



BEAUTY OF
SIGHT
A LIONS EYE BANK

Clear Perspectives

The monthly newsletter from Beauty of Sight

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Corneal Fellows' Wet Lab Training at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute

On August 10th, 2024, a significant event took place at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute at the University of Miami. The Corneal Fellows, who had embarked on their fellowship journey in July, participated in their first wet lab training. Under the expert guidance of Dr. Angela Zhu and Dr. Florence Anne Cabot, they honed their skills in advanced corneal procedures, specifically DMEK and DALK. These procedures, being vital advancements in corneal surgery, are set to improve patient outcomes significantly.

- **DMEK (Descemet's Membrane Endothelial Keratoplasty):** A corneal transplant technique that replaces only the cornea's innermost layer, offering faster recovery and better visual outcomes.
- **DALK (Deep Anterior Lamellar Keratoplasty):** A partial-thickness corneal transplant that replaces the cornea's outer layers while preserving the innermost layer, reducing the risk of rejection.

These hands-on experiences, crucial for the advancement of eye care, are made possible through the selfless generosity of individuals who donate ocular tissue for research. Their contributions are not just donations but the building blocks of new surgical techniques, medications, and technologies, as well as the training of future physicians. Their impact is profound and inspiring.

Beauty of Sight proudly facilitates eye donation for research as an end-of-life option. Since 1962, thousands of selfless donors have contributed to advancements in eye care, benefiting countless individuals across generations. We extend our deepest gratitude to these donors and their families.

While some people may not be eligible to donate for transplantation due to age, many of these individuals, often over 70, can still donate their eyes for research. Additionally, ocular tissue that cannot be used for transplantation for medical or regulatory reasons remains invaluable for research purposes.



Beauty of Sight attends the 2024 Florida Cemetery, Cremation, and Funeral Association convention and Trade Show

The Florida Cemetery, Cremation, and Funeral Association (FCCFA) hosted its annual convention and trade show in Bonita Springs, FL, from July 25th to July 27th, 2024. The event brought together professionals from the funeral home and end-of-life industry and agencies dedicated to deceased donation for research, such as whole-body donation and the UM Brain Endowment Bank. Beauty of Sight's participation was especially significant, emphasizing the importance of building relationships with funeral homes and funeral directors in our service area as they play a crucial role in our mission to restore sight.

Funeral homes work closely with eye banks and tissue recovery organizations, ensuring that the wishes of the donor and donor family regarding donation are honored.

Coordination and Logistics:

- Funeral home staff coordinate with eye bank teams to arrange for the timely retrieval of eye tissue.
- If the eye bank recovery technicians cannot get to the funeral home promptly, the funeral home ensures that a certified technician from the funeral home completes the ocular tissue retrieval.
- They facilitate access to the body while maintaining dignity and respect for the deceased.

Support for Families:

- Staff provide information and support to grieving families about the donation process.
- They offer reassurance that the donation will be handled respectfully and professionally.

Care of the Deceased:

- After the ocular tissue is recovered, funeral homes prepare the body for viewing or burial.
- They ensure that the deceased's appearance is minimally affected by the donation process.

By fulfilling these responsibilities, funeral homes help facilitate the donation of eye tissue, which can restore sight to individuals suffering from corneal blindness and other eye conditions.



Vision Restored: A Journey of Innovation and Hope Supported by Beauty of Sight

Antonio Vento, a 14-year-old with a passion for video games, faced a significant obstacle due to severe vision impairment resulting from a rare genetic condition called dystrophic epidermolysis bullosa (DEB). This condition, characterized by extreme skin fragility leading to blistering upon minor friction or trauma, affects approximately 3.3 million individuals across the globe. Antonio's DEB manifested severely, impacting not only his skin but also impairing his vision.

Under the care of Dr. Alfonso Sabater, M.D., Ph.D., at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, and with the support of the Beauty of Sight foundation, Antonio underwent groundbreaking treatments to address his ocular complications. Traditional surgeries initially cleared scar tissue obstructing his vision, but the condition persisted due to the underlying genetic mutation preventing proper collagen production. Seeking alternative therapies, Dr. Sabater collaborated with dermatologists and pharmaceutical experts to adapt a promising skin therapy for ocular use.

The innovative treatment involved applying a specialized eye drop designed to promote the synthesis of Collagen 7, a crucial protein lacking in Antonio's body. This approach marked the first instance of gene therapy targeting ocular surface cells. Following rigorous testing for safety and efficacy and special approval by the Food and Drug Administration, Antonio became the first recipient of this transformative therapy, administered after surgical intervention to clear scar tissue from his corneas.



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Gracious Donation of Eyeglasses from Scheck Hillel Community School

We are delighted that Scheck Hillel Community School has generously donated over 50 pairs of used eyeglasses. These glasses have been collected from students over the years, and as they no longer have any use for them, the school made a significant contribution to our cause.

The Impact of Your Donations

There is an immense need for used eyeglasses, especially in low-income communities and developing countries. Many people worldwide cannot afford new glasses, and receiving a pair of donated eyeglasses can be life-changing for them. These glasses provide essential vision correction, significantly improving the quality of life for those in need.

This donation is a testament to the Beauty of Sight Eye Bank and Lions Club's ongoing commitment to restoring sight and enhancing lives. We are incredibly grateful for this contribution, as it empowers us to continue making a meaningful difference.

The Journey of Recycled Glasses

- **Collection:** Donated eyeglasses are sent to the nearest Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center.
- **Sorting and Cleaning:** Trained volunteers at the center sort, clean, and determine the prescription strengths of the glasses.
- **Packaging and Storage:** The glasses are then carefully packaged and stored until they are needed for eyeglass dispensing missions. Glasses that cannot be reused are recycled for scrap, with the proceeds benefiting local Lions and Leos projects.
- **Distribution:** At mission sites, eye care professionals and trained Lion and Leo volunteers perform vision screenings and dispense the appropriate recycled glasses, free of charge, to children and adults in need.

How You Can Help

If you have used glasses, including sunglasses and reading glasses, please consider donating them to a Lions Club collection point near you. Your donations help us extend the gift of sight to those who need it most. For more information, please email us at info@beautyofsight.org.



[DONATE NOW](#)

Please donate today to support our programs, including our Gratis Corneal Tissue, Serum Tears Assistance, and Research programs!



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