

Blind Race in support of the Filatov Institute of Eye Disease and Tissue Therapy

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SI " The Filatov Institute of Eye Diseases and Tissue Therapy of the NAMS of Ukraine";
Odesa (Ukraine)

The 27th Charity Chestnut Run took place on Independence Square in Kyiv on May 26 (The Day of Kyiv), 2019. The Chestnut Run is the largest charitable sports event in Ukraine. This year there were 600 teams on Maidan, and the total number of people taking part in the race was more than 20,000.

In addition, this year, for the first time in the Run's history, the Run included a new race, the Blind Race in support of the Filatov Institute of Eye Disease and Tissue Therapy of the city of Odesa. The participants ran in pairs, one guiding, one blindfolded. In this way, they tried to experience the feelings of blind people for a few minutes at least, and to get the idea of being blind, whereas the organizers of the event tried to attract public attention to the Childhood Blindness Prevention Center to be established at the Filatov Institute.

A group of enthusiasts headed by Sergii V. Katsan has been working at the Institute for a decade, contributing to the fight against premature blindness and incapacitation due to such specific disease as retinopathy of prematurity (RP). The disease is a major cause of blindness at an early age.

The doctors of the center will provide surgical treatment and follow up care to children with RN, and the data accumulated at the center will contribute to the development of novel treatment options.

Some advanced equipment, including PanoCam LT (Visunex Medical Systems, Fremont CA), a pediatric

retinal camera designed specifically for newborn screening and capturing digital images in high-resolution on light or dark colored retinal pigment, has been already purchased for the future centre. This is the only PanoCam LT in Ukraine. The camera is hand held, allowing for screening the newborns located at premature departments, which is especially important for low weight infants. Apart from detecting retinopathy, the equipment also provides new opportunities for the diagnosis of and monitoring retinoblastoma (a malignant ocular tumor developing at an early age), allowing for preventing blindness and incapacitation in children.

As of today, the center requires furniture and some items of equipment. However, the institute will not be able to cope with this problem without the help of others. The first money for establishing the center was raised during the last year's Charity Internet Artwork Auction, with prominent Ukrainian artists participating in the event. This year, during the 27th annual Chestnut Run event, the Blind Race raised Hr 100,000.

The project of establishing the center is gradually becoming a real possibility due to the help of charity and donations, and we hope that new comfortable conditions for baby patients, their patients and doctors will be created in the near future.