

The Spectacle



A publication of the

Lions Sight Program
at the
University of Minnesota

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank

Lions Children's Eye Clinic

Lions-Funded Research

The MAC



Winter 2007

Eye Bank Joins Groundbreaking Ethics Group

The Minnesota Lions Eye Bank is a charter member of the Minnesota Commission of the Procurement and Use of Anatomical Donations. The commission, composed of Minnesota organizations committed to the ethical procurement and use of human anatomical donations for research and education, will create a national model and set an example for other states to follow.

Minnesota is the first state in the nation where best practice protocols regarding human anatomical donations are cooperatively supported by representatives of medical schools, researchers, and academic institutions; funeral directors; and tissue and eye procurement

"We want public interest in donation to continue to grow, so we must assure everyone involved with donation...of the appropriate and safe use of donations."

organizations. Best practice protocols will aim to protect donors, donor families, and tissue users for research and medical education by preventing inappropriate or unethical procurement and use of donations. Nine


Ethics continued on page 2

Ethics continued from page 1

organizations and agencies have joined together to establish the commission.

“Donation is key to the research and education that lead to a better understanding of diseases and health conditions and also to the development of treatments and cures,” said Jackie Malling, executive director of the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank. “We want public interest in donation to continue to grow, so we must

assure everyone involved with donation, from donors and donor families to scientists and educators, of the appropriate and safe use of donations.”

The Commission will review current practices and provide recommendations for best practices for ethical donation, procurement, screening and testing, preservation, distribution, as well as final disposition of human anatomical donations. 

Minnesota Commission of the Procurement and Use of Anatomical Donations

American Tissue Services Foundation
Arrowhead Funeral Directors Association
Mayo Medical School Department of
Anatomy
LifeScience Alley
Minnesota Coroner and Medical
Examiner's Association
Minnesota Funeral Directors Association
Minnesota Lions Eye Bank
TRIA Orthopaedic Research Institute
University of Minnesota Medical School

Eye Tissue Transport Update

The volunteer tissue transport program has been humming along since the summer of 2004. Here is a little information on what's been happening.

The numbers of eye tissue relays in the metro area (corneas going out to surgery sites or to or from the



Volunteer tissue transporter Bob Becker, the “You Call, I Haul” Lion of Brooklyn Center receives a package from eye bank distribution coordinator Stephanie Hackl.

airport) has been very steady in 2006. We are averaging at least one transport per day. The number of runs from the six outer drop sites is a bit down, but there are good reasons for this.

The eye bank practices two types of eye tissue removal: enucleation (whole eye removal) and in situ (cornea only removal). What is important in either case is “death to preservation” time, which

needs to be under 15 hours. With enucleation, we must procure the eyes, transport them back to the eye bank, and remove and preserve the corneas, all within the 15 hours. When we use in situ, we just need to remove the cornea and place it in a preservation solution *at the site of the donation* within that 15-hour window.

The Minnesota State Patrol kindly carries eyes for the eye bank and has done so since 1961. Because of the increased calls for service and the need to focus on the enforcement of violations linked to serious and fatal crashes, the Patrol has asked that we only call upon them when no other timely courier methods are possible. In situ eliminates the need for the urgent transportation provided by the State Patrol.


We now do in situ instead of whole-eye enucleation on many cases in the Duluth, Fargo, and Rochester areas and so have the time to use couriers for delivery. Our Twin Cities procurement staff hand deliver the eyes they recover, and we have increased their coverage area.

Our dependence on our volunteer transporters, however, is still very strong. “We still have cases that need to be delivered by the state patrol and then relayed by the Lions volunteers,” said Raylene Dale,

“We could not transport donated eyes to the eye bank, at a reasonable cost, without our volunteer drivers. I hope these volunteers know how much we value their work.”

Transport continued on page 3

Transport continued from page 2

eye bank technical director and volunteer transport liaison. "We could not transport donated eyes to the eye bank, at a reasonable cost, without our volunteer drivers. I hope these volunteers know how much we value their work, even though transports may not be as often as expected." 

2006 Tissue Transport Stats (through September)

Belle Plaine	6 transports	Northfield	1 transport
Cannon Falls	3 transports	Rush City	3 transports
Glencoe	3 transports	Rogers	32 transports
Twin Cities Metro		297 transports	

Eye Bank Active in Local and National Initiatives

The Minnesota Lions Eye Bank continues to lead national and state donation activities. In November, the eye bank team joined two important collaboratives, one committed to increasing the number of designated donors, and the other dedicated to cornea transplantation.

