

A warm welcome to our new readers and an equally warm welcome-back to our more regular readers. The summer of 2014 has been a great one. An unprecedented number of new vitiligo support groups have been established around the world, providing vital services to those with vitiligo.

In their honour, this edition of the Vitiligo Research Foundation newsletter has a theme of support; we highlight some of the incredible people working to support those with vitiligo in lots of different ways. We remain committed to improving the lives of vitiligo sufferers and hope we can inspire you to do the same.

World Vitiligo Day: 485,788 Stand Together for a Cure

With vitiligo lacking the celebrity status or major funding contributions of other diseases, World Vitiligo Day is, at its heart, a grassroots celebration of awareness. Every year, thousands of people take initiative worldwide to spread awareness, raise money, and support others around the world struggling with vitiligo.



This year, Indian supporters poured into the streets to celebrate World Vitiligo Day at headquarters in Chandigarh, under the successful chairmanship of Prof. Davinder Parsad, MD. World Vitiligo Day is celebrated around the world to raise acceptance and awareness and has been previously headquarters in Italy, Nigeria and the United States. 2015 promises to continue our happy traditions of love and support.

Our petition to the Secretary-General of the UN urging research into a cure for vitiligo reached **485,788** signatures. Our call for research into a disease that affects many by turning them into outcasts and pariahs has helped the vitiligo community stand together and continue to fight for a cure- we're getting new signatures everyday, and you can sign too, at <http://25june.org>.

Supporting our mission of awareness and celebration, hundreds of individuals overcame their own personal demons to share photos and stories online for the first time. **Shirina Carstens** is poet and founder of Beauty from Within, a project aiming to raise self esteem through creative art projects. Her touching words on Facebook spoke out to many.



We would like offer our congratulations to the McElroy family who came together to raise money in honor of their daughter Hana on World Vitiligo Day. Dad Kyle McElroy competed in an Ironman Triathlon, an extreme challenge for the supremely fit to raise funds, and sister **Makena McElroy** organized a very successful fundraiser in partnership with local entrepreneurs.

VRF would like to offer a huge thank-you to our all our volunteers who took part, organized events, made T-shirts and banners, signed our petition, and posted comments and photos, with extra thanks to UFC martial artist **Scott Jorgenson** and Dutch soccer goalkeeper **Hedvig Lindhal**, who helped promote the event among their followers.

Our Growing Community

We are excited to add four new **Support Groups** to the World Vitiligo Map, our online database of support organizations around the world. These include;

- Serbian Vitiligo Support Group from **Belgrade**, recently established by Slobodanka Mijatovich;
- **Chicago** Vitiligo Meetup, USA;
- Living With Vitiligo in **Melbourne, Australia**; and
- The More Than My Skin Project in **Los Angeles, California** which will launch this month with a networking brunch, support group, photo modeling project, and social club.



Chantelle Brown-Young: Model. Role Model.



A mesmerizing young woman who was recently grappling with thoughts of suicide reached finals of the smash TV series *America's Next Top Model*. Chantelle Brown-Young from Toronto has radically changed the show that had essentially been the same for the last 11 years. Her social media influence of over 245,000 followers on [Instagram](#) is already nearly one quarter of the show's 1 million viewers.

"Yes, it's just cosmetic, it doesn't hurt, but treating vitiligo is so important - it can be so crippling to your self esteem" she explains. Studies show young people developing patches of pigmentation may feel particularly isolated. A study by the UK Vitiligo Society found that young people with vitiligo were four times more likely to be bullied than their peers. Brown-

Young is sympathetic "You're already having changes you don't understand, plus this skin condition that I didn't ask for that has to do with other people's opinions and other people's bullying".

Whether she goes on to become the next America's top fashion girl or not, right now she is an incredible role-model for individuals who feel different, or "flawed." DESIGUAL has signed Chantelle as the face of its autumn-winter 2014 campaign and has covered New York with posters featuring this beautiful model.

Our Support Spotlight: VITFriends

In 2004, two women, united by their passionate advocacy for those with vitiligo, had an idea for an organization that would offer support, love, and acceptance to those suffering from vitiligo. Launched in 2009, [VITFriends](#) offers support to those with vitiligo and has campaigned tirelessly to raise public awareness and educate communities about vitiligo. Working in New York, Connecticut and the Boston Area, VITFriends has fought for those with vitiligo to feel accepted and welcomed. In July, they welcomed attendees to their 6th Vitiligo Conference, held in The Bronx, NY. We would like to recognize VITFriends for their outstanding work, and congratulate their president **Valarie Molyneaux** on receiving a letter of recognition from the Governor of Massachusetts, who has declared his full support for World Vitiligo Day.



