATEMENT
The International Hearing Foundation — nonprofit, tax-exempt and funded solely through donations and fundraising events — has a three-fold mission: otological research, service and education — all areas of great need. Beneficiaries of these charitable endeavors are first local but also international. The IHF is an affiliate of the University of Minnesota Foundation.

IHF continues to support the unique commitment the foundation has for the International Fellowship Program. This program educates physicians throughout the world in cutting-edge research and clinical practice. These doctors are able to return to their countries and expand the influence of IHF to literally thousands of patients. They are studying under the excellent leadership of Sebahattin Cureoglu, M.D. Your donations help us with our commitment to the Marlys Soderberg Meniere’s and Tinnitus Support Groups, which are as strong today as it was when Marlys started it back in 1985. Rosie Hulse-Larson (group leader) does an excellent job running the program.

IHF was founded to address the needs relating to hearing disorders, and we are committed to carrying out those missions through RESEARCH, SERVICE & EDUCATION — the basis of our mission statement. With your help, we can make a difference.

Again, thank you for the caring spirit that leads you to make life-changing contributions in support of the International Hearing Foundation.

—Treva
From South Korea to Minnesota to the Otopathology Lab

By Inae Har, U of MN Otopathology Lab

In 2005, our family moved to the United States from South Korea. Life as immigrants was not easy in the beginning, but we were able to settle in well in Minnesota because of the nice Minnesotans and the beautiful nature of Minnesota.

During my college years, I struggled greatly to figure out what I am passionate about and which career path would make my life meaningful. Trying to find answers to these questions, I only ended up having even more complicated questions.

While enrolling in a research course and working at labs, I found that discovering new findings is very attractive and the idea that the new findings will advance our generation is even more appealing. My desire to explore new ideas before anyone else and learn experimental techniques grew immensely when I joined the Otopathology Laboratory after graduating from the University of Minnesota.

In the Otopathology Lab, I have been investigating in biofilms in otitis media (middle ear infection). I performed experiments understanding the biofilm formation and discovering non-antibiotic treatment, such as photodynamic light therapy, to disrupt the biofilm matrix in recurrent middle ear infection. I also successfully performed immunohistochemistry on celloidin embedded human temporal bones and paraffin embedded animal bones to investigate biofilm markers.

In addition to research, I have been processing, sectioning and staining human and animal temporal bones in order to prepare a wide variety of histology for various pathological studies. Every time a new case is added to the temporal bone collection, I feel accomplished and rewarding that I have added another case that may open the doors to the unknown. I am very grateful to have the opportunity to work with such an enthusiastic and passionate team including the IHF fellows and Dr. Michael Paparella who established the legacy of the lab.

According to one of my favorite philosophers, Ralph Waldo Emerson, “To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.”

I strive to accomplish this as a researcher and a scientist with our lab members by discovering new ideas that help study ear diseases and hearing-related problems.

The U of MN Otopathology Lab is 1 of 3 in the World

Looking Back on 33 Years

By Dr. Michael Paparella, IHF Board and Founder

In the 1970s I met Ralph Lynam, who was president of Lion’s International. Among the charitable activities that Lion’s International supported was eye research at universities in the United States and worldwide. At the time I was chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology at the University of Minnesota and served in that role for 18 years.

After several discussions, Lynam agreed with me that Lion’s International might be able to support hearing research at the University of Minnesota. The local Lion’s district includes Minnesota and Canada. A committee and a fundraising effort were established, and Stanley Hubbard, who owned KSTP-TV, kindly provided — and without cost — three 24-hour telephones on his television station for this effort. Actress Shari Lewis and her dear puppet, Lambchop, were moderators for the telephones, which included many local and Hollywood celebrities and musicians.

It’s amazing to think back that more than $2 million was raised to remodel the ear, nose and throat research and administrative space for the Department of Otolaryngology, then located on the 8th floor of the Phillips-Wangensteen Building at the university. The research base was developed for the oto (histo) pathology laboratory, which has since been relocated. The Lion’s — back then and ever since — have provided financial support for the Department of Otolaryngology’s ear research.

