

# 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**



**Fall 2008**

## **Signatures for Sight** Still time to participate in campaign

We are now more than halfway through our *Signatures for Sight* challenge. Has your Lions club joined in the campaign yet? Please help us make sure there is a donated cornea for every American who needs a cornea transplant. Help eye banks meet the cornea needs of the world.

The *Signatures for Sight* campaign asks each member in your club to sign up four people on Minnesota's donor registry, [DonateLifeMN.org](http://DonateLifeMN.org). We track registrations through paper sign-ups or through paper confirmations of online sign-ups. If your club has no campaign supplies, ask for them today. Details can be found on the eye bank's Web site ([www.MnLionsEyeBank.org](http://www.MnLionsEyeBank.org)) or by calling 1-866-887-4448.

The campaign runs through the end of 2008 and provides pins, banner patches, and special recognition for clubs achieving the four registrations per member goal.

### **10,000** **Signatures for Sight**

For the first time in decades, a shortage of corneas for transplant is leaving people waiting for the chance to see. More than 100,000 Americans are in need of eye, tissue, or organ donations now. You can help by deciding to become an eye, tissue, and organ donor. Give the gift of life and sight.

#### **Donation Facts**

- One person can save or enhance up to 40 lives through eye, tissue, and organ donation.
- Anyone is a potential donor regardless of age, race, or medical history.
- Alcohol, smoking, or use of an eye donor. Poor vision, cancer, or age may not prevent donation.
- Eye donations are used for sight-saving cornea transplants, vision enhancing surgery, research, and education.
- Every year, more than 21,000 work-related eye injuries occur and thousands injure their eyes during leisure or daily living activities.
- More than 11,000 corneal transplants are performed in the United States annually.
- Eye donation helps professionally blind men, treatments for diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, interophthalmia, and glaucoma.
- Each day 18 people die while waiting for an organ transplant.
- More than 1 million people each year are impacted by tissue donation.
- A University of Minnesota study showed that 97% of Minnesota support eye, tissue, and organ donation as a generous and noble act.
- Most religions in the United States support and see eye, tissue, and organ donation as the final act of love and generosity toward others.

**Signatures** continued on page 2

Signatures continued from page 1

### Signatures for Sight tally

For those of you who are having Olympics withdrawal and need more than baseball's pennant race to sustain them, we have some *Signatures for Sight* preliminary data. To date, the top five signature-garnering clubs are:

- Sauk Centre Lions
- Pine Island Lions
- Ashby Lions
- Fairhaven Lions
- Princeton Lions

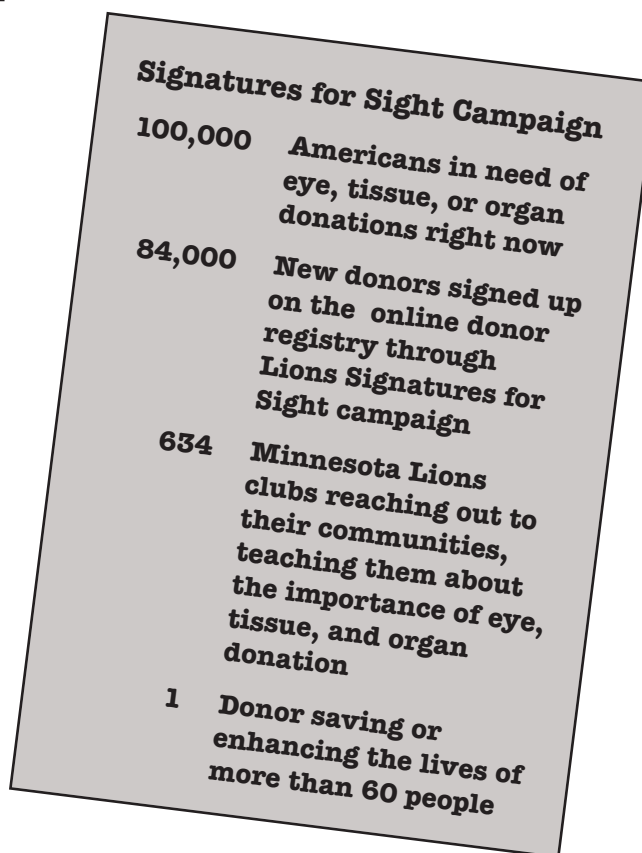
Many clubs are now participating, but we have room in the race for many more. Please help us in this very important cause.

