

the VISIONARY

A PUBLICATION FROM THE CENTRAL OHIO LIONS EYE BANK

An Attitude of Gratitude

Cornea recipient Robert Williams doesn't need to be coaxed to express his enthusiasm about the gift of sight that he considers "almost a miracle." His cornea problem – keratoconus – was diagnosed when he was only about 13 years old. The disease causes a person's cornea to become misshapen and thinned, distorting vision. As often happens with a keratoconus patient, Mr. Williams' vision grew worse and attempts at non-surgical treatments became futile. The use of glasses gave way to gas permeable contact lenses, but as the disease progressed and his vision was no longer sufficient to pass a driving test, he understood that a transplant was going to be necessary. As an entrepreneur, metal machinist, and avid motorcyclist, losing sight was affecting far too much of his life.

But Mr. Williams was reluctant to undergo the procedure. He researched cornea transplants and didn't like the idea of a long healing process and slow recovery of vision. Then – on the Internet, of course – he discovered the availability of a "new" transplant technique that intrigued him. He read of the partial-thickness transplant, a less-invasive, stronger graft with a much more rapid path to healing and improved vision. It took awhile before he found someone who could answer all his questions about the surgery, until he contacted cornea surgeon Richard Erdey, M.D. Mr. Williams received the answers he'd been looking for, and had an overall "good vibe" interacting with the surgeon and his staff. Lacking health insurance coverage, once he heard that he was a good candidate for the partial-thickness transplant procedure, he gathered and borrowed from family the funds necessary to move forward.

Prior to the transplant, Mr. Williams' vision in his keratoconic eye was 20/300. After the procedure, on progressive post-op visits to the doctor he was 20/70, then 20/60, and 20/50 with correction. At his next visit, he's hoping for 20/30.

Mr. Williams describes himself as having "an attitude of gratitude." He sees his 95-year-old grandfather every day, and is very thankful to have that opportunity. He cherishes



Robert Williams with his grandfather, WWII Vet Cleo Keffer

those close to him, and explains his philosophy is to "treat friends like pieces of jewelry." He still takes the time to write personal letters and thank-you notes, eschewing the modern tendency to dash off a quick e-mail. And he is an organ donor himself. He's a believer that "you should change somebody's life if you can."

He talks of his surgeon's talent, knowledge, and staff in glowing terms, saying "everybody's great at Dr. Erdey's!" He keeps them in his prayers.

His appreciation for the success of his cornea transplant is as clear as his new vision when he says, "It's been an absolute blessing in my life."

Standing on the shoulders of giants

A message from Jason Brosious, Executive Director, Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank

Dear Eye Bank Friends:

As I step into my new role with the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank, I have reflected on what brought me, and this organization, to where we are today. So much has been involved in the evolution of the Eye Bank, including the hard work and perseverance of so many contributors to the organization's growth. So, it is imperative for us to recognize those who have done their part to make the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank what it is today. For both myself and this organization it is important to remember the diligent efforts and dedication of our former (retired) Director Phyllis McNabb, who over the last 28-plus years transformed this organization from two rooms at The Ohio State University and minimal staff, to an independent organization serving the entire community (not to mention the rest of the country and the world). Today, the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank stands shoulder to shoulder with the best Eye Banks in the nation. Then there are our Medical Directors, Boards, and staff, and the surgeons who attend to the patients we serve daily; it is their shared commitment to improving



**New Executive Director
Jason Brosious**

the lives of our patients that spurs us to fulfill our mission. Our community Lions tirelessly stand by our side to ensure that we all live up to being Knights of the Blind, as Helen Keller asked almost a century ago. Our hospital partners

work collaboratively with us every day, helping to ensure that eye donors and their families are cared for to the last, and that the donors' wish to give the gift of sight is carried out. As for our donors and their families - without their selfless and final gift, we could not do our part in this modern-day miracle of restoring sight.

