

Melbourne, FL -- The Preeclampsia Foundation announced today that Dr. Coral Murrant, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada; and Dr. Lauren Anton, University of Pennsylvania, USA, are recipients of its 2010 Vision Grants. These prestigious research awards will be presented to them at the Foundation's annual benefit gala, Saving Grace - A Night of Hope Around the World, on Saturday, November 6, at the Olympic Fairmont Hotel in Seattle Washington.

New this year, in addition to the usual robust scientific review committee that makes the primary funding recommendations, the Preeclampsia Foundation added a patient review committee (PRC) to offer a second layer of review. The PRC findings were rendered only to the top applicants as determined by the scientific committee. Thus, this year's grantees represent the strongest scientific proposals with a further review and endorsement by a dedicated patient perspective.

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

Dr. Coral Murrant is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Human Health and Natural Sciences at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. She received her Ph.D. in Biophysics from the University of Guelph in Ontario, before going on to serve as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Guelph, Baylor College of Medicine and University of Rochester. She has had over 10 years experience with microscopy, intravital microscopy, fluorescence microscopy and measurements of vascular diameter, including four years' experience with a uterine endometrial vascular model, which she developed. Her objective for preeclampsia research is to establish the processes that determine blood flow control to the placenta through the uterine vascular bed and potentially identify an entirely new pathway for fetal-maternal communication. She intends to investigate the lack of appropriate communication pathways that link blood flow needs and its potential for inhibiting fetal development and intrauterine growth.

"Understanding how and why pregnancy and placental blood flow is successful in the healthy situation is critical to understanding when things go wrong," explained Murrant in her application.

Dr. Lauren Anton is currently a post-doctoral fellow at the Center for Research on Reproduction and Women's Health at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. She received her Ph.D.

from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where she completed the Molecular Medicine Graduate program, which focuses on performing cutting-edge research in cellular and molecular mechanisms of human disease. She has served as a research assistant in the Departments of Veterinary Science and Microbiology at Pennsylvania University as well as a Research Intern with the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. Her objective for preeclampsia research is to investigate the effects of epigenetic regulation on placental angiogenic factors by the use of a novel approach and to identify previously unknown genes that are differentially methylated in preeclamptic placentas. The goal is that with a greater understanding of the mechanisms of placental development, this research could lead to new therapeutic and preventative strategies for preeclampsia patients.

"Scientists are working hard to find a biological reason for this disease," said Anton. She hopes that patients will be comforted with the knowledge that their stories of life with preeclampsia do not go unheard. "With every small piece of the preeclampsia puzzle that is revealed, we get one step closer to clearly understanding this disease and how we can prevent it."