

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



Spring 2008

Signatures for Sight

Lions campaign will help increase eye, tissue, and organ donations

One hundred thousand Americans are in need of eye, organ, and tissue donations right now. Each day, 100 people are added to the national transplant waiting list, and there are too few corneas to restore the sight of all those who are in need of transplants. Lions can help.

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank is asking Lions, champions of the blind and sight-impaired for more than 80 years, to participate in our *Signatures for Sight* campaign. With your help, we can make sure there is a donor cornea for every American who needs one. One day eye banks will be able to meet the cornea needs of the world.

The Campaign

The *Signatures for Sight* campaign simply asks each Lions member to sign up four people on the Minnesota donor registry (www.DonateLifeMN.org). The campaign runs through the end of 2008 and provides pins, banner patches, and special recognition for clubs achieving an average of four registrations per club member. Donor registration is easy.

Signatures continued on page 2

Signatures continued from page 1

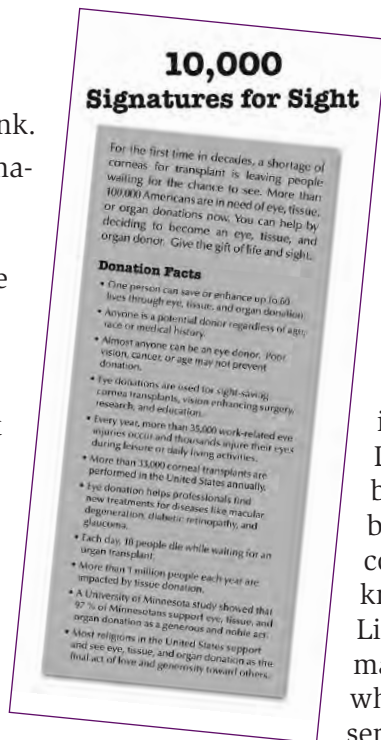
- Minnesota Lions Eye Bank supplies clubs with registry forms.
- Forms are completed by new registrants.
- Forms are mailed to Minnesota Lions Eye Bank.
- Eye bank submits information to state donor registry.
- Confirmation packets are mailed to registrants.

Lions who wish to sign up online can mail in a confirmation form to receive credit toward the campaign.

Widespread benefits

Lives are saved or dramatically improved when people say “yes” to donation by legally registering themselves as donors. An increase in the number of “designated donors” (persons who document their intents to become donors) equals an increase in the donation rate. And the more eye donors, the more

opportunities we have to fight blindness through cornea transplants, research, and medical education.



Lions benefit as well. The *Signatures for Sight* campaign can increase Lions visibility in the community. It can increase interest in Lions membership by broadening the community’s knowledge of Lionism and the many ways in which Lions serve.

Contact and supplies

Signatures for Sight registration sheets and fact flier can be ordered from Minnesota Lions

Eye Bank by contacting Lion Jennifer Marshall at 612-626-6081 (toll-free, 1-866-88-SIGHT) or mader005@umn.edu. 📧

How to Succeed

Clubs can incorporate donation and registration information into their community events (White Cane Days, pancake and waffle breakfasts, chicken dinners, etc.)

Clubs can participate in school and community functions, set up an information table or schedule a speaker

Clubs can provide information about *Signatures for Sight* campaign to local news media outlets.

Clubs can have donor family members or transplant recipients speak about their personal experience to news media representatives or at community or public events. (Minnesota Lions Eye Bank can help identify donor family members or recipients who are willing to speak or be interviewed.)

Eye Banks Participate in Cornea Donor Study Results show older corneas suitable for transplant

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank participated in a 5-year study funded by the National Eye Institute (one of the National Institutes of Health), that demonstrated that corneal transplants using tissue from older donors have similar rates of survival to those using tissue from younger donors. The study supports Minnesota Lions Eye Bank’s own practice of accepting corneas for transplant from donors up to 75 years of age.

“The five-year transplant success rate was the same — 86 per-

cent — for transplants performed with corneas from donors ages 12 to 65 years and from donors ages 66 to 75,” stated the study published in the April issue of *Ophthalmology*.

