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LionsGiftofSight.org

Dear Lions Gift of Sight Friends,

We wish to make you aware of a development in the eye donation environment in Minnesota. In January 2018, another donation organization announced its intention to compete with Lions Gift of Sight for eye donations in Minnesota. This organization shared that they intend to send all of the eye and cornea donations they procure to Seattle-based SightLife where they will subsequently be processed and distributed by SightLife's for-profit surgical arm, CorneaGen (recently rebranded from SightLife Surgical).

We at Lions Gift of Sight have grave concerns about the effects of this plan on the future of eye banking and the advancement of ophthalmology research. We are also dismayed about the commodification of human tissue by using a for-profit company for corneal processing and placement.

I am notifying you as you have always been a strong supporter of this eye bank and of Lionism. The partnership between Lions Gift of Sight, Lions clubs of Minnesota, and the University of Minnesota is 58 years strong. We are an outstanding and world-respected eye bank that focuses on our local community. Eye donations that come into Lions Gift of Sight are evaluated here, eye tissue is prepared here for surgeons, and the majority of corneas we recover for transplant are placed here in Minnesota.

We are asking that your family continue your dedicated advocacy of this eye bank. We hope that, if you are approached by another organization to be a speaker about eye donation or corneal transplants, that you continue to pledge partnership with Lions Gift of Sight.

Please contact me with any questions. I have enclosed an information packet that demonstrates why we feel Lions Gift of Sight is the best option to serve Minnesota's eye donation needs. Thank you for your support!

Warmly,

Your Minnesota Lions Vision Foundation Directors



Lions Gift of Sight has been helping physicians and scientists restore sight for more than 60 years.

With 60 years of eye banking experience, Lions Gift of Sight is recognized as a world-class eye bank and valued by surgeons and researchers alike. Our innovation has produced the corneal storage solution that revolutionized eye banking. Our technicians have perfected eye tissue preparation techniques that result in more successful corneal transplants. Our dedication to research has advanced the treatments available to patients suffering from macular degeneration and other eye diseases.

We are dedicated to our mission to restore sight through eye donation. We are knowledgeable about our profession. And we are expert in the services we provide. Our focus is on one thing and one thing alone: working with donors and their families to procure eyes and corneas for transplant, research, and education.

Eye donation can produce miracles, and eye banks will continue to be true partners with surgeons and researchers in the shared goal to eradicate blindness.





Accomplishments and Benefits of Lions Gift of Sight

- Not-for-profit serving Minnesota, North Dakota, and Western Wisconsin for more than 60 years in partnership with Minnesota Lions Clubs and the University of Minnesota
- Experienced local staff with excellent response times
- Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) accredited
- Certified Eye Bank Technicians on staff
- 100% of ocular surgical requests filled with local patients as priority
- 1,496 corneas distributed for transplant in 2019
- Greater than 95% success rate of corneal transplants with Lions Gift of Sight corneas
- Known for quality. EBAA trains eye bank staff from U.S. and Canada on tissue evaluation at Lions Gift of Sight
- Received award from the National Eye Institute for "Excellence in specular microscopy imaging" for study in which 23 eye banks participated
- Full Service Eye Bank:
 - Initial Screening
 - Recovery
 - Final Eligibility Determination
 - Processing (surgical refining of tissue)
 - Distribution
- Compassionate staff caring for donors and donor families during and after donation
- Devoted to the service of Lions Clubs International, with more than 20 staff members in Lions clubs

Lions Gift of Sight

Surgeon Testimonials

Lions Gift of Sight primarily works with corneal surgeons in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota, and also provides eye tissue to selected surgeons elsewhere in the United States and overseas when domestic needs are met.

// I have exclusively used the MN Lions Eye Bank since 1988. I am grateful for the professionalism, service, and concern that the staff at the eye bank brings to the medical community. As the only corneal specialist in Northern Minnesota, I am acutely aware of the positive impact of the MN Lions Eye Bank on my region. The lives of many thousands of Minnesotans have benefited from corneal transplantation, and the ability to perform this operation hinges directly on the expertise of the MN Lions Eye Bank.

