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Illinois Eye-Bank celebrates National Eye Donor Month

The month of March has been recognized for nearly 30 years as National Eye Donor Month, in an effort to raise awareness about the importance of eye donation.

In celebration of National Eye Donor Month, the Illinois Eye-Bank will host a two-day open house at its office in Chicago, in addition to holding a number of educational events throughout the area.

“Last year, more than 1,000 Illinois residents received a second chance for sight, thanks to the generosity of eye donors and their families,” says Diane Hollingsworth, Executive Director of the Illinois Eye-Bank. “For those in need of a cornea transplant, there is no substitute for donated eye tissue.”

Cornea transplants can treat blinding eye conditions that affect the cornea itself. These conditions often include eye injuries that result in scarring or damage to the front surface of the eye and diseases that distort the shape and clarity of the cornea. Other eye tissue can be also be recovered from a donor for use in certain kinds of reconstructive eye surgery.

The Illinois Eye-Bank also supports research into the causes of and cures for blinding eye conditions that cannot be helped through corneal transplantation.

“Our Eye and Vision Research program provides seed money grants to scientists researching a variety of vision problems,” Hollingsworth explains. “When consent is given by the donor or donor’s family, we can also make eye tissue available for those scientists, who desperately need it to help combat blinding eye conditions like glaucoma, macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.”

The Illinois Eye-Bank Open House will run from 1 to 4 p.m. on Friday, March 18, and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 19. The Eye-Bank is located at 547 West Jackson Blvd., Suite 600, in Chicago.

To join the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry, visit www.lifegoeson.com.

The Illinois Eye-Bank is a charitable, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the restoration of sight. It recovers, evaluates and distributes human eye tissue for transplantation. It also supports research into the causes and cures of blinding eye conditions, promotes donation awareness through public and professional education, and provides humanitarian aid to people in need of corneal transplantation throughout the world. For more information, visit the Illinois Eye-Bank online at www.illinoiseyebank.org or call (800) 548-4703.

