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To Whom it May Concern;

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to bring your attention to a cause very close to my heart—my son's struggle with blue cone monochromacy (BCM). As a parent, I am reaching out to you today in the hopes that you might consider supporting vital research that could dramatically improve the quality of life for individuals like my son and many others affected by this condition.

Those who suffer from BCM face not only the challenge of limited vision but also the emotional and developmental hurdles that accompany the condition. My son, like many others, faces a future where his world is viewed primarily in shades of gray, and simple tasks we often take for granted can become monumental challenges. Watching him as a baby with his shaking eyes and head constantly turned to the side as he struggled to find a better focus was devastating. He was pulled out of class in elementary school to learn to use devices that would allow him to visualize the whiteboard and to learn to read Braille. His orientation and mobility therapy sessions are spent learning basic, but essential, life skills for someone with low vision. He learned to use his monocular to see the isle signs on the ceiling of Target and he is currently learning how to navigate crossing the street since he is unable to see the crosswalk sign on the opposite side of the street and learning to use a white cane. We have spent years prepping him for the time when his sisters and all of his friends begin driving since he will not be able to partake in this giant step of independence.

Groundbreaking research in the fields of gene therapy and retinal disease have shown the success that is possible and seems so close. It took us 12 years to find a diagnosis despite taking our son to specialists all over the country and undergoing numerous studies and genetic tests. The number of people afflicted with this condition is likely much higher than the census. My husband and I would do anything to find a treatment for our son's visual impairments, as I am sure every family afflicted with BCM would do for their son.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this important cause. I am hopeful that your funding will result in a true breakthrough for the children and adults living with BCM.

Warm regards,

Patricia Harris, MD