



- News from the Lions' State Sight Project -

Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation

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Eye Bank Ranked Third in the U.S.

The Heartland Lions Eye Banks has been ranked as the third largest eye bank out of over 100 eye banks in the United States, according to the Eye Bank Association of America.

The ranking is based on the number of corneal transplants provided by an eye bank. Heartland Lions Eye Banks (HLEB) provided 1,656 individuals with restored sight in 1998, through corneal transplants.

"I'm proud of not only the staff, but the Lions and hospital personnel that work with HLEB, and the donor families who said 'yes' to donation," stated Lion Dr. Ron Walkenbach, executive director of HLEB. "Being ranked as the third largest eye bank means we are helping the third largest number of people to see again, throughout the world."

The HLEB continues to prove itself as a leader in eye banking, not only through receiving and distributing eye tissue for transplant and research, but also through technological advancements. The Eye Bank created its own in-house eye banking software in 1997. The software offers complete tracking of all eye tissue as well as all donor/recipient information. Today, HLEB has the largest customer base, with fifteen other eye banks currently using the HLEB's software.

The HLEB has also developed its own On-Line Ocular Tissue Services (OTS) over the internet. The on-line system allows surgeons worldwide to request and obtain eye tissue from HLEB, making the eye bank a worldwide leader in tissue distribution. The system was designed to save the surgeons' time and to better accommodate international surgeons, who work in varying time zones. In addition, the OTS is one of the first secure on-line services to allow surgeons to track their specific requests and schedules, as well as modify their requests.

The eye bank will continue to advance its

services to fulfill its mission of serving those in need. HLEB would like to recognize those Lions who transported tissue from March through May: Art Kolkmeier, Ben Barrows, Bernard Grove, Bill Berendts, Bill Huntley, Bill Nichols, Bob Van Ark, BR Buckallew, Bud Baker, Bud Dean, Bud Meyers, Carol

HLEB Statistics

July - May	'97-'98	'98-'99
TOTAL EYES RETRIEVED	2,974	3,120
TOTAL CORNEA TRANSPLANTS	1,285	1,655

Hoskins, Charles Cannaday, Charles Findley, Charles Winfield, Charlie & Shanna Johnson, Charlie Teeter, Chuck Dunn, Cleo Wiggins, Cliff Amos, Clifford Falzone, Dalton Owens, David Carmony, David Menefee, David Sullivan, David Vanderman, Dennis Hemsath, Don Clark, Donald Mitchell, Elaine Brown, Eric Nichols, Gail Oehrke, Gary Marksberry, George Reaves, Glen Godsey, Greg & Melissa Hoffman, Greg Hampton, Helen Friedrich, Herb Stratton, Howard Dampler, Jack Martin, James Baker, James Carpenter, James Neal, James Rosebrough, JD Schlobohm, Jerry & Janice Rollins, Jerry Jones, Jim Stevenson, John Hartung, Joy Bryant, Ken Roberson, Kerry Noble, Leroy Potter, Mark Edwards, Mel Propst, Norm Jenthon, Pat Forbis, Ray Morris, Richard Brown, Richard Paisley, Richard Stump, Robert & Marie Barlow, Robert Marsch, Robert Teacutter, Rod Billingsley, Russell Petree, Shirla Behrens, Stan East, Tom & Judy Johnston, Tom Johnson, William Johnson, and Winston Jefferson.

CATARACT RESEARCH BEING CONDUCTED AT MLERF

A new phase in supporting eye research has been added to MLERF's eye research program.

In May, the University of Missouri-Columbia began conducting cataract research in the Foundation's 4,000 square foot laboratory facilities.

"It's great to add another facet of supporting eye research in addition to providing non-transplantable eye tissue for research projects all over the world," stated Lion Dr. Ron Walkenbach, executive director at MLERF.

MLERF is currently participating in an amblyopia screening methodology study as part of a clinical research program. In addition, the Foundation is involved with a variety of research programs around the country; by providing non-transplantable human eye tissue for studies on blinding eye diseases, such as macular (retinal) degeneration, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma to name a few.

The Foundation's eye bank is a leader in providing research tissue to the National Disease Research Interchange, an organization that assists researchers with their needs by linking them with eye and organ banks. More than \$225,000 in expenses are incurred each year by the Foundation, for preparation and delivery of the eye tissue for research. MLERF has also funded more than \$75,000 to the University's research through research grant funding, research equipment and building upgrades on the Foundation's laboratories.

The cataract research project being conducted at MLERF will focus on ways to delay or eliminate cataract formation. Dr. Beryl Ortwerth heads the project. and has been instrumental in discovering that cataract is not a disease that begins in the latter years of life, but is an accumulation of many years of biochemical reactions within the lens of the eye throughout life.

In the last issue of the *Missouri Lion*, the article on donor families incorrectly stated Crystin Hess was the daughter of Ron and Carol Hess. It should have stated Crystin was the daughter of Ross and Carol Hess.