



*Knights Templar Eye Foundation, Inc.*

1033 Long Prairie Road, Suite 5 • Flower Mound, TX 75022

**August 2014**

**Provides Grant to the Apl.de.ap Foundation's**

***Campaign for Filipino Children***

The Apl.de.ap Foundation was formed by Allan Pineda Lindo better known as Apl.de.ap, a member of the Grammy Award-winning group The Black Eyed Peas. Apl.de.ap is a Filipino-American who himself suffers from an eye ailment and is considered legally blind. The *Campaign for Filipino Children* is its first health initiative and is in line with the goal of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation to educate doctors around the world.

The *Campaign for Filipino Children* is an initiative that addresses a critical medical concern in the Philippines, the pediatric eye affliction known as retinopathy of prematurity. Combining the expertise and passion of the Apl.de.ap Foundation and its principal program partner Dr. Thomas Lee, Director of the Vision Center of Children's Hospital Los Angeles, the campaign will provide a sustainable approach to the diagnosis and treatment of this specialized medical condition. Dr. Lee is also a member of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee. At the most recent annual board meeting of the Knights Templar Eye Foundation, the board approved a \$95,000 grant to assist in purchasing digital imaging systems that will be used in this pilot program.

At least ten percent of all births in the Philippines involving premature babies each year are the result of the relative deficient nature of prenatal care available to the poor. At least thirty percent of these premature babies develop retinopathy, a disease that causes abnormal blood vessel growth in the retina from excessive oxygenation. If the affliction is not treated within 48 hours of diagnosis, these premature babies become permanently blind.

Many practitioners in the Philippines are not thoroughly familiar with retinopathy of prematurity. Many practitioners may not have had adequate training in this area and hospitals may not have appropriate equipment to recognize, diagnose, and treat the affliction and prevent blindness.

The *Campaign for Filipino Children* intends to enter into partnerships with four pilot hospitals in the Philippines. Dr. Lee and his team will travel to the Philippines and train medical staff from these participating hospitals. The Philippines is unique in the sense that the archipelago is composed of 7,100 islands. Access is always an issue.

From four pilot hospitals alone, the initiative will potentially train from 6 to 10 medical practitioners from each hospital, a total of 24 to 40, and potentially prevent blindness for 4,380 premature babies each year. In the future, doctors from these pilot hospitals will train their counterparts in other hospitals, especially those in other rural and hard-to-reach provincial hospitals, and share the original equipment to sustain diagnosis and treatment on their own. The goal is to create the internal capacity in the Philippines to diagnose retinopathy of prematurity and perform needed surgeries within the first 48 hours of diagnosis.