### The promise of research

Eye donors are critical to many aspects of sight preservation in addition to cornea transplants. Donors for research and teaching purposes help new ophthalmologists and ophthalmic surgeons perfect their knowledge and techniques. Research eye tissue enables doctors to develop new treatment options for people with glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. Eyes donated for research will help scientists find ways to treat, cure, or prevent devastating diseases like macular degeneration.

### Just one person matters

One donor can save or enhance the lives of more than sixty people. When you consider donation for research, there is no way of calculating the number of lives touched—tomorrow or in future generations. Please spread the word. **Every donation counts.** 🐉



## Thanksgiving for Vision Right Around the Corner

### Lions club presidents encouraged to attend

Labor day has come and gone. For many it means no more white shoes. For the *Thanksgiving for Vision* planning committee it means the invitations are out!

Every Minnesota Lions president should have received an invitation by now for our October 25 celebration. But every president may not know what *Thanksgiving for Vision* is and why attending the celebration will be an autumn highlight. Here is a quick look at what to expect when you attend.

### Thanksgiving for Vision 101

*Thanksgiving for Vision* is held at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center. Registration and coffee begins at 9:00, and you are sure to make new friends if you do not run into many old ones.

Throughout the morning, you are encouraged to take part in the silent auction. At 10:00, the symposium starts. University of Minnesota ophthalmology doctors and researchers share information on current research, new surgery techniques, improved treatments.

Topics range from the remarkable world of pediatric ophthalmology to the latest in age-related macular degeneration research.

The lunch program follows, this year ably emceed by Lion Mike Molenda. A cornea recipient will tell her story, and a donor family will share their donation experiences. The program never fails to move.

Come celebrate the exciting sight-saving work occurring in Minnesota, thanks to our University and to our Lions. RSVP today! 🐉

# 2008-2009 Board Members Begin Term

## Six new directors join Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc. Board

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc. Board of Directors held their first meeting of the fiscal year on Saturday, July 12. Six new directors (marked with asterisks) were welcomed to the board.

Eye bank board members oversee Lions' funding for the eye bank and report on eye bank activities to the Lions of Minnesota. They promote the eye bank and other sight programs at the University of Minnesota to fellow Lions and to the community. In addition, directors regularly review grant requests from the Lions Children's Eye Clinic and the Lions Macular Degeneration Center.

### 5M1

PDG Lion Allen Fravert, Plainview  
PDG Lion Clair Mrotek, Spring Valley \*

### 5M2

Lion Jean Dahlke, Glencoe  
PDG Lion Marlys Meskan, Waterville \*

### 5M3

Lion Jim Fromm, Granite Falls \*  
PDG Lion Daryl "Barney" Olson, Jackson \*

### 5M4

PDG Lion Kent Beissel, Sauk Centre  
PDG Lion Jerry Miller, Alexandria

### 5M5

Lion Bob Becker, Sauk Centre \*  
Lion Brian Salisbury, Maple Grove

### 5M6

PDG Lion Lynn Farley, Stillwater  
Lion Jim Opp (Vice Chair), Stillwater

### 5M7

PDG Lion Larry Kounkel, Monticello  
Lion Tom Waldren, Forest Lake \*

### 5M8

PDG Lion Bob Hoofnagle, Sauk Rapids  
Lion Jennelle Shriver, Staples

### 5M9

Lion Vi Bergman, Frazee  
PDG Lion Ray Woods, Deerwood

### 5M10

Lion James Gorman, Blackduck  
Lion Sandy Palmer, Duluth

### 5M11

PDG Lion Richard Reger (Chair), Thief River Falls  
PDG Lion Jim Strandlie, Thief River Falls