Team Minnesota Designated Donation Collaborative Established

Donate Life America (an alliance of national organizations and local coalitions dedicated to inspiring people to donate life through organ, tissue, and eye donation) has launched a Donor Designation Collaborative. This nationwide endeavor promotes donor registries with a goal to add 100 million designated donors to United States registries by April

2008. (October 2006 marked the 300 million mark for United States residents.)

The Minnesota Lions Eye Bank is a member of our state-wide effort, Team Minnesota. Also representing

Team Minnesota are LifeSource (an organ and tissue procurement organization), Mayo Clinic, Hennepin County Medical Center, and Southside Community Health Services.

Minnesota has a population of approximately 5.2 million persons, and 36 percent of these Minnesotans have designated themselves as donors on their drivers' licenses or through the state donor registry. Team Minnesota's goal is to increase this number to 51 percent. A 2005 University of Minnesota study found that 97 percent of Minnesotans support organ and tissue donation, so the Team Minnesota stretch goal of 51 percent is certainly achievable.

How does the number of registered donors help potential transplant recipients? A similar Organ

Donation Breakthrough Collaborative demonstrated that an increase in the number of designated donors (persons who document the intent to become a donor) equaled an increase in the number of organs procured, which equaled an increase in lives saved. Well-planned and well-executed collaboratives with widely-supported goals can make a difference.


If you do not have "donor" on your license, stop by the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank booth at your Mid-Winter Convention and sign up to be on the Minnesota registry or visit www.DonateLifeMN.org.

Cornea Collaborative to Launch in 2007

Inspired by Donate Life America's new Donor Designation Collaborative, the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) will launch the Cornea Collaborative in 2007. The mission of the Cornea Collaborative is to eradicate corneal blindness in the United States through IQ²CAT or Increasing Quality and Quantity of Corneas Available for Transplant.

Each of the 25 participating eye banks will identify and commit to individual goals and track set measures. The data gathered will help develop national baseline benchmarks for eye banking and establish improvement goals for the eye banking community.



The Cornea Collaborative's aim is to double the conversion rate for corneas available for transplant within three years. (Conversion rate refers to the number of actual donors for transplant divided by the number of potential donors for transplant.) The Cornea Collaborative nicely complements the goals of SightFirst II, and together these two initiatives are making the future brighter for all of us. 

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Autumn Recap

The staff of the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank experienced an exceptionally busy fall as staff members planned and participated in five rewarding events, hosted Eye Bank Association of America site inspectors, attended national meetings in person or by phone, and searched for new eye bank space.

The fast-paced stint started with Minnesota's great get-together, the **State Fair**. Eye bankers and their volunteers staffed a booth in the HealthFair 11 Building in partnership with other Minnesota donation and transplant organizations. The booth's focus was educating the public about donation and promoting www.DonateLifeMN.org, a new Minnesota electronic donation registry. Eye bank directors and Hearing trustees promoted



Eye bank Board Member, Brian Salisbury, greets a shopper during National Donor Sabbath at the Mall of America.

Lionism at a booth in the Education Building as well.

Next up were the **Lions Tours** on September 30. Nearly 200 guests from 27 Lions and Lioness clubs soaked up knowledge of the eye bank, the Low Vision Center, the Minnesota Lions Macular Degeneration Research and

Rehabilitation Center, oculoplastics, and corneal surgery. (Not to mention, of course, all the great tour stops in Otolaryngology.)

On October 15, the eye bank held its biannual **Donor and Family Recognition Service**. We hosted more than 400 friends and family members of eye donors, as well as corneal recipients and Lions. Feedback was warm and gratifying: "I knew we made a good choice donating, and seeing everyone there was so positive." "The whole program was meaningful."

"You do a good job of serving." "Bravo to you." Donor and Family Recognition Services are made possible by grants from the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank board of directors and are the eye bank's way of giving back to donor families.

Hard on the heels of the recognition service was **Thanksgiving for Vision** on October 28. Luncheon speakers Brock Stewart (father of donor Brodyn) and corneal recipient Gary Erickson spoke from their hearts and touched ours. We were educated at the Symposium (see p. 7) and entertained at the Silent Auction. Thank you to our generous auction donors who helped us raise \$3,500!

