

Valley Fever Americas Foundation

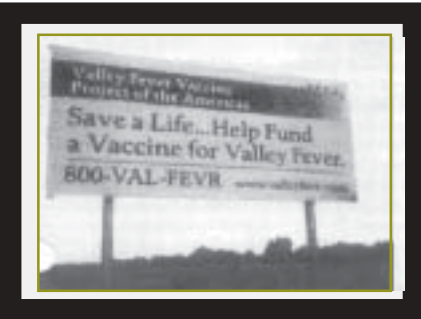
Volume 8, Issue 3

Quarterly Newsletter

July/August/September 2005

SAVE A LIFE THROUGH VALLEY FEVER AWARENESS

This story begins with an east coast transplant to the west coast who read an article about Valley Fever in one of the magazines published for the trucking industry.



Truck driver Gary Slade was very interested in the article, and, not long afterward, noticed a billboard near Williams, California on Interstate Highway 5 that said

“Save a Life . . . Help Fund a Vaccine for Valley Fever.” He called the 800 number, requested information, made a donation,

TRUCKER, continued on page 4

Kern County Board of Supervisors Pledges \$100,000

On February 9, 2005, Michael W. Cooper, President of the Valley Fever Americas Foundation, sent a letter to the Kern County Board of Supervisors describing the need to invest in a future that includes a vaccine against Valley Fever. The letter stated in part that:

- a vaccine will prevent physical, emotional and financial suffering of private citizens whose families have felt the impact of what can be a terrible and sometimes life-threatening disease,
- a vaccine will reduce loss of productivity from ill employees in the public and private sector
- a vaccine can be expected to reduce significant public costs of treating the disease

On February 20, 2005, Pauline Larwood, a former Kern County Supervisor and active supporter of the Vaccine Project, thanked the board for \$50,000 contributed beginning in 1996, and asked that the Board refer a request for \$100,000 to the budget file. The Board did so and also directed that letters be sent to their counterparts throughout the endemic area urging their support.

On August 9, 2005, the Kern County Board of Supervisors received a recommendation from the County Administrative

KERN COUNTY, continued on page

NOTE FROM FOUNDATION PRESIDENT MICHAEL W. COOPER

In January 2005, we asked readers of this newsletter to give us YOUR ideas on how you can help the Valley Fever Vaccine Project.

This issue is filled with stories of individuals making a difference. We cannot thank you enough for the efforts being made on behalf of a vaccine to prevent Valley Fever.

I hope you are inspired by these stories as I am to do what you can do to increase awareness of Valley Fever, and secure funding for vaccine research.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Thomas Announces \$176,771 for Valley Fever Vaccine Development Effort



Congressman Bill Thomas announced September 12th that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will release a grant of \$176,771 to the California State University at Bakersfield (CSUB) Foundation to purchase equipment needed by the Valley Fever Vaccine Project.

“In the last five years, we have seen over 5,000 cases and almost 50 deaths from Valley Fever in Kern County,” said Thomas. “Valley Fever continues to be a serious health problem and I was pleased to secure this additional federal funding to supplement our community’s effort to develop a vaccine.”

At Thomas’ request, the funding was included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005, which President Bush signed into law in December 2004.

City of Arvin

Arvin is a small farming town located south of Bakersfield in California's great central valley. After hearing the stories of valley fever victims who attended a city council meeting in June, Councilman José Flores decided something had



to be done. Flores approached businesses with local ties and received over \$4,000. Good job Arvin!!

Buttonwillow Community Foundation

Buttonwillow is a very small town west of Bakersfield at the population center of California with less than 1500 residents. The Buttonwillow Community Foundation recently donated \$10,000 for the Vaccine Project.

Bakersfield Californian

The Bakersfield Californian is a family owned newspaper. When asked for money, a committee of employees makes the recommendation. The recent contribution for valley fever vaccine research was \$6000.

Centennial Medical Group Punches Up Pasta Feast Proceeds



Chairman Pam Mahan had lots of helpers for the Bakersfield East Rotary's Annual Pasta Feast. Proceeds donated to the Valley Fever Vaccine Project were matched by the Centennial Medical Group, for a total donation of nearly \$10,000! Thank you Dr. Johnson Jung!



