The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes. –Marcel Proust

For Eye Donation Month, here at the Utah Lions Eye Bank we wanted to share a couple of facts about eye donation with you:

• There are 12 million corneal disease cases worldwide that result in blindness or visual impairment that could be reversed with cornea transplants;
• Corneal transplant has a 95–98% success rate.

Our hope is that you, in learning more about eye, organ and tissue donation, will consider registering as a donor. You have the power to give someone the precious gift of sight.

Madison Richardson is a 24 year old college graduate and two-time cornea recipient. She honors her donors every time she opens her eyes and sees the beautiful details in the world around her. We are honored that she chose to share part of her story here. Be sure to watch for Madison on FOX 13 Stories of Hope beginning in November where they will highlight a transplant recipient or donor every week through the holidays. Below is a portion of Maddy’s story:

When I was eight years old I was diagnosed with a degenerative eye disease called keratoconus. In my case, the disease progressed fairly quickly and by the time I reached high school I was legally blind in both eyes. I often struggled with day to day tasks like getting my driver’s license, participating in sports and taking notes in class. Along with these struggles came various periods of time spent in pain and discomfort because of my condition.

After high school, my vision continued to decline to the point that it could no longer be corrected by contact lenses or glasses. It was decided that it was time for me to undergo corneal transplant surgery. I had my first transplant in December of 2014, and the second in December of 2015.

Cornea recipient, Madison Richardson

Continued on next page
Receiving these transplants was very bittersweet for me. I was very excited because I knew that my vision and quality of life was going to change drastically in a very good way. I was also very humbled because I knew that the lives of others were going to change in a very difficult way in order for me to restore my sight.

Since my transplants my vision has improved significantly. Even the day after surgery, with my eye swollen and barely able to open, my vision tested better than it was before my transplant. I can see the detail in the beautiful world that we live in: small things like individual blades of grass and leaves on the trees that I never even realized existed before! One of my new favorite things to do since my transplants is driving through the mountains and looking at the stars that I used to not be able to see. I also have been able to continue my education with ease, began volunteer work with the Utah Lions Eye Bank, and have learned so much about myself along the way. I suppose that is what makes mine and others transplants so very special. I will forever have a piece of each of my donors with me; they help me to strive to be the best person I can be, to treat others with kindness and respect and to not take things for granted. I will forever be indebted to my donors and their families, and I am incredibly grateful to the amazing organizations that facilitate organ, eye, and tissue donation.

Learn more about National Eye Donation Month at https://restoresight.org/

The disease is a leading cause of blindness in adults age 55 and over. More than 20 million Americans are living with AMD, which causes irreversible central vision loss. That number is expected to grow to 40 million people by 2050.

Led by Gregory S. Hageman, PhD, the SCTM combines the knowledge of experts in biology, genetics, and clinical AMD with the collective strength of a team of cell biologists, geneticists, epidemiologists, molecular immunologists, pathologists, and ophthalmologists. Using the largest human donor eye tissue repository in the world dedicated to the study of normal and diseased retinal tissue, Dr. Hageman’s team has already changed our understanding of AMD.

SCTM data has proven AMD is at least two distinct biological diseases. A cluster of genes on chromosome 1 plays a critical role in the immune system and directs one form of the disease, while two genes on chromosome 10 cause the second form of the disease.

Now, the SCTM is developing a therapy to treat chromosome 1-directed AMD. The new adjunct faculty members will lend a variety of expertise in aspects from clinical trial design and data evaluation to advanced imaging techniques and drug delivery. They are:

- Monika Fleckenstein, MD, PhD; University of Bonn, Germany
- Eugene de Jaun, MD; University of California San Francisco
- Anat Loewenstein, MD; Tel Aviv University, Israel
- Philip Luthert, FRCP, FRCPath, FRCOphth; Moorfields Eye Hospital, London, and University College London Institute of Ophthalmology
- Catherine Bowes Rickman, PhD; Duke University Medical Center, North Carolina
- Steffen Schmitz-Valckenberg, MD, PhD; University of Bonn, Germany
- Larry Wheeler, PhD; John A. Moran Eye Center
- Moussa Zouache, PhD; research assistant professor, John A. Moran Eye Center
Heart of the Lion Courier Program

Please join us in thanking the following Utah Lions for their support of the Heart of the Lion Courier Program by delivering precious eye tissue to local hospitals and surgery centers, January–October 2018:

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Bereavement Support Groups

For bereavement support group information, please contact the University of Utah College of Nursing

801.585.9522
nursing.utah.edu/caring-connections

Donate Life Transplant Games 2018

By Emily Hargis

Salt Lake City had the opportunity to serve as the host city for the 2018 Donate Life Transplant Games. We welcomed transplant athletes from around the United States as well as other countries as they participated in a variety of athletic events.

The games in Salt Lake City had a record 5,511 registered attendees and it is estimated that there were approximately 8,000 people who came to Salt Lake City to attend the games. This was the largest number of registered attendees in the history of the Games. In conjunction with the Games, a Guinness World Record was set with 540 solid organ transplant recipients gathered in one place. Hundreds of Cornea recipients from around the country also participated in this year’s games.

Because the Games were set in Salt Lake City, many local recipients had the opportunity to join Team Utah/Idaho, making it the largest team at the Games with 118 athletes, ranging in age from 3–79 years old. The team earned a total of 204 medals.

The athletes who came to Salt Lake City will continue to live life to the fullest and honor those who gave the gift of life. Salt Lake City will be remembered for the victories won, the tears shed, the amazing volunteers, and the records that were set.

Information regarding organ, eye, and tissue donation can be found at www.yesutah.org.
Financial Gifts for Sight

The Utah Lions Eye Bank thanks the following individuals for their generous financial donations January 2018—October 2018:

Ann Breiner
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Dale Downard
Dee Ann Gornichec
Dennis Udy
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Eva C. Pendleton
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Gary & Garda Wardle
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Sheri Bodily
Sherman Rigby
Sherry Luthi
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Stephen & Nancy Williams
Utah Lions Foundation
Warren & Tamara Phillips
Willard & Rona Lee Maughan

Please use the enclosed envelope, or visit us online at www.utaheyebank.org, to give by credit card to make a donation in memory of, or in honor of, someone you love. Thank you for your generosity.