Ever more amazing is that although the University of Minnesota was the first university to receive financial support for ear research by the Lion’s, subsequently many universities in the United States and worldwide also have received financial support from their local Lion’s districts for ear research.

The International Hearing Foundation was established in 1985 to primarily support the Otopathology Laboratory at the University of Minnesota. Other missions and objectives were established under the IHF under the broad areas of Research, Education and Service.

We established a board of directors for the IHF and throughout the years all previous board members have served IHF with distinction. We continue to give our gratitude to all board members then and now. I will mention just few previous board members: Two governors of the Lion’s district, Dan Hallberg and Dan Barnett, served on the board and also as presidents of the board. Sister Mary Madona, who was CEO of St. Mary’s Hospital and also previously director of the Department of Health for the State of Minnesota, also served the board with distinction. Ted Grindal, a health care lawyer, also made important contributions to the early development of the board and to IHF.

There are so many ear diseases that can be disabling to patients. Some 90 million Americans suffer with dizziness, which can cause great incapacitation, as well as ear infection, vertigo, and many more ear diseases. Financial support for such common diseases is woefully inadequate, including support from the NIH. Moreover, otopathology research is the best example of translational research that
The Department of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery at the University of Minnesota.

The annual lecture is sponsored by the International Hearing Foundation and Dr. Vambutas completed her medical school training at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She is also director of the Center for Hearing and Balance and Basic and Clinical Research, at the Feinstein Institute for Medical Research. She is professor of Otolaryngology and Molecular Medicine at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine at the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell. She is also director of the Center for Hearing and Balance and Basic and Clinical Research, at the New York Head & Neck Institute of Northwell Health.

Dr. Vambutas is a clinician-scientist. She is the medical director of the Apelian Cochlear Implant Program and the Section Head of Otology/Neurotology of Northwell Health. She is professor of Otolaryngology and Molecular Medicine at the University of Minnesota. The two largest collections, with thousands of human temporal bone specimens, are at Harvard and here in Minnesota. Our laboratory has attracted many scholars from all over the world. Several have gone on to become faculty, professors and chairpersons of their departments and even a few deans of medical schools.

Under the aegis of service, IHF has provided free hearing aids to the needy, cost-free surgery to those who cannot afford it and support groups for vertigo, tinnitus and other ear diseases. IHF has helped to send doctors to Senegal, Africa to provide surgical services and education to assist the patients and the doctors of that region. One past IHF research fellow, Dr. Malik Diop, along with the help of Starkey Hearing Foundation and the Senegal government, are in the process of developing a major center for treatment, education and clinical research for ear diseases and deafness.

IHF — with Rotary clubs and the assistance of Dr. Robert Margolis — has also provided perhaps the best hearing center in Chile, but also programs in other countries including Mexico, India and elsewhere. Educating international Research Fellows has been an extremely great by-product of IHF’s activities. Those individuals have returned to their countries to help literally thousands of patients to better understand and to treat the many ear diseases some of which cause not only disability but also death, particularly in many of the third world countries. They also, in turn, have taught others, thus the rock in the still pool in perpetuity continues to help many patients in the future.

In 1988, I was blessed to have met Treva. In April 1990 she became IHF’s leader with no salary and continues to be a tireless, hardworking blessing to IHF. IHF’s administrative costs are the least of any other charitable foundation I am aware of. In the beginning, IHF held formal dinners with entertainment as fundraisers. With Treva’s guidance, the annual IHF golf tournament has become our most important fundraising endeavor. Starkey Hearing Technology’s wonderful financial support is recognized and greatly appreciated.

With a relatively modest budget, IHF has done a remarkable world of good. There are still millions of children and adults who are impacted by ear diseases, from vertigo to deafness. Too many patients cannot work, drive a car or have a life. In my opinion, the best way to help doctors help patients with ear diseases is through pathology and research. And there should be an otopathology research laboratory in every major university, yet only three exist! What can be done?