Kidz Klub and Sgt. Griepsma

Valley Fever Americas Foundation

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- My check payable to the Valley Fever Americas Foundation is enclosed.
- Please charge the amount above to my MASTER or VISA card.
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TARGET TOURNAMENT OCTOBER 25, 2005



RIO BRAVO COUNTRY CLUB

The tournament is October 25th at Rio Bravo, \$150/person. The organizer is Josh Noda, One of the big selling points for the tournament is that we are paying out prizes in CASH. Tournament Chairman Josh Noda can be contacted for tournament information (entry forms) at 661-396-6107 or Josh.Noda@target.com. Proceeds will go to United Way, Valley Fever Vaccine Research and Hurricane Katrina Relief.

Josh Noda is the Regional Transportation Supervisor for Target Corporation, headquartered at The Target Distribution Center in Shafter, California. He asked for the tournament to benefit Valley Fever because of his personal experience with the disease. In Josh's own words:

I had valley fever about 16 months after moving down here from Oregon (May of 2004, moved here in December 2002). I was really sick with flu-like symptoms for about 1 week (missed work) and then a cough that would not go away. Originally I was diagnosed with pneumonia, and it took a few visits before they figured out it was valley fever. I started treatment in August of 2004 and have been on the medication ever since. By January of this year it had almost gone away, but it flared up again, so I continue to take my medication. I only missed that 1 week of work last May, and have not missed a day for any reason since. I do

remember coming back to work after missing 1 week, and being extremely tired. The Target Distribution Center is HUGE, and I recall it making me tired just walking from my car to my office.

As far as the why's behind this event - When I was 10 years old, our Little League baseball field was being torn down due to lack of funds. I was devastated and my father suggested I organize a fund-raiser. "Back then" baseball cards were popular, so I decided to hold a baseball card show. I rented out an auditorium in our city and advertised my event. I went around to local businesses to seek donations that were to be auctioned off at the show, with proceeds benefiting Little League. There were laughs, since I was only 10 years old (and about 4'9" tall) and asking to speak to the owner of businesses. I carried around a little receipt book too! The card show was a success, and I remember why this was so important. It instilled a sense of ownership in a community, and the value of people and doing something positive.

In addition, I am a life-long golfer, and worked at a golf course for many years. I hope this paints a picture of the motivation behind my efforts!



KAISER PERMANENTE AWARDS \$12,770

Often LOTS of individuals are involved in getting things moving in a useful direction. This story starts with Julie Larson, a Kaiser employee, who heard a lot about the need for valley fever vaccine research funding from her mother-in-law, the editor of this newsletter. Julie felt certain Kaiser would want to do something to help, and volunteered to find out who to contact. When she visited Cristy Cortez, Director of Public Affairs in Kaiser's Bakersfield Office, Cristy said that they had just been discussing how Kaiser could get involved and who to contact for more information. Cristy and other staff members had recently attended the Valley Fever Forum sponsored by California State Senator Roy Ashburn.

The next step was a meeting with Vaccine Project Director Richard Hector, representatives of California State University Bakersfield, the Valley Fever Americas Foundation, and Kaiser to explore research partnering possibilities. Several activities are under discussion, but one is concrete. The Valley Fever Americas Foundation was encouraged to apply for a grant to fund the tests of coccidioidin. Coccidioidin is required for a skin test to determine if a person has had valley fever. This step is critical to vaccine clinical tests performed on humans in the future.

Coccidioidin has been used in the past but the test is required to renew licensing. The first skin test study will be done at Fort Irwin which is located in the High Mojave Desert northeast of Barstow. In addition to demonstrating the efficacy of the coccidioidin, it will also demonstrate the extent of the Valley Fever problem that troops face when engaged in desert warfare training in that area. Plans are to eventually conduct similar studies in Kern County.

and has been receiving this newsletter from just about the first issue.

As he gathered more and more information about the disease, he decided to make an effort to inform others as well. He started placing posters at truck stops along his route to alert other drivers, especially those from outside the endemic area, giving some information and telling where to find out more.



Slade doesn't know how many persons he may have helped, but he does know one for certain. He and Ken Whittaker work for the same trucking firm, so it was natural for Gary Slade to hear that Whittaker had been admitted to the hospital, desperately ill. Ken was being treated for pneumonia in the intensive care unit, but was rapidly growing weaker rather than improving. Gary says it sounded like Valley Fever to him, so he got together his packet of information and drove it from his home in Fullerton to the truck terminal; someone there drove it out to Ken's home in Palmdale, and from there the information was driven to the hospital.

At the hospital, doctors performed tests and determined that it was indeed Valley Fever that was causing the illness. He was hospitalized for 43 days but eventually recovered and was able to get back to work. That was three years ago. Recently when Ken was asked if he believes Gary Slade saved his life, he responded with emphasis, "I KNOW he did!"

