

SECOND SIGHT

SUMMER 2008



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The Power of Information

Donor Awareness Council Uses New Method to Distribute Donation Messages

So even I can register to donate?
Yes, you can still save lives through donation regardless of your age or health. You can register to be an organ, eye or tissue donor even if you have suffered from common diseases like cancer, diabetes or heart disease.

These are the some of the key messages developed by the Donor Awareness Council (DAC) to overcome misconceptions people may have about becoming a donor. The DAC is a coalition of organizations that focuses on public education on organ and tissue donation. The Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank is an active member.

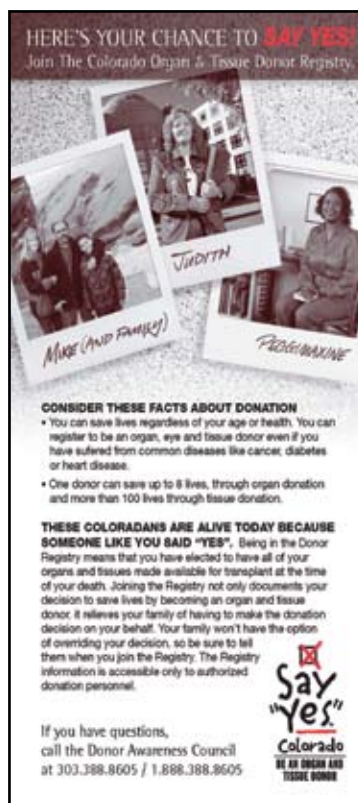
Ninety-nine percent of all registered donors join the registry via the driver license and a new program helps educate those about to be asked the organ and tissue donation question by driver license office employees. Danielle Percival, driver license office program manager

for the Donor Awareness Council said, “We conducted a DLO [driver license office] survey in the spring of 2007. The employees’ responses indicated that the two most common reasons cited by customers for not donating were ‘I am too old’ and ‘I’m too sick’. That represented 70 percent and the number one reason.”

This is referred to as a “self rule-out.” “Distrust of the medical system was a far second at 21 percent and religion was only 2 percent.”

“Another survey that we conducted at the same time as the DLO survey focused on folks who had not yet designated themselves as organ and tissue donors. One of the overwhelming things our research firm heard was: ‘I was surprised and not expecting to be asked about organ and tissue donation at the driver license office.’ ”

To address these findings, the DAC tested whether or not it made a difference if a simple



Shown above is the front page of the flyer that patrons of the Aurora, Colo. Driver License Office are given. It contains key messages about organ, eye and tissue donation.

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OUR MISSION

To fulfill the wishes of eye donors and their families to help another overcome blindness through transplantation and medical research.

Edmund Jacobs, Executive Director

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Technical Manager Finds Familiar Home at RMLEB

In April, the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank hired a new employee to manage the technical department. But this technical manager isn't exactly "new" to the RMLEB team.

Eric Meinecke began his eye banking career at RMLEB, where he worked from 2000 to 2005. After this start, Meinecke served as the technical director at the Lions Eye Bank of Wisconsin, where he had the opportunity to gain a different perspective on eye banking and increase his knowledge base. His versatile experience in the technical aspects of eye banking made him the right candidate for the job when the technical manager position at RMLEB came open earlier this year.

"I'm excited to be back at the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank," said Meinecke. "We have a great team here that I'm extremely proud of, and a

bright future."

Meinecke is responsible for the coordination, recovery and distribution of donated ocular tissues at the eye bank. This includes having the appropriate amount and caliber of employees to accomplish the technical department's important and complex mission.

Several technical staff members have departed RMLEB this year to pursue their next career aspirations, so Meinecke has been hard at work filling those voids.

"We have an abundance of knowledge and talent here, and I'm confident that the new staff will find

personal enrichment while fulfilling our mission," said Meinecke.

To read more about Meinecke, the new staff members and previously existing staff, visit www.corneas.org and access "Our People."



Eric Meinecke, the new Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank Technical Manager.

Students Get Artistic for Donation



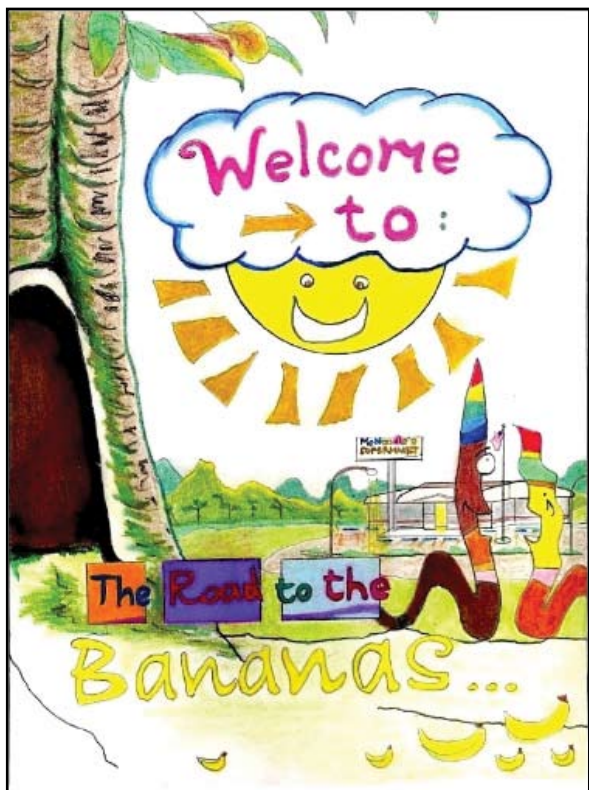
Kelli M., a student at Englewood High School, holds her award for First Place in the 2008 Creative Challenge Journalism Contest. The Creative Challenge, a youth program of the Donor Awareness Council, also includes a poster and poetry competition for middle and high school students. The theme for each contest is organ and tissue donation. The journalism contest is sponsored solely by RMLEB, a coalition organization of the DAC. To learn more about the Creative Challenge, visit www.donor-awareness.org.