*Daniel N. Skorich, M.D.
Essentia Health Duluth Clinic*

// I've been working with the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank now for over 25 years and have admired their innovation, dedication to quality, and customer service.

*David R. Hardten, M.D.
Minnesota Eye Consultants*

// The staff at Minnesota Lions Eye Bank have been very proactive, responsive, and conscientious in the way they have processed and handled corneal tissue to optimize patient's vision. I have many patients who have benefited and who would be legally or functionally blind without Minnesota Lions Eye Bank services.

*Anthony F. Novak, M.D.
Eye Surgery & Laser Center*

// I use the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank for my transplant tissue needs because I know the tissue I receive will be top quality and processed well. I also know that the staff will be responsive to any concerns I may have in a timely manner. Because of my unique tissue needs, which include keratolimbal allograft tissue, corneas for keratoprosthesis surgeries, corneas for pediatric transplants, and corneas for research, I need a flexible and reliable eye bank like Minnesota Lions Eye Bank to meet all my demands.

*Joshua Hou, M.D.
Medical Director, Lions Gift of Sight*

Lions Gift of Sight

Research Testimonials

Those in the field of ophthalmology and sight restoration understand that the key to eradicating blindness worldwide is research. While not all U.S. eye banks participate in research, Lions Gift of Sight has done so since the beginning, and, as early as 1960, eye tissue from University of Minnesota Hospital donors was benefiting both the transplant and research communities. **We help people today, we help people tomorrow.**

- “ Minnesota Lions Eye Bank, now Lions Gift of Sight, has been the preeminent source of eye tissue, procuring and placing high quality specimens with internationally recognized customers.

*Paul A. Sieving, M.D., Ph.D., Director
National Eye Institute*

- “ The quality of Lions Gift of Sight eye tissue and service has been a major factor for the success of our research.

*Michael P. Fautsch, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Research Chair
Department of Ophthalmology, Mayo Clinic*

- “ Donated eyes hold the answer to many disease conditions. Lions Gift of Sight recognized this a long time ago and is one of the few eye banks to consistently provide eye tissue for research.

*Erik van Kuijk, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Chair
Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Neurosciences, University of Minnesota*

- “ Lions Gift of Sight staff are excellent in understanding my research requirements and offer the type of tissue needed in a timely manner.

*Sanjay V. Patel, M.D., Professor and Chair
Department of Ophthalmology, Mayo Clinic*

- “ Lions Gift of Sight provides excellent service in supplying eye tissue for research along with exceptional fundus photographs.

*Deborah A. Ferrington, Ph.D., Professor
Elaine and Robert Larson Endowed Vision Research Chair
2003–2004 Fesler-Lampert Chair in Aging Research
Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Neurosciences, University of Minnesota*

- “ The experienced staff of Lions Gift of Sight has been attentive to our tissue requests. We consider Lions Gift of Sight an indispensable resource for our research.

*Bradley D. Gelfand, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Ophthalmology
Center for Advanced Vision Science, University of Virginia*

Lions Gift of Sight

Friend Testimonials

Lions Gift of Sight (formerly Minnesota Lions Eye Bank) works closely with donor family members, corneal transplant recipients, and volunteers from the community to promote donation and raise awareness of the benefits that spring from eye donation. We are proud to hold many special individuals in our circle of friends.

// My daughter received a cornea from Lions Gift of Sight in 2007. 10 years have passed, and we are still strongly connected with the staff there. Not only did they help restore my daughter's eyesight, they've become a part of our family.

*Candice
Mother of Cornea Recipient*

// The corneal graft I received 21 years ago is truly indescribable. I am eternally gratefully as my transplant has been and continues to be successful. I cannot thank Lions Gift of Sight enough for giving me an opportunity to live a normal life. My gift of sight is the result of the dedication and commitment of this wonderful organization. The sacrifices of the surgeons, researchers, and staff does not go unnoticed. As a recipient I fully understand the importance of this organization and the wonderful things they are doing to restore vision. To Lions Gift of Sight, thank you for your generous donation and the continued gift of sight.