We say thank you to Gary Slade for his efforts, to truck magazines who care enough to get the word out to their readers, to Martin Outdoor Advertising which donated the bill boards, and to **everyone** working to increase awareness of Valley Fever.

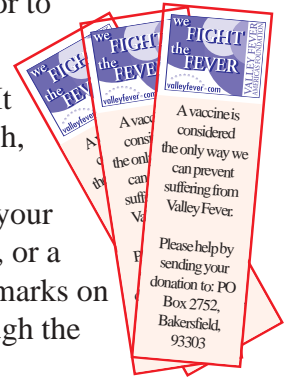


Young Kim and Isabel Aizpuru provide Valley Fever information at the BERCA Annual Pasta Feast.

BOOKMARK IN FOUR LANGUAGES

At health fairs we have been distributing a bookmark listing common symptoms of valley fever. The bookmark includes the mailing address, phone number and website for contacting the Valley Fever Americas Foundation to obtain more information about the disease or to make a donation.

It is shown in English below. It has been translated into Spanish, Punjabi, and Tagalog. If you would like to make copies for your own use, a pdf file is available, or a printed copy set up for 8 bookmarks on a page can be sent to you through the regular mail.



Common Symptoms

- Fever/Cough
- Chest Pain
- Fatigue
- Shortness of Breath
- Skin Lesions/Chills
- Muscle and Joint Pain
- Night Sweats
- Lack of Appetite
- Weight Loss

Valley Fever is caused by a fungus that lives in the soil. It is not contagious from person to person. About 60% who inhale the spores do not get sick. For a few it may be fatal.

For more information:
www.valleyfever.com
 661.832.1456
 1.800.VAL.FEVR



A vaccine is considered the only way we can prevent suffering from Valley Fever.

Valley Fever is an "orphan disease" Pharmaceutical companies are not interested in "adopting" it.

We are determined to fund the development of a vaccine.

Will you help?
 Send your donation to:
 V.F.A.F.
 P O BOX 2752
 Bakersfield, CA 93303
 501(c)(3) non-profit

IN MEMORIAM

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VALLEY FEVER ON PUBLIC TELEVISION

If anyone asks why you support the Valley Fever Vaccine Project, show them a program produced by public television in California and they will understand.

Public television reporter Sam Louie came to Bakersfield with a cameraman June 24, 2005. He interviewed Dr. Royce Johnson and patients at Kern Medical Center's Valley Fever Clinic. The impact on the lives of the patients and their loved ones was made very plain.

Louie also interviewed Cheryl Youngblood whose husband Michael died of the disease. Cheryl told her story eloquently and forcefully. Michael W. Cooper, President of the Valley Fever Americas Foundation, was also interviewed and described what has already accomplished, where the project is headed, and the need for contributions.

The story appeared on KCET "Life and times" in Southern California, and throughout the state in a "California Connected" story, a public affairs news magazine. It can be seen "live" on the web at: <http://www.californiaconnected.org/wp/archives/268>

Model T Ford Club of Kern County

Elaine Bierlein is a nurse in Bakersfield who was recruited to participate in the whole cell vaccine trial that was done in the early 1980's. She was new to the area and hadn't had Valley Fever yet. She still hasn't had Valley Fever. To help out with the current vaccine project, she approached her Car Club and asked that the project be considered among the charitable donations made regularly by the club. A few months later, a check for \$200 was presented to Sandra Larson at a regular meeting of the Model T Ford Club of Kern County. Thank you Elaine for following through with this request to your organization.



KERN COUNTY continued from page 1

Office that \$100,000 for Valley Fever vaccine development be approved and paid over two years with the first installment of \$50,000 in FY 2005-2006. This recommendation was adopted.

The leadership and concern for their constituents demonstrated by the members of the Kern County Board of Supervisors is greatly appreciated!

Valley Fever Americas Foundation

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The Valley Fever Benefit Golf Tournament is played at the beautiful Bakersfield Country Club. The picture above was taken at the 9th annual tournament in May 2005 as photographers awaited players for team pictures which were taken on the xxth green. Following play, prizes were distributed, refreshments enjoyed, and special recognition was given Dr. Hans Einstein for leadership provided the Valley Fever Vaccine Project.

10TH ANNUAL VALLEY FEVER BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENT MAY 22, 2006

SPONSORS

**send your contribution now for
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GOLFERS

**line up your team, get it on your
calendar now!**