**Front row:** Lions PDG Clair Mrotek, PDG Jerry Miller, PDG Frank Loreno (treasurer), PDG Kent Beissel, Brian Salisbury, PDG Jim Strandlie, Jean Dahlke. **Middle row:** Lions Jennifer Marshall (eye bank), DG Jim Mulroy (district governor liaison), PCC Richard Reger (chair), PDG Marlys Meskan, Sandy Palmer, Vi Bergman, Jennelle Shriver, PDG Ray Woods, PDG Bob Hoofnagle, PDG Mary Ferleman (secretary). **Back row:** Lions Jim Opp, PDG Lynn Farley, Mike Molenda (legal consultant), PDG Al Fravert, Tom Waldren, Jim Gorman, PDG Larry Kounkel, Jackie Malling (eye bank). **Not pictured:** Lions Bob Becker, Jim Fromm, and PDG Barney Olson.

# Spotlight on Volunteers

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank accomplishes its mission with the help of both staff members and generous volunteers. From recovering donor eyes to transporting eye tissue to helping out in the office, volunteers contribute every day to the sight-saving work of the eye bank.

## Finding Help in Unexpected Places

Volunteers are important to every nonprofit organization, and Minnesota Lions Eye Bank is fortunate to be affiliated with those best of all volunteers, the Lions. Now, the eye bank is also helped by volunteers in the general community. Guided by community liaison, Jodi Altenhofen, the eye bank's Volunteer Services program has grown from about a dozen volunteers to more than 80 strong in just two years!

Volunteers are a vital and important part of the



*eQuality volunteer Angie helps prepare for the fall Lions tour. Angie has been working with eQuality since 2002.*

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank team. They donate their time, services, and sometimes their finances. They do not expect, nor receive, pay or reimbursement.

### eQuality Volunteers

The eye bank has found steady volunteers in a group called eQuality. eQuality—Pathways to Potential—is an adult day program that serves Hennepin County developmentally-disabled adults. They offer vocational placement and support, educational opportunities, and community integration activities to help individuals with developmental disabilities maximize their potential and fully partici-

pate in life's opportunities.

eQuality volunteers regularly assist the eye bank in administrative projects and tasks ranging from assembly and labeling to filing.


Minnesota Lions Eye Bank was coupled with eQuality when the eye bank's call for volunteers was read by Cedar East Bethel Lions club secretary Lion Cindy Cunnien. Cindy works as a program coordinator for eQuality and approached Jodi about utilizing adults with disabilities. "The rest is history," said Cindy. "Jodi and the crew have welcomed us with such grace and generosity. They are helping us prove that when adults with disabilities are given a chance, they can succeed."

eQuality volunteers have now donated 125 hours to the eye bank. Each week adds more. "We are so grateful for the time and energy that the people from eQuality give to the eye bank mission," said Jodi. "I don't know that we have a more enthusiastic group of volunteers helping us. Our eQuality volunteers love working here, and we love having them."

### Community Volunteers

Once you start looking, you happen upon more and more people not just willing but eager to help. New volunteers come from youth groups, professional organizations, family and friends of staff members, and people with a personal connection to the eye bank. Some folks that have assisted the eye bank in the past year are:

- Delta Gamma Sorority
- Girl Scouts
- Bangu Tsunami Futbol Club
- Cornea recipients
- Donor families
- University of Minnesota students

We salute our volunteers! 



*Kyra, a six-year eQuality veteran, helps with an assembly project.*

# Spotlight on Volunteers

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, especially on an ongoing basis, please contact Lion Jodi Altenhofen, community services liaison, at 612-624-0446 (toll-free 1-866-887-4448) or at magnu007@umn.edu. As Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much!"

## Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Nominee Peggy Hill Receives Award

When the call went out for the Eye Bank Association of America's (EBAA) Gift of Sight Award, Minnesota Lions Eye Bank hospital liaison and lead procurement technician, RaChelle Gruba, immediately thought of nurse Peggy Hill, the Lead House Administrator and chair of the Donation Resource Team at MeritCare Health System in Fargo, North Dakota. RaChelle converted thought to action and nominated Peggy Hill, R.N., for the prestigious award.

Peggy tirelessly supports donation for transplant, for educational purposes, and for research that brings new cures and treatments to those with eye disorders. She works daily to ensure that everyone has the option to donate.