The final fall festivity was **National Donor Sabbath**, and the eye bank celebrated by participating in a public outreach event at the Mall of America on November 12. The Minnesota chapter of the National Kidney Foundation and LifeSource, an organ and tissue procurement organization, were also on hand

to mingle with shoppers and distribute information. The program featured speakers, musicians, dancers, and some great decorations. Cornea recipient Cindy Christian Rogers spoke on behalf on the eye bank and eye donation, while board member Brian



Shoppers examined displays, picked up literature about the eye bank, and scored free pencils and bookmarks at the Mall of America.

Salisbury, eye bank staff, and volunteers engaged the public and encouraged people to sign up on the donation registry.

In between these great events, the eye bank underwent a successful Eye Bank Association of America site inspection (see p. 5), and various staffers attended the Donate Life America Fall conference in New Orleans, the Eye Bank Association of America Fall Leadership Meeting in Las Vegas, a joint Eye Bank Association of America/American Association of Tissue Banks Quality Assurance Workshop in San Francisco, and numerous meetings via teleconference.

The Space Committee (eye bank staff, board members, and representatives from the University) devoted much time to finding the ideal new home for the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank, and many Lions and Lioness members contributed to a successful autumn. Our thanks go out to each and every one of them! 

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Receives Top Accreditation

The Minnesota Lions Eye Bank earned the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA)'s highest accreditation (three-year). The eye bank underwent a routine inspection in September and passed with flying colors.

The EBAA is a nationally-recognized accrediting body for eye banks, and their accreditation

meets or exceeds most state and national regulations. Eye bank professionals conduct site inspections of eye banks to evaluate adherence to EBAA Medical Standards and procedures. These standards ensure that member banks maintain the highest proficiency in eye tissue procurement, preservation, storage, and distribution. EBAA Medical Standards

are endorsed by the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

The Minnesota Lions Eye Bank staff's routine and unvarying focus on quality, safety, and service ensures that the eye bank stands ready for inspection at any time. A charter member of the 45-year-old EBAA, the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank has continuously held three-year accreditation.

Online Donor Registry Now Available


Minnesota has a new online donor registry: Donate Life Minnesota. The registry expands opportunities for people to specify themselves as organ, tissue, and eye donors. Previously, individuals could designate themselves as donors on their driver's licenses, on state identification cards, or by carrying donor cards. The advent of Donate Life Minnesota provides an additional and convenient way to securely document donation wishes at no cost. Paper sign-up is available for those who do not have internet access.

The eye bank and other organizations promoted the registry at the State Fair and the Mall of America and will continue to market the site. Please consider designating yourself a donor at www.DonateLifeMN.org.

Song Inspires Guests

The Minnesota Lions Eye Bank spring 2006 Donor and Family Recognition Service marked the world premier of "The Miraculous Gift of Sight," a song whose lyrics were written by the eye bank's own Vernna Anderson. Jennifer Kelley, pianist and vocalist, composed the music and performed the inspirational composition for more than 400 appreciative family members and friends of eye donors at the April event.

Vernna, retired from the Air Force, is a donor coordinator for the eye bank who is working toward his MBA. He regularly speaks with the family members of eye donors, volunteers in teen ministries, and wrote his poem as a tribute to the generosity of those who give in grief.

Jennifer, the mother of five, is leader of her church's worship team and a children's choir director. She plays guitar as well as keyboards. 



Songwriting duo Vernna Anderson and musician Jennifer Kelley.

The Miraculous Gift of Sight

*I was once in darkness,
But now I can see
Because of an everlasting blessing
From someone special who gave it to me.
I never met that person before.
I never even knew his or her name,
But I know of the joy and love
To their family they had to bring.
So at times when you search for meaning,
Let at least this one reason come to light...
You have brightened another person's life
By sharing your loved ones' vision in death,
You gave the miraculous gift of sight.
Thank you. I will always appreciate your
deeds.
Having loved and having given, you gave
unselfishly.*

Vernna Anderson, Jr.

Eye Bank Welcomes Community Liaison

The Minnesota Lions Eye Bank is pleased to introduce **Jodi Altenhofen** as its Community Services Liaison. A much-needed addition to the eye bank, Jodi will assist in many areas.


