

# the VISIONARY

A PUBLICATION FROM THE CENTRAL OHIO LIONS EYE BANK

## New Sight – For Driving and Pitching

When Torie Taylor found himself driving past a highway sign that he couldn't read, he said to himself, "Am I driving that fast?" But passing the next sign at a lower speed didn't help.

"Wow" was what he remembers thinking – the experience was telling. "I couldn't believe it." Who knew that the sign you can't read might be the "sign" you most need?

Until Mr. Taylor was 21 years old, he had 20/20 vision. That's when he began showing the first indications of keratoconus, a condition that causes a person's cornea to significantly change shape, from the normal round contour to more cone-like. Over time, the condition worsens.

Wearing glasses didn't help; Mr. Taylor switched to contacts. At age 35, he even tried a "piggyback system" of wearing two contacts on each eye – a soft

lens covered by a hard lens. The hard lens, though, would pop out and get lost. That was both frustrating and costly.

An outdoorsman who enjoys playing softball, hunting, and especially watching his son, Torie II, and daughter Miana play baseball, as well as Miana's basketball games, he felt quite "limited in how much fun I could have outdoors." Even going to the beach was disappointing. "I had to be very careful not to get sand in my eye" underneath his

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**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Torie and his son take to the mound for the first pitch; Eye Bank Trustee Jay Carey and Family; Cornea recipient Torie Taylor and Family; New 13F DG Lynn Thomas and wife.

# Special Thanks for Helping Us Change More Lives

*A message from Phyllis McNabb, executive director, Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank*

It's impossible to thank all of those who deserve to be recognized for helping us open greater opportunities for sight restoration in 2013-2014, but here are a few of the stand-outs: First, to Dr. John Stechschulte, for three years' service as Chairman of the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank's Board of Trustees; his efforts on our behalf in both the medical community and the community at large have been beneficial beyond words. Also to Ann Schiele, PhD, and PDG Ron Barber, who each recently completed six years as Trustees. To Lion David Jordan, for chairing the Lions Board, and to all the great volunteers who sit on both Boards. To the Eye Bank staff and our Medical Director Richard Lembach, M.D., for making this a banner year

for providing corneas, and for again achieving the highest accreditation awarded by the Eye Bank Association of America. To our Friends who attended our 40th anniversary dinner and our annual Night with the Clippers – what a joy to see so many wonderful supporters gathered for these events. To Riverside Methodist Hospital and Berger Hospital for your outstanding Eye Donor Programs. To Phillip's restaurant, for keeping the Eye Bank's name in front of your patrons all year. And to all those whose generous contributions move our mission forward – thank you for helping us change more lives this year!

*Phyllis*

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In honor of my gift of sight  
*Patricia M Wagoner*  
In honor of Martha J Hillier  
*C R Hillier*

### Dr. Richard Lembach Education, Research, and Development Fund

Dr & Mrs Richard Lembach  
Phyllis McNabb

**Donations given from from November 2013 through June 2014.** As a non-profit organization, the Eye Bank relies on private donations to make services available to those who need us. If you would like to help us give the Gift of Sight with a contribution, please contact the **Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank, 262 Neil Avenue, Suite 140, Columbus, Ohio 43215, 614.545.2057** or visit our Web site at [www.DonateMyEyes.org](http://www.DonateMyEyes.org).



# Nurse's Transplants Give Her "A Lot of Career" to Look Forward To

Labor and delivery nurse Amy Dietz knew her failing vision could have a major impact on her work. "My eyesight is really crucial to my job," she says. "Seeing an IV needle, reading small labels on drugs," and prolonged computer work all require good vision. She also was aware of her hereditary tendency toward Fuch's dystrophy, a vision-robbing disease for which her mother needed corneal transplants.

"I knew the potential for Fuch's," she says, and eventually began experiencing difficulty with night driving. "Halos around the lights from oncoming cars" made her stay in familiar areas when she drove after dark. In addition to the corneal disease, she had cataracts, which gradually reduced the level of brightness in her vision.

Ms. Dietz had a practical outlook. "You have to do what you have to do," she says, with regard to having both cataract and transplant surgeries. But she adds that, compared to other surgeries she's had, "the eye surgeries are the easiest."

Ms. Dietz felt confident in her surgeon, Carrie Lembach, D.O., and her confidence was borne out by the ease and painlessness of the experience. She was pleasantly surprised that the corneal transplant left her with 20 – 40 vision in her right eye. She is preparing to have the left transplanted soon, and is looking forward to new glasses. "I've been really happy with my choice" of surgeon and of The Eye Center as a venue for the procedures, she says.

"I'm not anywhere near retirement. I have a lot of career in front of me. I need my eyesight – it's such a safety factor," Ms. Dietz says. During a period before her surgeries, "my co-workers were very accommodating to me. Some functions are



harder than others (with deteriorating vision), and they were giving me assignments that were appropriate for me, working around me." Nursing, she explains, "is a team sport."

As for the donor aspect of her new vision, Ms. Dietz, like most corneal transplant recipients, finds it difficult to express her appreciation. It is moving to think that "someone sacrificed something for somebody else; out of concern felt they could benefit somebody else." She is thankful to her corneal donor, who made it possible for her to experience what she says is "almost like a miraculous improvement – like night and day. First, there was a gradual change to bad sight, then," she exclaims, "all of a sudden – clear and vibrant!"

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## CLIPPERS *continued from page 1*

contacts. And if he removed them he couldn't see his surroundings, a view he didn't want to miss.

Finally he told his wife Mindy, "It's time for things to change." She mentioned surgery. His doctor recommended a cornea surgeon who concurred. "I was ready to try anything," Mr. Taylor says. "I was slowly going blind." A date was set and the surgery proceeded.

"Amazing!" is how he describes his reaction when the patch came off the next day. The change from his piggyback contact days was immense. "I was one of the fortunate ones – I could see right away. I still can't believe how well everything went." His surgeon was pleased, telling Mr. Taylor that his result was one of the best the doctor had seen.

"It was one of the best things I've ever done," says Mr. Taylor, who may eventually need a transplant for his other eye.

Before this experience, Mr. Taylor remembers that being a donor "was something I said I'd never do." His current driver's license illustrates his change of heart. "I'm a donor now," he says, and he couldn't thank his donor's family enough. "I was fortunate because someone else was misfortunate," he realizes. But, "they changed my life for the better." Now, he explains, he wants "to make that kind of an impact" for another.

In keeping with his affinity for baseball, in June Mr. Taylor, with his son by his side, threw out the first pitch at the Eye Bank's Clippers event.

# Awardees Exemplify Community Service



» Shauna Conaway, RN, Eye Bank Liaison from Berger Hospital (right), accepted the Partner in Sight Restoration Award from Eye Bank Education Coordinator Cristina DeLaSerda at Berger's April 27th Legacy of Life Ceremony. Berger's dedication to the Eye Donor Program has spanned decades and resulted in restored sight for many patients in our community.



» Nicholas Manus (center), the President of Phillip's restaurant — a landmark in downtown Columbus — receives the Eye Bank's 2014 Philanthropic Award from Eye Bank staff members Jason Brosious (left) and Mike McMasters. Phillip's has been an ongoing promoter of the Eye Bank, adding to public awareness and raising funds to support vision restoration.

The Visionary is published by the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank. Please report all changes of address to: Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank, 262 Neil Avenue, Suite 140, Columbus, OH 43215, or email at [info@coleb.org](mailto:info@coleb.org).

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