"Peggy is very dedicated to the donation program at MeritCare Health Center and has been instrumental in increasing awareness of eye donation in her region," said RaChelle. "In conjunction with our eye bank, Peggy spearheads an annual National Eye Donor Month awareness campaign that reaches over 7000 MeritCare Associates during the month of


March. The campaign highlights personal stories by associates who have been touched by eye donation or who have received the Gift of Sight."

An ideal candidate for the Gift of Sight Award? The EBAA thought so, and, at their annual meeting in June, they presented Peggy Hill with the 2008 Gift of Sight Award, an honor reserved for professionals who work closely with the eye banking community and demonstrate significant support of eye and corneal donation.

A registered nurse, Peggy has worked for MeritCare Health System for more than 35 years. She has led MeritCare in developing and maintaining donation policies and procedures and has built strong partnerships with all donation organizations. Peggy's efforts greatly contributed to MeritCare receiving the Health Resources Services Administration's (HRSA) medal of honor three years in a row.

Peggy ensures that MeritCare meets requirements by analyzing pre-referral, approach, authorization, and donation rates. She facilitates changes in the donation program, in documentation, and in education for continued success. MeritCare has nearly eliminated pre-referrals and staff approaches with Peggy's assistance. She continuously helps other staff with referrals and follows up herself with methods of improvement.

Peggy has been extremely dedicated to the donation program at MeritCare Health Center and has been instrumental in increasing awareness of eye donation in the MeritCare service area. Through her commitment to eye donation, Peggy has helped MeritCare Health Center nearly triple its number of eye donors.

Donation is a partnership of donors, family members, health care personnel, funeral directors, and recovery agencies. Donation organizations need advocates like Peggy Hill to ensure that donation is an option for all. We are proud and grateful to partner with nurse Peggy Hill. 



Fargo area hospital liaison and lead procurement tech RaChelle Gruba (left) and eye bank executive director Lion Jackie Malling (right) flank 2008 Gift of Sight winner, Peggy Hill, R.N.

# Lions All-Star Baseball

## Tournament has long and exciting history

Every year, the Lions Children's Eye Clinic at the University of Minnesota benefits from our national pastime—baseball. Now in its 34th year, the Minnesota Lions All-Star Baseball Tournament annually raises about \$20,000 for the clinic to help with research on children's eye diseases. To date, more than \$334,000 has been donated to the Children's Eye Clinic.

The Lions All-Star Tournament draws on the most talented baseball players in the state. Eighty young men from the pool of graduating seniors are nominated by members of the Minnesota High School Baseball Coaches Association to play in the four-team round-robin tournament. The Minnesota Lions Eye Bank and the Minnesota High School Baseball Coaches Association co-sponsor the tournament.

In one weekend, baseball coaches and scouts from midwestern colleges and universities and professional teams see the best young baseball players Minnesota has to offer. Small town players, many of whom are never observed by scouts at their home town games, may come home to an answering machine of scholarship offers. In the 25-year history of the Lions High School All Star Baseball Tournament, 19 players have gone on to major league careers. Tournament alumni Kent Hrbek, Tim Laudner, Jim Eisenreich and Terry Steinbach all wear World Series rings.

If the tournament existed only for the kids, that would be enough, but the list of tournament beneficiaries is broader than that. The Lions of Minnesota enjoy an association with a top quality event; the public is treated to a weekend of excellent baseball; and players become familiar with the work of the Lions when they visit the University of Minnesota to learn about the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank and the Lions Children's Eye Clinic.


Tournament participants eat all of their meals together and stay in the same hotel. After a weekend of baseball, a real camaraderie develops. That camaraderie can continue well after the tournament.

Minnesota Twins Joe Mauer and Glen Perkins, who roomed together at the 2001 All-Star Tournament, are once again roommates, now as major leaguers!

Lions members statewide can support



the tournament by purchasing tickets, buying ads in the program (ads are the single greatest source of tournament revenue), or volunteering at the games. Volunteers are needed to park cars and to sell programs, t-shirts, and tickets.