The United States cornea donor supply has been fairly stable for the past ten years, with supply adequately meeting demand. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration implemented additional regulations in June 2007, and these regulations are already adversely affecting the supply of donated corneas. The study is,

therefore, timely.

“Surgeons and patients now have scientific evidence that older donor corneas are suitable for transplantation,” said Edward J. Holland, M.D., Minnesota Lions Eye Bank associate medical director and co-chair of the study. “Further, when corneas are readily available, transplant procedures can be scheduled more efficiently, allowing both surgeons and patients to plan for them.”

Additional studies measuring cornea age and transplant success rates are ongoing. 📧

Let's Play Ball!

Lions All-Star Baseball Tournament needs your support

Eighty Minnesota boys, just out of high school, will compete in the 34th annual Minnesota Lions All-Star Baseball Tournament. This fierce and entertaining state competition of north, south, east metro, and west metro teams takes place on **Friday and Saturday, June 20-21, 2008**, at the Chaska Municipal Stadium. The event benefits the Lions Children's Eye Clinic at the University of Minnesota.

Chaska is a beautiful baseball park, and you can't beat a warm June day for a club outing. Please consider attending the tournament to show your support of these young athletes. What fun to see the likes of Joe Mauer, Terry Steinbach, Jim Eisenreich, or Tim Laudner (all tournament alumni) on the cusp of stardom!

Lions can purchase tickets at a pregame cost of \$3.00 for the adult tickets and \$2.00 for students and seniors. (Costs at the gate are slightly higher.)

For more information or tickets, contact PDG Lion Bob Wharton at 763-784-5040. Thank you for your continued support!



Cornea Recipient Gives Encore Performance

Christina Granquist is now almost 17 years of age, but when she was first introduced to the University of Minnesota's Lions Children's Eye Clinic, she was only 14 hours old! Born with Peters' anomaly, a condition in which the eyes do not fully develop before birth, Christina had scarred corneas, cataracts, and

glaucoma. She was a cornea transplant recipient before she was a month old.

Christina is a familiar face to many Minnesota Lions. She was first introduced to us at the 1993 University of Minnesota Lions Research Building dedication. Her parents spoke

at the ceremony, expressing how much the Lions, the University, and the Children's Eye Clinic meant to their family. Then it was two-year-old Christina's turn. She brought down the house with her three word speech: "Thank you, Lions."

Christina addressed the Lions



Betty Walen, eye bank volunteer and cornea recipient, with Christina Granquist at District Governors-Elect banquet on March 3, 2008, in Roseville, Minn.

again just this year at the District Governors-Elect banquet, co-sponsored by the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc. and the Lions MD5M Hearing Foundation. Now a poised young lady about to enter college, Christina is every bit as beautiful and charming as she was 15 years ago. And she is still just as grateful for the support of the Lions.



Christina Granquist at the University of Minnesota's Lions Research Building dedication on June 30, 1993.



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.

Funeral Directors Honored for Support of Eye Bank

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank recognizes seven funeral directors for reaching milestones in their work as volunteer eye recovery technicians for the eye bank.

Nathan Stephens

Redwood Valley Funeral Home, Redwood Falls
50 recoveries through 2007

Terry T. Wiedl

Miller-Carlin Funeral Home, Saint Cloud
25 recoveries through 2006

Steven J. Almlie

Almlie Funeral Home, Tracy
10 recoveries through 2006

Andrew O. Johnson

Daniel Funeral Home, Saint Cloud
10 recoveries through 2007

Kevin D. Tebeest

Anderson Funeral Home, Montevideo
10 recoveries through 2007



Raylene Dale, Minnesota Lions Eye Bank technical director, and funeral director Nathan Stephens at the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association Convention on May 6, 2008.



Funeral director Andrew O. Johnson and Raylene Dale, Minnesota Lions Eye Bank technical director, at the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association Convention in Minneapolis, Minn.

Steven J. Wardrip

Halvorson-Johnson Funeral Home, Brainerd
10 recoveries through 2007

John E. Zaharia

Zaharia Family Funeral Services, Truman
10 recoveries through 2006

Funeral directors have played an important part in the recovery of donor eyes since 1975 when state legislation authorized eye bank trained funeral directors to surgically remove donor eyes. Since that time, funeral directors have recovered more than 10,000 donor eyes for the eye bank.