Against All Odds: How An Inspirational Young Dancer Succeeds with Support.



In the Sierra Leone orphanage of her early childhood, Michaela DePrince was known namelessly as girl number 27. She was abandoned at the orphanage as a baby; her father was shot during the civil wars and her mother starved to death soon after. Frequently malnourished, beaten, and derided as a "devil child" for her vitiligo, she ran away from her orphanage and took shelter at nearby refuge camp. When she was four, she was adopted by American parents and taken away to a strange new life in the United States.

Inspired by a picture of ballerina from her orphanage that she found and kept, she pursued a career in classical ballet, and is now dancing with the junior company of the Dutch national ballet in Amsterdam. She is proud of the progress she has made and believes a supportive community is essential. "My life is proof that no matter what situation you're in, as long as you have a supportive family, you can achieve anything" she says. Michaela DePrince was named in Huffington Post's List of the *Most Amazing People of the Year*

Under 18, and in 2013 she was named one of Newsweek's *125 Women of Impact*.

From Lab To Clinic

Our exclusive **Quarterly Research Review** is now available for [free download](#) at our website. Thirty six articles included in this research are dedicated to disease pathogenesis, epidemiology, triggers, candidate biomarkers and Eastern medicine treatments.

A promising [new therapy](#) being tested in clinical trials for use in a combination vitiligo therapy and demonstrated excellent results, especially in hard to regiment areas such as hands and elbows. Our [mini-FAQ article](#) continues our coverage of the Dermaroller® controversy. A [major change](#) in India: new drug from a global pharma company Dr.Reddy's. Discussing newly launched vitiligo laser clinics from US-based PhotoMedex.

Vitiligo Blog and Books



A new [vitiligo blog](#) has been started by **Dr. John Harris**, physician and a leading researcher into vitiligo, at the University of Massachusetts.

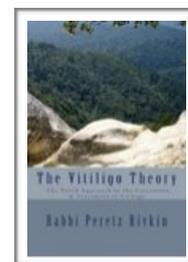
Along with the growing community of people worldwide, there is now a lot of cultural interest around vitiligo springing up.

We have compiled a small **Suggested Reading** list to include this quarter:

[Taking Flight](#), an unforgettable memoir by Michaela DePrince, from Alfred A. Knopf Books (October 14, 2014)

[The Vitiligo Theory: The Torah Approach to the Prevention & Treatment of Vitiligo](#), by Peretz Rivkin (August 14, 2014)

[My Victory against Vitiligo: A Successful Story and a Practical Guide to Treatment](#), by Xi-chao Mo (February 1, 2014)



Communications

Writer & Director **Nichola Wong** from the UK is currently developing a transmedia project on vitiligo, that will unfold across multiple media platforms. The heart of the project will be a 3D interactive website that will bring the vitiligo community together to tell their stories and share their words of wisdom and inspiration. The project will also include the production of a series of short films that will be curated by the vitiligo community. The aim of the project is to inspire and empower vitiligo sufferers as well as raise public awareness and address common myths and misconceptions about the condition.

Guide: How To "Whitelist" Our Communications



In the never-ending war between spammers and email services, we are accidentally caught in their crossfire. Providers often filter out email that you specifically ask to receive, such as our newsletters. We hate to inconvenience you, but the spammers leave us no choice. After you subscribe to our newsletter, we recommend you take the [steps](#) on our website to make sure you get your copy.

To help us ensure that the VR Foundation website appears high up on Google searches, please add a link to it from your company, department, college, university or blog site. This will help us to reach out with news and information to those who need it most.

Upcoming Events

The **Chicago Vitiligo Meet-Up support group** will meet on September 23, to discuss treatments, exchange stories, laugh and plan a future agenda. [Master Classes on Vitiligo](#) are coming up in **Istanbul, Turkey** and **Amritsar, India** this November.

Final word

That's it from us this quarter, but keep an eye out for our next edition, coming soon. We are always updating our news feed at vrfoundation.org, and for up-to-the-minute news on events and whats going on the the world of vitiligo support follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Tumblr](#) and [Wordpress](#).



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