At the heart of this tournament is a commitment to the Lions Children's Eye Clinic and a love for baseball. A lot of Lions share that. 

# Minnesota Lions Eye Bank 2007 Statistics Are Out

The year 2007 was groundbreaking for the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank (MLEB). As has happened for the last three years, our donor numbers have increased. Our technical staff recovered, prepared, and distributed a record 1,206 corneas for transplant, a rise of 17% over last year! Of even greater interest, however, is the change in the *type* of transplants being done with MLEB tissue.

Five years ago, our eye bank primarily provided tissue for three types of surgeries: standard penetrating keratoplasty (PK), keratolimbal allograft (KLAL), and anterior lamellar (Lam). In 2005, Minnesota Lions Eye Bank began preparing and distributing tissue for endothelial keratoplasty (EK) surgeries as well. This surgery swiftly gained popularity and, by the end of 2007, 30 percent of the cornea tissue distributed was for EK surgeries.

Our eye bank experience reflects a national trend, which showed a 133 percent increase in tissue provided for endothelial keratoplasty last year. In 2006, U.S. eye banks provided 6,027 tissues for EK procedures, but a year later that number skyrocketed to 14,159. Surgeons are fortunate that a handful of eye banks, like ours, quickly and effectively responded to the need for this highly-specialized eye tissue.

PK	Standard full-thickness cornea transplant
KLAL	Transplant of the outer ring of the cornea, including the stem cells
Lam	Transplant of just the front layers of the cornea, most commonly used to treat keratokonus or for repairs
EK	Transplant of just the back layers of the cornea

## 2007 Statistics

Eye Donors	1,291	PK Procedures	770
Eyes/Corneas Received	2,571	Anterior Lamellar Procedures	61
Corneas Provided for Transplant	1,206	EK Procedures	323
Eyes Provided for Research or Training	1,104	KLAL Procedures	52
Corneas Placed Regionally	69 %	Sclera Procedures	50
MLEB Corneal Transplant Success Rate	95 %		

## Tissue Transport Note

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank wants to once again let tissue transporters know that procedure changes have decreased the number of volunteer tissue transports around the state, by both State Patrol officers and Lions.

Tissue transports are indeed down from when the program first started in 2004. The reasons range from a change in eye tissue procurement methods to an increase in staff recovery technicians vs. volunteers. For particulars on all that is happening with volunteer tissue transport, please contact your regional transportation coordinator or call the eye bank and ask to have a detailed letter sent to you.

Although tissue transports are fewer, Minnesota Lions Eye Bank still has a need for volunteer transporters and would not be as successful or as cost efficient without our volunteers. We greatly value your support and are so grateful that Lions serve.

Thank you for the important work you have done, and continue to do, for the eye bank. ☺

## Donor Sabbath 2009

From November 14-16, many faith communities across the country will observe National Donor Sabbath. Donor Sabbath is a time to recognize the invaluable gift that donors and their families make to the health and well-being of cornea, organ, and tissue transplant patients and to those awaiting transplants to improve or save their lives.

Late September, the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank will mail out Donor Sabbath materials to Minnesota churches and synagogues. Please encourage your own faith community to participate. They can print an article in the weekly bulletin or newsletter; dedicate a sermon to the topic of donation; distribute Minnesota Donation Registry sign-up sheets; or have brochures on donation available to visitors.

More than 40,000 people received the gift of sight last year through cornea transplants and vision-enhancing surgeries. Countless others were helped by eye tissue donated for research and education. We hope that more Minnesotans will learn about the wonderful benefits of eye, tissue, and organ donation during this year's National Donor Sabbath. ☺

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Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Minneapolis, MN  
Permit No. 155

## 2008 Calendar

### The Spectacle

is a publication of Minnesota Lions Eye Bank sent to Minnesota Lions club presidents and other Lions leaders. 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](http://www.MnLionsEyeBank.org)  
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*Saturday, October 4*

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc. Board Meeting - Saint Cloud

*Saturday, October 25*

Thanksgiving for Vision - Brooklyn Center

*Sunday, October 26*

Donor & Family Recognition Service - Saint Paul

*November 14-16*

Donor Sabbath