Minneapolis, MN – September 24, 2009 – The Preeclampsia Foundation announced today that Dr. Hillary Gammill, University of Washington, and Dr. Bhanu Prakash Telugu, University of Missouri, are recipients of its 2009 Vision Grants. These prestigious research awards will be presented to them at the Foundation's annual benefit gala, Saving Grace – A Night of Hope, on Saturday, October 24, at the Renaissance Chicago Hotel in Chicago, Illinois.

Dr. Thomas R. Easterling, Director of the Foundation's Medical Board said, "The trend for strong submissions is continuing to grow as we have had another stellar year for our Vision Grant program. We have a robust grant review process and I am confident that we have identified promising young talent with novel ideas."

About the Vision Grant Award Recipients (photos available upon request):

Hilary Gammill is an Acting Assistant Professor at the University of Washington, as well as a Research Associate at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington. She graduated magna cum laude from Amherst College, and earned her medical degree at University of Washington School of Medicine. After completing residency and fellowship training at Magee-Womens Hospital of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, she returned to the University of Washington as an attending physician in Obstetrics & Gynecology. Gammill's research will evaluate two types of cells critical to the maternal immune response in pregnancy, as the excessive immune response seen in preeclampsia may represent "rejection" of the fetus. Ultimately, problems within these specialized cells may be targets for treatment.

Bhanu Prakash Telugu hails from Visakhapatnam, India. He received his Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine from Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, before going on to earn his Ph.D. at University of Missouri in Columbia. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the Division of Animal Science at the University of Missouri in Columbia. His past accomplishments include developing an assay for detecting pregnancy-associated glycoproteins in cattle, for which a U.S. patent is pending. His objective for preeclampsia research is to develop a novel human embryonic stem cell-based model to investigate the origin and migratory behavior of specialized placental cells called extravillous trophoblast. These cells modify the maternal blood vessels to ensure uninterrupted blood supply to the growing fetus, a process that breaks down in preeclampsia. The thrust of his research is to investigate the molecular signature and physiological behavior of these cells in order to identify the predisposing factors for the disease.