Our vision is your vision

Iowa Lions Eye Bank
Annual Report 2015
Dear partners,

In 2015, Iowa Lions Eye Bank celebrated its 60th anniversary. This milestone encourages us to reflect on our strengths and past accomplishments as we look forward to the future. In doing so, we are reminded of partners like you who play a critical role in our ability to restore and preserve sight for the people of Iowa. I am grateful for all you do to support the cause of eye donation.

Thanks to your partnership, in 2015, we recovered tissue from 1,220 eye donors and prepared 1,123 corneas for transplant. Our staff and research efforts continue to grow, preparing us to adapt to any changes the future may bring and continuing our tradition as a national leader in eye banking. Our bold innovation has made a significant contribution to the eradication of corneal blindness, and we simply could not do it without your support.

Spectacular achievement is always preceded by unspectacular preparation, and our success is a result of our habits. I have a feeling that 2016 is going to be our best collective year yet!

In partnership,

Cindy Reed, RN, PhD
Executive Director
### 2015 Impact

**By the Numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>Corneal research papers published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>315</td>
<td>Letters exchanged between recipients and donor families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>Surgeons provided with pre-cut tissue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,123</td>
<td>Corneas used to restore and enhance sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>Autologous Serum Eye Drops (ASEDs) distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>years of saving sight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>Eye donors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Did you know?

- Anyone can be a donor, regardless of age. In 2015, ILEB donors ranged in age from one-day to 96 years old.
- In 2015, 55% of donors were First Person Authorization (FPA) cases. FPA is an individual’s legally binding consent to donation, such as on a driver’s license or other official document.
Many donor families find comfort in sharing their loved one’s story with the staff at ILEB. Here are two of the many stories we receive each year.

**Colton Meyer**

2010-2014

Colton was full of energy, sharing smiles and hugs with everyone he met. He was inseparable from his older brother Jaxson. They ate breakfast together, sat side-by-side on the couch watching “Wild Kratts” on television, played for hours pretending they were cheetahs, helped with chores, and at bedtime, picked out their favorite books.

Colton died in a tragic farm accident in 2014 and his family consented to eye and tissue donation so he could enhance others’ lives. He is greatly missed by his mother Tiffany, father Travis, brother Jaxson, and sister Alexis.

“Joel had an unfailingly positive and selfless attitude when it came to his battle with leukemia and subsequent stem cell and lung transplants. When offered to him, he never hesitated to take part in a medical study and hoped that, through his illness, his doctors would gain knowledge and experience to more effectively treat patients in the future.” - Jana Higgins, Joel’s wife

When Joel died in June of 2014, Jana reaffirmed Joel’s commitment to helping others by donating his eyes to the Iowa Lions Eye Bank for valuable research of blinding eye disease at the University of Iowa.

**Joel Higgins**

1982-2014

“Sunset on Campus” - photograph of the ISU campus taken by Joel Higgins
The miracle of sight

“We, the cornea recipients, and our families have had our lives changed. Our eyesight is so precious, and it has been given back to us. We have many people to thank for this gift.” - Recipient Gordon Klatt speaks at the 2015 dedication ceremony

Iowa City surgeon Alex Cohen, MD, PhD, was on a mission trip in Swaziland in southern Africa when he met Louis Abrahams, a 43-year-old man with severe keratoconus. Abrahams had been told for years that his sight could not be restored. Dr. Cohen wanted to help him, so he contacted ILEB for a cornea and completed the first ever cornea transplant in Swaziland.

“I will be eternally grateful that someone cared enough to donate a cornea, just so that I can see. Many people, some of whom I didn’t know, responded to assist me, just a normal man, in a tiny part of Africa who had a need of a cornea transplant.” - Abrahams in a letter to his donor’s family

For the full story, please visit www.iowalionseyebank.org.

“Your incredible gift has given him a chance at a normal childhood.” - The parents of 5-month-old Joseph wrote to his cornea donor’s family

Life continues beyond one’s existence

Sadily, 10-year-old Garrett Brockway was killed in a tragic accident in February of 2013. 13-year-old Emma Dorcy was one of the fortunate recipients of the many gifts of life Garrett provided. Garrett’s selfless gift of his corneas helped restore Emma’s sight so that she can now enjoy activities such as competitive dancing.

For, more on Garrett and Emma’s story, watch our video at www.iowalionseyebank.org.
ILEB Associate Medical Director, Dr. Mark Greiner, received the 2015 Troutman Prize for Young Clinician Investigators. This award is bestowed annually by the Cornea Society for the most outstanding and innovative paper authored by an investigator 40 years of age or younger and published in the scientific journal Cornea.

The Iowa Lions Eye Bank is committed to engaging in research discoveries that will revolutionize our understanding and treatment of eye disease.

Corneal transplant surgery has a very high success rate with 95% of patients reporting improved vision. Unfortunately, a small percentage of cornea transplants fail, even when the tissue meets or surpasses all visual inspection quality control measures.

These unexplained transplant failures are one of the driving forces behind the research activities conducted at Iowa Lions Eye Bank. Our dedicated research team, in collaboration with a multidisciplinary group of faculty and staff at the University of Iowa, is relentlessly seeking out new discoveries and technologies that will improve eye banking practices and help restore vision loss.
Anyone can be a donor, regardless of age. In 2015, ILEB donors ranged in age from one-day to 96 years old. Iowa Lions Eye Bank is a leader in providing transplant surgeons around the globe with safe and reliable processed corneas for the most advanced corneal transplant procedures.