A primary focus of Jodi's efforts is outreach to donor families. She prepares and sends donor folios (containing a letter of thanks and a donor appreciation certificate) to families within 72 hours of eye donation. She also writes donation follow-up letters to the donor's next-of-kin that explain how the recovered eye tissue was used (transplant, research, education, etc.). She responds to donor family inquiries for additional information. On behalf of the eye bank staff, Jodi also recognizes the anniversary of each donor's death with a remembrance card. She coordinates correspondence between donor families and cornea recipients as well.

Jodi is responsible for planning and managing the bi-annual donor and family recognition services. The eye bank has offered these services since the spring of 2004, the most recent gathering taking place at the University of Saint Thomas. Past recognition services have been very successful and are a valuable addition to the eye bank's donor family support.

Jodi is also in charge of the Minnesota Lions Eye

Bank speakers bureau and volunteer services. The eye bank is often asked to present to civic and service organizations, at hospitals, churches and schools, and at Lions events.

Volunteer speakers can share personal stories of how eye donation restores sight and advances research and training. Volunteers assist with special events and a variety of administrative and office work as well.

With a background in psychology and an impressive work history with the University's Academic Health Center, Jodi is a valuable member of the eye bank team. 



Jodi Altenhofen shares information with shoppers at the Mall of America on National Donor Sabbath.

Eye Bank Staff Receive National Certifications

Training and certification are key to providing the highest quality services to donor families, recipients, surgeons, and researchers. In support of the eye bank's quality initiatives, several eye bank staff recently received national certifications.

Auditor Training

Wallis Cale, quality systems director for the eye bank, devoted three days to Internal Quality Auditor Training in Las Vegas and was awarded the registered Good Tissue Practices Internal Auditor certification from the American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB). To receive this certification, candidates must pass a comprehensive four-hour exam.


According to the Food and

Drug Administration (FDA), a quality program is an organization's comprehensive system for manufacturing and tracking human cellular and tissue-based products (e.g., corneas). Such a program is designed to prevent, detect, and correct deficiencies that may lead to increasing the risk of introducing, transmitting, or spreading communicable diseases. A good quality director is critical to the success of an eye bank.

"Wallis' interest in becoming a certified auditor is consistent with her enthusiasm and the dedication to high quality she demonstrates every day at the eye bank," said Jackie Malling, executive director. "She constantly inspires me to raise the standards in all areas of our eye bank."

Eye Bank Technician Training

Jason Merkel, eye bank training coordinator, became a Certified Eye Bank Technician (CEBT) in June. To attain CEBT status, a candidate must have six months eye-banking experience, demonstrate proficiency in the recovery of corneoscleral rims (witnessed and verified by a medical director and a technical trainer), and pass a 4-hour, 250-question written exam.

Jackie Malling, executive director, and Raylene Dale, technical director, were recently re-certified as CEBTs, and the eye bank is fortunate to have two other CEBTs on staff as well. The Eye Bank Association of America requires its member banks to have at least one CEBT in a supervisory role. 

Symposium Offers Wealth of Information for Guests

Thanksgiving for Vision is an observance that brings together people connected to the exciting sight-saving work occurring in Minnesota. One aspect of Thanksgiving for Vision is an educational symposium put on by University of Minnesota ophthalmology faculty. Five University doctors participated in the Symposium and enlightened us about new research, surgical techniques, and international outreach efforts. Here is just a taste.

DSAEK

A new surgery is changing the face of corneal transplants: Descemet's Stripping Automated Endothelial Keratoplasty or DSAEK. Lion Andrew Huang, M.D., M.P.H., explained how DSAEK differs from the standard full-thickness corneal transplant.

A cornea has five layers (epithelium, Bowman's membrane, stroma, Descemet's membrane, and endothelium). Instead of using all five layers for a cornea transplant, DSAEK surgery uses only the innermost layers of the donor cornea containing the endothelial cells and posterior stroma. This thin piece of tissue, slipped into the recipient's eye through a small incision on the side of the eye, simply adheres to the back surface of the old cornea. A smaller incision and no stitches allow the eye to heal more quickly.

DSAEK is not an option for all cornea disorders, but it is fast gaining popularity where suitable.

Macular Degeneration

2006 was a very big year for advances in the macular degeneration fight, reported Lion Tim Olsen, M.D. This is exciting news because Age-related Macular Degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss in the Western world, and one in ten persons aged 65 or older battles macular degeneration. Clearly, there is much work to do!

