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The process begins long before sight is restored...

Cheryl Wirtshoreck and Karyl Hildebrand, Illinois Eye-Bank Technicians



At the Illinois Eye-Bank, we do more than assist the vision-impaired. We are dedicated to the restoration of sight. That means we explore every avenue to help those with eye and vision impairments regain their vision.

We care for donors and their families.

We consider eye donation to be a special gift from the donor and the donor's family. Regardless of whether a person chooses to donate, or whether an eye donation results in a transplant, we respect the wishes of the donor and the family, and honor the irreplaceable gifts they give.

Amy Bauchens, Ambassador Coordinator



The decision to give consent for a loved one's eye donation can be difficult. Donor family members are experiencing a tragic loss, often one of the most painful experiences in their lives. We offer our donor families hope by offering the option of eye donation. Knowing that a loved one's eye donation can truly make a difference — that their loved one can live on in the eyes of others — brings them comfort when little else can.

Illinois Eye-Bank staff members are specially trained to work with donor families in a sensitive, compassionate manner. Our staff understands the special needs of these family members, and is there to help them make an informed decision about eye, organ and tissue donation.

David Hearn, Area Coordinator, and Bob Albrecht, Division Manager – Illinois Eye-Bank, Watson Gailey



History



Dr. Watson Gailey

Although the first successful corneal transplant was performed in 1905, most eye banks were not organized until the mid-20th century. The Illinois Eye-Bank was founded in Chicago in 1947, and it was the fourth organization of its kind. Meanwhile, Dr. Watson Gailey, a renowned ophthalmologist and pioneer in corneal surgery, was helping to establish an eye bank in the Bloomington area. The facility now known as the Illinois Eye-Bank, Watson Gailey was founded in 1952. Both eye banks were later joined through their affiliation with Midwest Eye-Banks. Today, they offer a second chance for sight to more than 1,500 people each year.

DEDICATED

WWW.DONORTRIBUTE.ORG

We help donor families find grief recovery resources, and also encourage them to honor their loved one by creating an online Donor Tribute through our special Donor Tribute web site, www.donortribute.org. Many families find comfort in adding a few words or a special picture as a memorial to a loved one who has helped others by giving the precious gift of sight.



Committed to meeting the need for eye tissue...

Corneal Transplantation

The transplantation process begins when a specially — trained Illinois Eye-Bank technician recovers corneal tissue from an eye donor. Our technicians are certified by the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) within their first year of employment. They travel across Illinois, and sometimes beyond, at any hour of the day or night when donated eye tissue becomes available. After eye tissue has been recovered, it is quickly and carefully returned to our on-site laboratory for evaluation.



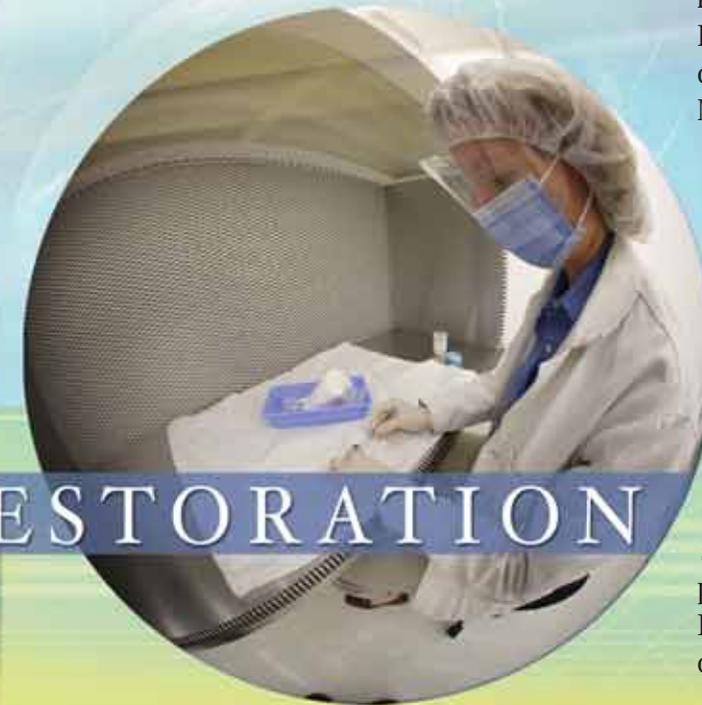
Bob Albrecht, Division Manager

Using advanced techniques and equipment, our skilled laboratory staff assesses the cornea's viability for transplant, working to protect the health of the transplant recipient and ensure the best possible outcome. Corneas that are unsuitable for transplant can, with donor family consent, be utilized for important eye and vision research. Corneas deemed suitable are placed in the hands of ophthalmic surgeons whose patients are awaiting transplant procedures.

The Illinois Eye-Bank has virtually eliminated waiting lists for corneal transplantation. Our skilled Tissue Distribution Coordinator and our highly efficient surgery scheduling system enable the corneal tissue we recover to be made available for patients in Illinois and elsewhere, at a moment's notice.

Although there is never a charge for human tissue, eye banks must charge processing fees, paid by hospitals and surgery centers. These fees are intended to offset the cost eye banks incur in recovery, evaluation and distribution of corneal tissue for transplant. When a patient does not have health insurance and cannot afford corneal transplant procedures, the Illinois Eye-Bank can work with the transplanting surgeon to waive or reduce fees. This helps to ensure that no one in need is ever denied the opportunity to see again.