**Milestones**

**2006:** ILEB began preparing partial cornea grafts for transplant. To date, ILEB has prepared more than 9,000 partial cornea grafts for transplant surgery and developed specialized software to reliably process corneas to a surgeon's desired thickness with a high degree of accuracy and precision.

**2007:** ILEB began using a femtosecond laser to prepare corneas with specific-shaped edges to promote healing when used in Laser Assisted Keratoplasty (LAK) surgery.

**2009:** ILEB became the first United States eye bank to prepare tissue within the eye bank setting for use in Descemet's Membrane Endothelial Processing (DMEK) transplants, where only the bottom layer of the cornea is transplanted.

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**Exciting new findings**

Using a “Seahorse” to measure the energy production in cells, Dr. Greiner and the research team at ILEB have found that a cornea’s endothelial function is affected by disease states such as diabetes. This initial finding sets the stage for further research to determine whether new metrics can be established for assessing cornea health.

**Innovative research articles**

Under the leadership of Dr. Mark Greiner and Ben Aldrich, PhD, ILEB research staff published eight research papers in four scientific journals in 2015.

**Article citations:**


8. Wagoner MD, Welder JD, Goins KM, Greiner MA. Microbial keratitis and endophthalmitis after the Boston type 1 keratoprosthesis. *Cornea* 2015.
Supporting our donor families

Honoring the gift

The gift of sight would not be possible without generous donors and their families who have the courage to support donation at a difficult time. Many families find donation can help with their grief.

Family Services program

Saying goodbye to a loved one is not easy and we recognize that everyone processes grief differently. That’s why Iowa Lions Eye Bank created a Family Services program to support donor families based on their individual needs.

All families are provided with, but not limited to, the follow-up services listed here:

- A caring Family Services Coordinator to provide support in the grieving process
- Safeguarding of privacy when facilitating potential correspondence between recipients and donor families
- Memorial and recognition options
- Outcomes update on their loved one’s donation

Memorial & Healing Garden

Donor families and others can purchase a memorial paver in the Iowa Lions Donor Memorial & Healing Garden to honor their loved ones.

The Memorial & Healing Garden was established at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics in 2005 to honor donors and recipients while funding cornea research.
“The value of one’s life cannot be measured in the years they live, but rather, in the value of the gifts they leave behind.”

Events to Remember

Annual Dedication Ceremony

Each year, an annual dedication ceremony is held in the Iowa Lions Donor Memorial & Healing Garden to celebrate the altruistic gifts given by Iowa families and the dedicated work of all who facilitate and support the donation and transplantation process.

The 2015 dedication ceremony was held in October to coincide with ILEB’s 60th anniversary. Pavers can be purchased with proceeds funding cornea research.

Colton Meyer’s family honors him with a garden paver at the 2015 ceremony

The Giving Tree

The Giving Tree is a beautiful tree displayed in the Main Entrance lobby of University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics during the holiday season. Each butterfly ornament on the tree represents a donor who died at UIHC in the prior year.

On December 10, 2015, Iowa Lions Eye Bank and Iowa Donor Network held a reception to honor these selfless donors and to support their grieving families.

Kate Lockett, the widow of a donor, speaks at the 2015 reception

The Giving Tree

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In 2015, 138 surgeons relied on ILEB to provide quality, pre-cut tissue for cornea transplant surgery. Through VisionShare, ILEB’s tissue is made available to surgeons within the U.S. and around the world.

Helping surgeons restore sight

In 2015, ILEB provided corneas to restore the sight of 503 individuals living in the state of Iowa. In addition, ILEB provided corneas for individuals living everywhere from Arkansas and Connecticut to Bangladesh and Thailand.

Did you know?

- People of all ages need cornea transplants. In 2015, ILEB tissue restored the sight of a 3-month-old child and a 100-year-old man.

- Corneal transplant surgery is the most commonly performed transplant surgery in the United States with approximately 48,000 completed each year.

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Iowa Lions Eye Bank partners with many organizations and individuals to further its mission to restore and preserve sight.

Community support

Eye donors
It all starts with selfless individuals and families who consent to eye donation.

Financial donors
As a non-profit organization, ILEB relies on financial donations to fund valuable research on eye diseases to improve sight restoration.

Volunteers
ILEB appreciates its volunteers that help in a variety of ways, from transporting tissue to promoting the cause of eye donation.

Professional partners

EMT/Medical Examiners
EMT responders and medical examiners are often the first point of contact for deaths that occur outside of the hospital, making them an essential part of the referral process.

Funeral Directors
ILEB coordinates recovery logistics with funeral directors to ensure an individual’s donation wishes are fulfilled.

Hospice caregivers
Hospice caregivers often can help fulfill the wishes of terminally ill patients by assisting with the referral process.

Hospital staff
Hospital staff play a critical role in referring deaths that occur within the hospital. As the only eye bank in Iowa, ILEB partners with every hospital in the state.

Lions of Iowa

The Iowa Lions played an integral role in the founding of ILEB in 1955 and continue to provide support through their financial contributions and volunteer efforts. Since 2009, Iowa Lions club members have provided 1,700 transports of donated tissue for ILEB.

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Partnersing to enhance lives

Iowa Donor Network (IDN) is the state of Iowa’s Organ Procurement Organization. ILEB collaborates with IDN on shared cases and to promote the cause of organ, eye, and tissue donation.
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MISSION
To enhance the quality of life through the restoration and preservation of sight

VISION
The ILEB is an innovative leader providing quality tissue, education, research and support to those who serve the sight impaired

In collaboration with: