The Preeclampsia Foundation announced today that Drs. Ödül "Laurie" Amburgey (University of Vermont), Daobin Ding (University of Chicago), Jonathan McGuane (University of Florida), and Alexander Panda (Yale University) are the recipients of its 2008 Vision Grants. These prestigious awards will be presented to at the Foundation's annual benefit gala, "Saving Grace: A Night of Hope" on Saturday, September 20th at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. "Preeclampsia has been known since Biblical times – yet we still don't understand its root causes, "said J. Thomas Viall, the Foundation's Executive Director, "our goal is to inspire the next generation of investigators who will make the breakthroughs that will save moms and their babies from the all too often tragic impact of preeclampsia." Dr. Thomas R. Easterling, Professor of Maternal Fetal Medicine at the University of Washington and Chair of the Foundation's Medical Board stated, "This year's submissions were the strongest I've ever seen and I can't thank my review committee enough for their good work - we have a robust grant review process and I am confident that we have identified exceptional young talent."

About the Vision Grant Award Recipients:

Ödül "Laurie" Amburgey is a native of Ankara, Turkey. She received a BS in Chemical Engineering from the University of Cincinnati in 1993. After a year in industry, she returned to the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine where she received the Obstetrical and Gynecological Award for excellence. She completed a residency in Ob/Gyn at the University of North Carolina, and was twice recognized for excellence in teaching. She continued her training at the University of Vermont where she is currently a Maternal-Fetal Medicine fellow. Dr. Amburgey's research seeks to determine if some women have certain blood factors that make them more susceptible to edema, or swelling of the brain.

Daobin Ding, a Shandong University Medical School graduate in China (1994), received his PhD in Molecular Biology at Wayne State University, Detroit, MI (2001), completed his Ob/Gyn residency at the University of Toledo, OH (2007), and is currently a Maternal-Fetal Medicine Fellow at University of Chicago. His research interest is on the function of mitochondria in the earliest stages of preeclampsia. With help from Dr. Marshal Lindheimer, he met renowned geneticist Dr. Carole Ober who agreed to mentor his studies that aim to identify mitochondrial mutations linked to preeclampsia. Dr. Ding's research suggests that these mutations cause the placenta to increase production of proteins known to be associated with signs and symptoms of preeclampsia.

Jonathan McGuane hails from Victoria, Australia, and holds a Bachelor of Science with Honors from Deakin University and a PhD from the University of Melbourne. During his recent doctoral studies (2002-2007), Dr. McGuane accepted awards from the University of Melbourne, the National Heart Foundation, and the Society for Reproductive Biology. He was also the recipient of a postgraduate PhD Scholarship from the Jenny Ryan Scleroderma Foundation (Melbourne, Australia). Relatively new to the preeclampsia field, his research interests have to date centered on the physiology of the pregnancy hormone relaxin and cardiovascular adaptations during gestation.

Alexander Panda attended medical school at the Alexander von Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany and earned a Masters in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. He is a board certified infectious diseases specialist and is currently in the final stages of his fellowship in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine. He is also a Clinical Research Fellow in the Investigative Medicine Program at Yale University School of Medicine. Dr. Panda's research focuses on the possibility that "toll-like receptors" (TLRs - which are part of our immune systems) activate inappropriately in some pregnancies and contribute to the development of preeclampsia.