*Paige
Cornea Recipient at Age 6*

// In my mind, and in my heart, Lions Gift of Sight and the University of Minnesota took care of my mom when I no longer could. I was prepared, as best as I could be, to follow my mom's end of life wishes. What I never could have anticipated, is the tremendous feeling of hope and healing that her gift to advancements in ophthalmology research would bring to our entire family.

*Patty
Daughter of Eye Donor Monna*

// When you can't see and then suddenly you can, you want to help others. I saw what the Lions had done for me, so I decided to become a Lion to pay them back. Lions members give up their free time to make the world a better place.

*Brian
Lion, Gift of Sight Volunteer, Corneal Transplant Recipient, and Father of Eye Donor*

// I have indicated on my license for years my choice to be a donor. However, I never knew what it meant until my daughter was a donor. There isn't enough words to express our gratitude for what Lions Gift of Sight (formally MN Lions Eye Bank) has done to make the worst day of our life 5 years ago more peaceful every day since.

*Corinne
Mother of Eye Donor Lizzie*

// The cornea transplant I received because of the Lions Eye Bank gave me my life back. Things I never thought would be possible are happening, and I am looking at a world with new possibilities.

*Jessica
Cornea Recipient at Age 13*

// This year marks my 22nd year post-transplant with corneal donor tissue from Minnesota Lions Eye Bank. I am eternally grateful to their organization and for my surgeon choosing the absolute best organization to provide me with the gift of vision. The absolute care and professionalism, starting with the privacy and concern of the donor through the harvesting and preservation process of the tissue to the actual surgical procedure itself, requires an amazing amount of dedication and passion toward caring for others.

*Jason
Corneal Transplant Recipient at Age 27*

// I am very concerned that a donation organization with for-profit connections has entered the eye donation environment in Minnesota. I am a proud recipient of corneas in both my eyes as Fuch's Dystrophy treatment from the the Lions Gift of Sight, a non-profit, socially responsible organization. Having been a member of the Lion's Club previously in India, I know the Lions Club is founded on the principles of social justice and stewardship of the local community, and dedicated to high quality service. Moreover, having served as a community development worker in a Third World country, I am well aware of the dire consequences of the commodification of human organs and tissues and the exploitation of the poor by those driven by profit motives and greed in ways we cannot even imagine. I urge all Minnesota medical professionals and institutions to pledge to continue procuring their eye tissues through the Lions Gift of Sight.

*L.
Corneal Transplant Recipient*



Statistics

Eyes or Corneas Provided for Transplant and Research

	Eye Tissue Donors	Corneas Provided for Transplant	Eyes or Corneas Provided for Research and Education
2017	2,379	1,829	2,846
5-Year Total (2013 - 2017)	9,913	6,721	11, 929
Historic (1960 - 2017)	38,498	35,260	38,011

Current Corneal Transplant Success Rate

99% of Corneal Transplants performed with Lions Gift of Sight corneal tissue are successful.

Five-Year Total (2013 – 2017) Eye Tissue to Service Area Communities

97 % of eye tissue provided by Lions Gift of Sight for transplant went to communities within our service area.

2017 Total Eye Tissue to Service Area Communities

All local needs are being met, and 65 % of eye tissue provided by Lions Gift of Sight for transplant still goes to communities within our service area.

ONE

Lions Gift of Sight is first eye bank in Minnesota

% 99 %

Percent success rate for cornea transplants with
Lions Gift of Sight tissue

107

Oldest Lions Gift of Sight eye donor to-date

1960

Lions Gift of Sight opened its doors

39,000

Lions Gift of Sight Eye Donors To-date

+\$532 MILLION

Estimated lifetime economic benefit of transplants from
Lions Gift of Sight corneas 2013-2017