On the genomic (gene and chromosome) front, researchers have identified that gene mutation occurs in severe cases of macular degeneration. Ho hum? Not a bit. Finding out *what* happens leads to finding out *why* it happens leads to *stopping* it from happening. Genomic work is vitally important to all aspects of macular degeneration treatment (preventing, slowing, reversing).

Scientists are now certain that dry macular degeneration can be slowed by the ingestion of antioxidant vitamins (C, E, beta-carotene, and zinc-copper sup-

plements). **Important points to note:** No one should begin a vitamin or dietary supplement regime without consulting a physician, and pills are not a substitute for sensible living. Maintain a healthy lifestyle that includes a low-fat diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables. Do not smoke, exercise regularly, and protect your eyes from chronic sun exposure.

Prompt and early diagnosis is key to treating macular degeneration. Make a habit of doing a monthly self-check using an Amsler grid, and see your ophthalmologist if you notice anything out of the ordinary.

Amblyopia ("Lazy Eye")


Lion Gail Summers, M.D. gave an amblyopia update. Amblyopia is the most common cause of reduced vision in children. The condition typically occurs between birth and eight years of age and can be caused by misaligned eyes, an asymmetric refractive error, a cloudy cornea or a

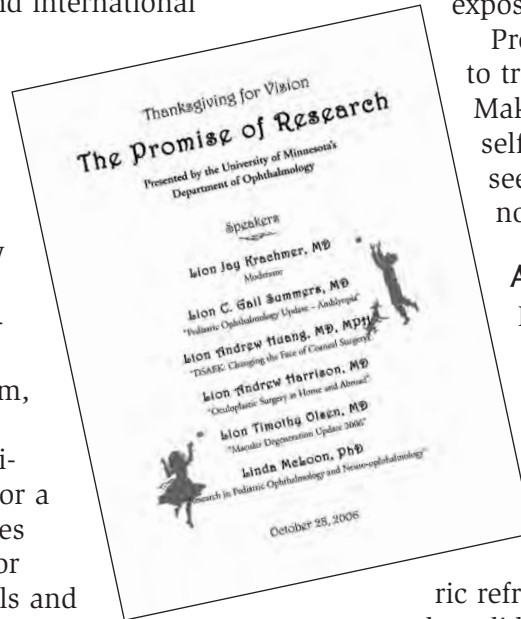
cataract, or by a lid that covers the eye. Amblyopia is usually reversible with early treatment.

An ophthalmologist will treat Amblyopia in several ways. Glasses may be prescribed to improve focusing or misalignment of the eyes. The strong or better-seeing eye may be patched (covered) to force the weak or lazy eye to pull its weight. Similarly, Atropine drops may be used to blur the vision of the good eye in order to force the weaker one to work.

Children who are treated before they reach seven years of age have the highest success rates, and early diagnosis and treatment is encouraged. However, older children can still benefit, and improvements are possible at any age with proper treatment.

Travels in India

Lion Andy Harrison, M.D., shared tales of his travels to Dharamsala, India, home to a large community of exiled Tibetans. The average yearly salary of these refugees is only \$200. They are unable to purchase land, cars, etc. without an Indian actually performing the transaction, and they have limited support by the international community. Dr. Harrison spent a rewarding week volunteering at an eye clinic in Dharamsala. The resources of this clinic are very limited, so he hopes to establish a regular partnership and system of support for the clinic. 



Minnesota Lions Eye Bank
University of Minnesota
MMC 493
420 Delaware Street SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mpls. MN
Permit No. 155

Return Service Requested

2007 Calendar

The Spectacle

is a publication of the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank sent to Minnesota Lions club presidents. Contact the editor with your questions and comments.

Articles are available in alternate formats and may be copied with attribution to the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank.

www.mnlionseyebank.org
Toll free: 1-866-88-SIGHT

Editor: Jennifer Marshall
Phone: 612-626-6081
E-mail: mader005@umn.edu

Associate Editor: Grecia Glass

Saturday, January 13

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Board of Directors Meeting

March

National Eye Donor Month

April

National Donate Life Month

Saturday, March 31

Lions Tours at the University (filled)

Friday and Saturday, June 22-23

Minnesota Lions High School All-Star Baseball Tournament

Saturday, September 22

Lions Tours at the University

Saturday, October 27

Thanksgiving for Vision