The problem of identification and support for ear research was critical and desperate years ago. It is currently more critical than ever, and support from IHF’s board and others is more important than ever before to primarily help ear research at the University of Minnesota and to support and communicate IHF’s mission of local and international hearing assistance.
By the Grace of God, From Brazil to Minnesota and Back

By Adriano Meira, M.D., IHF Fellow

In 2006, I had the pleasant opportunity to meet Dr. Michael Paparella and his wife, Treva. Since then, I continue to recall with affection being an International Hearing Foundation (IHF) fellow. The IHF and the Paparellas have welcomed dozens of fellows from all over the world, many of whom I have met, and this has made me see that we can always do more and more for the people. Each one, according to his/her possibilities, can extend arms to the neighbor and try to change the world.

While living in Minneapolis, I knew about the work of the IHF and of the Starkey Hearing Foundation. So when I returned to João Pessoa, Brazil we created a clinic, SOS OTORRINO, in the northeast region, which is an economically poor part of Brazil.

In 2012 with the clinic already consolidated, we decided to invest in a strong social program, called SOS SOCIAL. This program includes a bus, adapted to disabled people, that is equipped with two examination boxes and an audiometric examination room. We acquired and refurbished this equipment and thus began to help, with private resources, the poor population of our city and state. So far we've served more than 20,000 people from small towns and performed more than 2,000 surgical procedures in a public state hospital partnership, where we operate voluntarily with our residents.

In 2017, the Starkey Hearing Foundation helped us by donating numerous hearing aids to the needy population. Bill Austin, Starkey’s founder, and his wife, Tani, visited my city and have shown me that it is important to believe in dreams and seek inspiration from people like our dear Dr. and Professor Paparella. This pursuit will always take us beyond and closer to God; after all, we must remember that a doctor is the reflection of God when serving those who need.

We Get Letters…

Dear Mrs. Paparella,

I would like to thank you and the IHF board for helping our son receive hearing aids. Without your help, this wouldn't have happened. Our son is doing much better in school, and is feeling much better about himself since he received his hearing aids. He struggled in school and was ashamed when he couldn't hear his teachers or fellow students. At times he was bullied because of this. So thank you so much for helping our son. We are indebted to IHF donors.

Sincerely,
Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert

Dear Dr. Paparella and IHF,

I can't thank you and your team enough for the help provided to my daughter, who has suffered from hearing loss since age 5. With your help she can now hear and understand the many sounds around her. As a single mother, I was unable to help my daughter. Then I heard about your foundation. You have changed the world in many ways. We thank you for this.

Thank you,
Debbie and Carey

My Journey to the Otopathology Lab

By Irem Gul Sancak, IHF Fellow

I graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (Ankara, Turkey) in 1999. Following veterinarian school, I started residency and specialization program in the department of surgery. After I obtained my Ph.D. degree researching stem cell therapy in ophthalmology, I was appointed as a clinician and a lecturer in my department.

In 2011 I was awarded ESCAS scholarship and worked two years in Musculoskeletal Research Unit (MSRU), Competence Center for Applied Biotechnology (CABMM) Vetsuisse Faculty ZH at the University of Zurich.

Since October 2016, based on the MOU agreement between University of Minnesota and Ankara University, I have been in Minnesota as a fellow to conduct research on stem cells, which focuses on sensorineural hearing loss.

In addition to that research, I have worked on two more projects focusing to highlight the pathologies in cats suffering from Eustachian tube obstruction and in addition addressing the pathologies in dogs with hereditary deafness.

With this opportunity, I have broadened my knowledge and expertise with the help of Dr. Michael Paparella, Mrs. Treva Paparella, Dr. Sebahattin Cüreoglu and Otopathology Lab staff.

I am thankful and grateful for this opportunity and to be part of the Otopathology Lab team. I am sure this family will continue to grow and connect the researchers from all over the world.
We need your help to implement International Hearing Foundation (IHF) programs. Please make your check payable to the International Hearing Foundation and mail to 701 25th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55454.

Here is my contribution in support of better hearing.

- $15.00
- $25.00
- $50.00
- $100.00
- $250.00
- Other $ ________________

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The IHF is an affiliate of the University of Minnesota Foundation, a 501(c)3 charitable organization. For more information about the IHF, please call (612) 339-2120 or visit www.ihf-mmf.org.

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