As you can see, the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank is sustained by a community that believes in our mission and understands the importance of restoring, improving, and preserving sight. I look forward to carrying on the tradition of progress, quality, and success that has been the hallmark of the Eye Bank for nearly 45 years. I am grateful for the leadership opportunity that the Board of Trustees has given me. And I am excited to get to know more of the Friends of the Eye Bank, whose support of the organization continues to be immeasurable.

Best regards,
Jason

A post script...

For many years it was my privilege to serve as the Executive Director of the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank. Getting to know and work with the Eye Bank's Friends, supporters, contributors, staff, physicians, and beneficiaries has been an honor far beyond my ability to express. I leave the Eye Bank in great hands with Jason Brosious. He has been extraordinarily devoted to the organization and responsible for the technical leadership that put the Eye Bank at the forefront of the field. His future vision will bring about exciting advancements. After fifteen years of

working side by side with Jason, I know that the welfare of the patients who depend on the Eye Bank will always be his guiding principle. I look forward to watching the organization grow and prosper under his direction. Of course I can't simply walk away from a position that was more a gift than a job to me, without saying good-bye and thanking the many, many people I got to know and cherish through the Eye Bank. I'll continue to work on Eye Bank projects wherever I can be of help, and to stay in touch as I begin my new adventure.

With much gratitude,
Phyllis

UPCOMING EVENTS

CLIPPERS BASEBALL GAME
Sunday, July 23, 2017
4 pm at Huntington Park

**SWINGING FOR SIGHT
GOLF TOURNAMENT**
Monday, October 9, 2017
(Columbus Day)

For ticket information, please contact Jason or David at 614/545-2057.

2016: Another Record Year!

The Eye Bank was quite busy last year, setting a new record for the number of transplant and other surgical patients the organization was able to help. Overall, surgeries exceeded 1,100 – including 915 corneal transplants. The number represents an increase in corneas provided of over 150% in one year. The number has tripled since 2010.

The Eye Bank's priority continues to be the provision of corneas to patients here in the community. The transplant surgery must be performed within seven-eight days after the corneas are donated, so once the local need is filled in any given week the Eye Bank offers any surplus corneas for transplant patients in the U.S., and across the globe. The Eye Bank provides corneas to patients who need

corneal transplants regardless of their economic circumstances, insurance status, race, religion, or country of origin. Thanks to the charitable support of our community, fees for processing corneas may be adjusted or waived by the Eye Bank if economic hardship would otherwise prevent a patient from having his or her vision restored.

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Donations given from April 4, 2016 through May 15, 2017. 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.

Eye Bank Appoints New Executive

On January 2017, the Board of Trustees announced that Jason Brosious is the new Executive Director of the Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank. Mr. Brosious is well-known to those who work with the Eye Bank, as he formerly served as the Eye Bank's Technical Director. He has worked in and led the technical program for over 15 years. He holds Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in nursing, and is an Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA)-Certified Eye Bank Technician (CEBT) and an American Association of Tissue Banks-Certified Tissue Bank Specialist (CTBS).

Mr. Brosious developed the Eye Bank's services for preparing corneas for specialized corneal transplants. The Central Ohio Lions Eye Bank was one of the first



in the nation to establish a program using this advanced technology. As a result, he was tapped to help write the national standards for such programs.

As a seasoned eye banker, Mr. Brosious currently sits on the Eye Bank Association of America's Medical Advisory Board as well as its Board

of Directors. Additionally trained and certified in tissue banking, he is poised to take the Eye Bank to the next level in the field of transplant donor recovery.

Mr. Brosious was named Executive Director upon the December retirement of former E.D., Phyllis McNabb. Megan Hicks, CEBT, was promoted to the Technical Director position.

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.

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CENTRAL OHIO LIONS
EYE BANK
Be a part of the vision.

OUR MISSION | To restore, improve, and preserve vision by connecting eye donors and transplant recipients, educating physicians, and enhancing research through quality eye banking services.

- New Executive Director Named
 - A Transplant Recipient's Gratitude
 - Upcoming Eye Bank Events
- Special thanks to Old Trail Printing for donating the printing of the newsletter



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