Volunteer recovery technicians are trained by the eye bank and certified annually. They are integral to the work and success of the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank.

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!"

Volunteer Eye Recovery Technicians

Volunteer eye recovery technicians are trained and certified to perform eye removals in areas of the state where the eye bank does not have staff technicians.

The following volunteers are certified eye recovery technicians for Minnesota Lions Eye Bank:

Denise Baker, Elbow Lake
Sarah E. Behrns, Waseca
Mark J. Benson, Saint Cloud
Michael Bjerum, Mountain Lake
Steven Boser, Pierz
Melanie Brolin, Royalton
Timothy M. Carlin, Fosston
Larry A. Dahl, Dawson
Karey A. Gerads, Saint Cloud
David J. Goplin, New Ulm
Timothy Hall, Bemidji
Kevin J. Hammond, Saint Cloud
Andrew O. Johnson, Saint Cloud
Paul Kapsner, Little Falls
Daphne Karpan, Alexandria
Shawn T. Kirby, Le Sueur
Hans Larson, Perham
Peter C. Macho, New Ulm
Terry J. Nelson, Little Falls
Bruce H. Savoy, New Ulm
Jeffrey S. Schmucker, New Ulm
Joseph G. Schuller, Bertha
Steve C. Sheets, Perham
Durin L. Smith, Coleraine
Terry G. Smith, Willmar
Nathan Stephens, Redwood Falls
Kevin D. Tebeest, Montevideo
Steven J. Wardrip, Brainerd
Joseph S. Waslaski, Bemidji
Terry T. Wiedl, Saint Cloud
Nicholas G. Zillmer, Crosby

Soccer Team Helps Eye Bank



Fifteen young ladies associated with the Bangu Tsunami Futbol Club (BTFC) came to the eye bank in late March to assemble guest packets for the eye bank's spring Donor and Family Recognition Service. Guided by Patty Rich, eye donor daughter and soccer mom, the energetic team members completed 600 packets in four hours.

The eye bank thanks the following BTFC members:

Bianca Diaz	Lauren Nash
Tori Fuglister	Maddie Nelson
Sophie Gelbmann	Sarah Rich
Mallory Getchell	Jill Richgels
Rachel Gratz	Rebecca Roberts
Kaelyn Korte	Rachael VanKeulen
Mackenzie Lewis	Hannah Werth
Lauren Miller	



Volunteers from the Bangu Tsunami Futbol Club.

Eye Bank Adds Thief River Falls Team

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank now has six new eye recovery technicians serving the Thief River Falls area. These technicians bring a variety of great talents to their work from backgrounds in nursing, nursing instruction, and surgery.

The new team covers a 100-mile radius that includes Minnesota health care facilities in Ada, Bagley, Bemidji, Cass Lake, Baudette, Crookston, Hallock, Mahnomen, Roseau, and Warren. They cover North Dakota hospitals in Fargo and Grand Forks as well.

The eye bank added staff recovery technicians to Minnesota's northwest corner in order to increase eye donation opportunities for those who live in the area and to raise the level of service given to health care staff at the affected hospitals. 🐾



Back row left to right: Nancy Thompson, R.N.; Stacy Wightman, R.N.; Kim Decowski, R.N. Front Row left to right: Mei Sather, N.P. and Qian (Iris) Zhou. Not pictured is Eric Groslie.

Eye Bank Helps Foundation Fighting Blindness

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank recently helped the Foundation Fighting Blindness with a retinal degeneration research study. The eye bank recovered the eyes of a registered Foundation Fighting Blindness donor and sent them to the Foundation's Histopathology Center to help with their retina research.

The Foundation Fighting Blindness studies many retinal disorders such as macular degeneration and retinitis pigmentosa in order to understand better the causes and consequences of retinal diseases. They are helped by donated eyes.

Persons who suffer vision loss because of degenerative retinal diseases can register to be Foundation Fighting Blindness donors, and eye banks nationwide work with the Foundation to fulfill donors' wishes. 🐾

Cornea Transplants on Rise

The Eye Bank Association of America reports that the number of cornea transplants performed in the United States rose by 16 percent last year.

