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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate use

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World Retinoblastoma Awareness Week Shines the Light on Childhood Eye Cancer.

A potentially deadly childhood eye cancer will be in the global spotlight during World Retinoblastoma Awareness Week, thanks to the efforts of two British charities.

Spearheaded by Oxford/Toronto based Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund and the London based Childhood Eye Cancer Trust, the May 13-19 2007 awareness campaign will highlight "white pupil" in flash photography as the most common early sign of retinoblastoma. Other eye cancer organisations, treatment centres, affected families and survivors around the world have also pledged their support.

Retinoblastoma is a rare, fast growing cancer of the infant retina. which may affect one or both eyes. When diagnosed and treated early this cancer is highly curable. 96% of affected children are cured in developed countries like the UK. However, without prompt intervention, affected eyes may need to be removed to prevent the cancer spreading to the brain or bone marrow. Untreated retinoblastoma is fatal. An estimated 92% of affected children live in less developed countries, and the global survival rate is less than 20%.

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Shining the light on childhood cancer. (p2)

In Oxford, Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund Chief Executive and retinoblastoma survivor, Abby White, will give a series of talks to local parent and baby/toddler groups across the city. A poster campaign in the region will also emphasise the importance of carefully checking photographs of young children.

"Awareness is hugely important" says Miss White. "Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund evolved from the experiences of two little girls whose life and sight could have been saved if their parents and doctors had known about the significance of a white eye reflection in young children. Many parents dismiss this 'cat's eye reflex' as a trick of the light or a camera fault - simple knowledge is key to early diagnosis that enables vision saving therapies. In many countries, early diagnosis is a child's only hope for survival."

Across the globe, people of all ages will participate in activities to raise awareness of this cancer's easily recognised early sign, and the importance of seeking prompt medical attention. Planned events include public presentations, poster campaigns, school activities and exhibits exploring various aspects of retinoblastoma.

For more information, visit www.daisyseyecancerfund.org, or contact Abby White at abby@daisyseyecancerfund.org or 01865-243-654. Donations can be made online at www.daisyseyecancerfund.org/donate.

ENDS



Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund

A Global Response To Childhood Retinoblastoma

Shining the light on childhood cancer. (p3)

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Editor's Notes:

- **Retinoblastoma** is a cancer of the developing retina that can affect one or both eyes. Tumours typically develop before the age of 4 years, and some babies are both with this cancer. Vision saving treatments include laser, freezing therapy, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Many children undergo surgical removal of the eye to protect their life.
- **Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund** is a registered charity in England and a special fund within the charitable foundation of SickKids Hospital, Toronto, Canada. The organisation supports vital awareness campaigns, clinical research, and the development of novel approaches to sustainable, locally managed care for children in resource-poor countries, so that many more children can be saved. www.daisyseyecancerfund.org
- **The Childhood Eye Cancer Trust** was founded in 1987 to support families affected by retinoblastoma across the UK. The organisation supports scientific and clinical research, manages awareness initiatives, provides information on treatment options and offers psychosocial family support and long term survivor support. www.chect.org.uk
- **World Retinoblastoma Awareness Week:** Further information and downloadable awareness resources (fact-sheets, publications, graphics and activities) can be found on the [DECF Awareness Week](http://www.decf.org.uk) website