

2011-2012 Fellow



Dr. Tiffany Chan

I was born and raised in the small town of Grass Valley in Northern California, equidistant from Sacramento and Lake Tahoe. I received my undergraduate degree from the University of California, Davis in psychobiology. Following in my parents' footsteps, I received an optometric degree from the University of California Berkeley, School of Optometry (yes, my parents are both optometrists!). During my student internships at the Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMCs) in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Miami, Florida I managed geriatric eye care with heavy ocular disease emphasis. I also completed an internship at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, Florida in the pediatric and strabismus division. After graduating from optometry school, I completed a residency at the Northport VAMC in New York where I managed patients with macular degeneration, diabetic eye disease, glaucoma, traumatic brain injuries, and neurologic vision impairment. I was planning on heading back to Northern California after my resi-

idency to join my parents' optometric practice, but I was encouraged to apply for the Lions Low Vision Fellowship. I was nervous about applying to such a prestigious program, but with the support of my family and low vision rehabilitation mentor at my residency program, I sent in my application and anxiously awaited response after the full day of on-site interviews. I was elated when I received the acceptance call from Dr. Judy Goldstein!

I feel so fortunate to have received such enriching experiences during optometry school and residency, however there is nothing that compares to the intensity and impact of the Lions Low Vision Fellowship. The Fellowship helped set up the foundation for my career and develop deeper knowledge of complex cases and confidence in caring for patients with vision impairment. People fly from all over the world to receive care at Johns Hopkins, which exposes the Fellow to rare conditions and difficult disease management. The program fosters teamwork both in the clinic, providing patient care, and also academically, in research and publishing manuscripts. Additionally, I gained confidence with lecturing and educating through national and international speaking opportunities.

Following the Fellowship, I joined the faculty at Wilmer Eye Institute. One of the goals of the position was to develop satellite low vision rehabilitation clinics in surrounding cities, outside of the main Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD. These satellite clinics are important in helping care for patients with vision impairment, because we are able to serve a greater number of people by reducing the burden of transportation.

On August 12, 2016, my life changed in a big way. My mother suffered from a subarachnoid hemorrhage due to a ruptured cerebral brain aneurysm, complicated by a hemorrhagic stroke. We spent three grueling weeks on-edge in the ICU until she was finally discharged to an acute rehabilitation facility. I am happy to say, with an amazing team of doctors, surgeons, therapists, countless hours of therapy and relentless dedication, she is doing extremely well now. The incident has given me an appreciation for the challenges and emotional impact of experiencing health crises and how life can change in a fraction of a second.

After my mom's incident, I moved back to California. I joined my parents' private practice providing full-scope optometry, including low vision rehabilitation. Additionally, I am able to continue working in academia as the Chief of the Low Vision Clinic at the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco, where I provide low vision rehabilitation education to eye health professionals and the community, as well as provide clinical instruction to the ophthalmology residents. I have been invited to lecture about optics and low vision rehabilitation to multiple programs around Northern California.

I am extremely thankful for the Lions Low Vision Fellowship. It was an absolutely incredible opportunity, which opened the door to many possibilities. This program provides unparalleled experience and training, which prepares the Fellow to care for patients with vision impairment in any setting.

Fun fact: I was inducted into the University of California, Davis Cal Aggie Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012 for my collegiate accomplishments in gymnastics. I continue to hold UC Davis school records on vault, balance beam and floor exercise. I was also cast as a background elite gymnast in the Disney movie, "Stick It" starring Jeff Bridges.