In 2006, 33,962 cornea transplants occurred in this country compared with 39,391 transplants reported for the year 2007. More startling than the general increase in transplants, however, is the rise in a particular type of cornea transplant surgery—endothelial keratoplasty or EK. EK surgeries rose 133 percent in 2007!

While a standard cornea transplant (or PK for penetrating keratoplasty) involves the entire thickness of the cornea, an EK

transplant uses only the inner layers of the cornea. More surgeons are now performing EK surgeries, and more eye banks are offering the specialized eye tissue needed for EK surgery.

One reason for the EK leap in popularity is that the surgery provides some decided advantages for the patient. EK eliminates the need for multiple sutures on the cornea. (A standard transplant can involve 16 or more.) Having fewer stitches reduces the risk of rupturing the eye globe; lowers the risk of infection; and lowers the likelihood of astigmatism.

EK provides a new and more conservative surgical approach for patients whose corneal dis-

ease involves only the endothelial cells. While not everyone can be helped by an EK transplant, about 40% of corneal transplant patients do meet the criteria.

Minnesota Lions Eye Bank began providing EK eye tissue to surgeons in March of 2007, thanks to a generous grant from the Lions that provided for equipment, training, and additional staff.

The demand for EK tissue continues to grow, and the number of cornea transplants should again rise in 2008. Eye banks are working hard to ensure the needed eye tissue will be available for cornea transplant patients. 🐾



University of Minnesota Doctor Visits Zimbabwe Performs rare cornea transplant

Mercy Garanga, a young woman from Zimbabwe had been blind since she was a 10-year-old school girl. She has an inherited cornea condition called keratoglobus, a

diffuse thinning of the cornea, with scarring, that left her extremely nearsighted and light sensitive. Mercy was able to read, but only if she held a book inches from her face. Although she had glasses to correct the nearsightedness, she found them of little help. She needed the arm of her husband to safely walk along the rocky, uneven roads and paths typical of rural Zimbabwe.

One treatment option for keratoglobus is a cornea transplant. Unfortunately, cornea transplants are rarely, if ever, done in Zimbabwe. The collapse of Zimbabwe's health system, the extremely high prevalence of AIDS in the country, and the lack of reliable eye banks all make a transplant very difficult to come by. But Mercy was luckier than most. In January 2008, Lion Stephen Christiansen, M.D., a pediatric ophthalmologist from the University of Minnesota, visited Karanda Mission Hospital, the bush hospital in Mercy's district. With Lion Steve was a donated cornea from the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank. The cornea was intended for Mercy.


Lion Steve replaced Mercy's diseased left cornea with the healthy donor cornea in a cornea transplant operation, the first cornea transplant ever performed at

Karanda hospital. The operation was successful, and by the ninth post-operative day, Mercy's vision measured 20/80 without the benefit of glasses.

Mercy was elated with her improved vision. The dramatic change in her sight and situation so excited her that she told Lion Steve she now wants to learn how to drive! As it is unlikely that she or her pastor husband will ever be able to afford a car in the shattered

Zimbabwean economy, Lion Steve found her optimism both amusing and inspiring. He hopes to perform a similar operation in Mercy's right eye next year.

Blindness is a worldwide concern, but problems multiply in countries where poverty, poor sanitation, war, and civic

unrest have left a legacy of eye trauma. While the most common cause of bilateral blindness in Zimbabwe is cataracts, the leading cause of monocular blindness is corneal scarring, often the result of trauma or infectious corneal ulcers. The country's need for specialized eye care and for donated cornea tissue is tremendous. 



Mercy Garanga, a young woman from Zimbabwe, Africa, after she received her cornea transplant.



A surgery team, headed by Lion Stephen Christiansen, M.D., replace Mercy's diseased cornea with a healthy donated cornea.

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2008 Calendar

The Spectacle

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

www.MnLionsEyeBank.org
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Friday-Saturday, June 20-21
Lions All-Star Baseball Tournament - Chaska

Friday-Saturday, July 11-12
Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Inc. Board Training & Meeting - Twin Cities

Wednesday, July 30
Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Open House - Saint Paul

Saturday, September 13
Lions Tours - Minneapolis

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