Eye and Vision Research



Corneal transplantation is a cure for only about 10 percent of all blinding eye disease. For eye conditions that cannot be corrected through corneal transplantation, scientific research is often the only hope. To that end, the Illinois Eye-Bank is proud to support research into the causes and cures of blinding eye diseases. Since its inception in 1980, Midwest Eye-Banks' Eye and Vision Research Program has contributed nearly \$2 million toward eye and vision research. Each year, we award grants and educational stipends to researchers and students at universities throughout the state. The Eye-Bank's research program has led to several important discoveries over the years, including the identification of a gene that can cause early childhood blindness when it is defective.

Our Eye and Vision Research Program has funded research into glaucoma and diseases of the retina, lens and cornea, as well as numerous other eye disorders. The seed money grants we've provided have also made it possible for researchers to obtain funding from the National Institutes of Health for large-scale studies into causes and cures of blinding eye disease.

TO THE RESTORATION

Community Education

Working together with other agencies in the state, Illinois Eye-Bank actively promotes eye, organ, tissue donation. We believe that barriers to donation are reduced if families are given an opportunity to dispel misconceptions and learn the facts about donation prior to encountering end of life decisions in a hospital setting.

Illinois Eye-Bank's Area Coordinators travel across the state to administer public and professional education through hospitals, schools and community events. Our Ambassador Program is an opportunity for transplant recipients, eye donor families and other volunteers to reach out to the community, spreading the word about eye donation and the miracle of sight restoration.

Help the Illinois Eye-Bank offer someone a second chance for sight.

Corneal transplant recipients have a wonderful story to tell. Not only have they been given a second chance for sight, but they are part of a miraculous process that began with the generosity of someone they never even met.

The cornea is the most frequently transplanted part of the human body, and more than 90 percent of corneal transplants performed in the United States are successful. Our recipients find many ways to express their gratitude for the gift they have received. If you know someone whose life has been touched by eye donation, or perhaps someone who has vision-related problems for which research may be the only hope, we hope you will also consider supporting our mission to restore sight.

Become an eye donor. Donation is a selfless act of generosity that creates a lasting legacy. The most important step in deciding to become an eye donor is to tell your family of your decision. At the time of the donation, your family plays a critical role by providing much-needed information and allowing us to recover eye tissue. We also encourage you to join the Illinois Donor Registry through the Secretary of State Office, and use the donation decal provided on the back of your driver's license.

Become an Illinois Eye-Bank volunteer. Our Ambassador Program brings together eye donor families, corneal transplant recipients and others whose lives have been touched by eye, organ and tissue donation. Ambassadors support the Eye-Bank by volunteering at special events, distributing educational materials and

reaching out within their own communities. They are always looking for new ways to support our mission to restore sight. For more information, contact the Illinois Eye-Bank at 800.548.4703.

Dominique Chambers, corneal transplant recipient. "Without the use of both eyes, it would have been very difficult for Dominique to acquire the foundational learning skills that are fundamental to his development."
— Dominique's eye surgeon



"I can now see leaves on trees, individual bricks on buildings and baseball on television. These are sights I have not seen since I was a small child. The whole process and result has been a miracle for me."

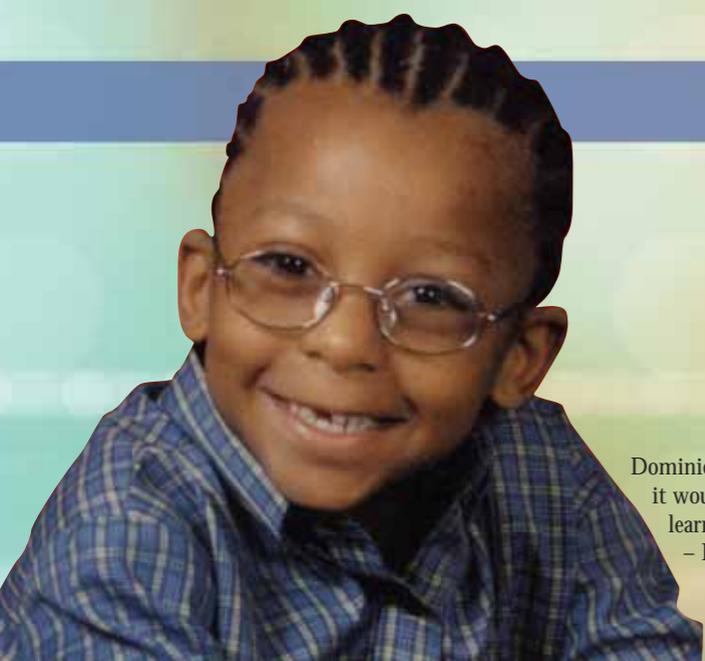
— Don Rowley, basketball coach and corneal transplant recipient
from Arlington Heights, Illinois

Make a charitable contribution to the Illinois Eye-Bank. Financial support is one of the most powerful ways of bringing the gift of restored sight into the community. Your contribution can help us place corneal tissue where it is needed most. It can be the foundation

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for new and more effective means of educating the public about the ongoing need for eye donors. It can also fund groundbreaking eye and vision research, offering new hope to those who cannot be helped by corneal transplantation. To learn more about making a gift to the Illinois Eye-Bank, or including the Eye-Bank in your estate plans, please contact us at 800.548.4703. Your support can be a light in the darkness for those whom we help.

Rocco Ryg, corneal transplant recipient,
with Susan d'Olive Mozena, Midwest Eye-Banks President
and Chief Executive Officer



OF SIGHT