Transplant recipient pens children's book, dedicates it to RMLEB

The experience of receiving the gift of sight is often life-changing for corneal transplant recipients, and is something they never forget.

Peter Searle, a transplant recipient and former Colorado resident, has a deep appreciation for this gift and the people who made it possible. He is also an strong advocate for organ, eye and tissue donation.

"The Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank rescued my life, and so many others, from what would have been complete blindness," said Searle. "Not a day goes by without my memory of that reality."



The front cover of "The Road to the Bananas," a children's book by corneal transplant recipient Peter Searle and Dustin Desany. Searle created the illustrations for the book.

You may remember Searle from a news story on Denver's Fox 31 News in July of 2000 that featured RMLEB and the eye donation and transplantation process. In this news spot, Searle received the opportunity to meet the family of his cornea donor.

Searle now lives in Vermont and recently authored a children's book titled "The Road to the Bananas." He has dedicated the book to RMLEB, and also plans to donate a portion of the sales to RMLEB.

The story for the book was the idea of Dustin Desany, the son of Searle's girlfriend. Searle collaborated with Desany to turn the idea into a written work, and also created the brightly-colored illustrations that accompany the story.

The story follows two earthworms, brothers Paul and Carl, who venture inside their neighborhood grocery store on their birthday and meet a variety of other creatures along the way.

For information on how to purchase "The Road to the Bananas," visit www.corneas.org and access the "News" section.

From the Top

Edmund Jacobs, Executive Director



Altruism is something that comes naturally for human beings. We often go the extra mile to help other people, whether the benefits are great or small. That sense of selflessness is reflected in the donor registration statistics for Colorado and Wyoming. The majority of citizens in both states have indicated that they wish to help someone else through organ, eye and tissue donation when they are no longer living.

What if that desire to give of one's self was not carried out, even though it could have been? This situation has been a reality for many terminally ill citizens who choose to die at home, but the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank is helping to alleviate the loss of the wish to donate. As you'll read in the "Circle of Light" feature on pages 4 and 5, hospices in our service area are working hand-in-hand with RMLEB to fulfill their patients' wishes to help another overcome blindness.

As more hospices partner with RMLEB, more patients and their families will be empowered to help someone else through donation. Thank you to all who make the extra effort to help a patient fulfill their selfless legacy of donation.

CIRCLE

A Unique Legacy: Donation Program Met With Warm Reception at Hospice

Terry Dionisio is a patient of Pikes Peak Hospice & Palliative Care (PPHPC) in Colorado Springs who is living with end-stage kidney cancer.

One of Dionisio's final wishes is to become an eye tissue donor, and hopefully be able to help restore someone's vision so they can live a fulfilling life. A donation program with the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank that began in April at PPHPC will grant her, and many more like her, the wish to give the gift of sight.

Based on a medical screening, Dionisio is eligible to donate her eye tissue and has made herself a donor through the Colorado Donor Registry. Dionisio, 61, has been in hospice care since early June. Though she has been registered to donate for some time, the donation program has given her another opportunity to share her wish with her husband, Joe, and their family. John Bauer, Director of Chaplains and Counselors at PPHPC, initiated the conversation of donation with the Dionisio family when they were ready.

"I think John made the opportunity [to donate] very clear and understandable, and we were all on board together very quickly. It wasn't a long discussion at all," said Dionisio.

The PPHPC donation program also cleared up a misconception for

Dionisio that is common for many patients: that although she is ill, her particular condition will not prevent her from donating.

"I had assumed that I would not be a donor because of my cancer, and I didn't even know that eye tissue donation was an option," said Dionisio. "And I think, for me, to lose sight



Photo by Sandra Adams

Terry Dionisio is a PPHPC patient with end-stage kidney cancer. RMLEB is working with PPHPC to fulfill Dionisio's wish of donating her eye tissue at the end of her life.

would be one of the cruelest, most frightening things that can happen in your life...not to be able to see or read.

So if someone can continue to do those types of activities, I would love to be a part of that."

The nature of hospice care enables the opportunity for a patient to openly discuss with their family whether or not they wish to donate. Patients who enter a hospice are terminally ill, and are provided with care that addresses their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Because patients are encouraged to take an active part in their advance care plans, the hospice staff has found it appropriate to facilitate an open discussion of donation with a patient's family while the patient is still living. Ideally, an eligible patient is able to clearly express his or her wishes regarding donation.

"This is definitely unique for us. To talk about the donation before I die is an incredible experience," Dionisio said. "It's part of the whole package of trying to make the gift of dying this way even more positive."

Darlene Avery, Assistant Director of Chaplains and Counselors at PPHPC, is an administrator of the eye tissue donation program. She can attest to the benefits that families have experienced by discussing donation with their loved one.

"I've found that the conversation takes the burden off the family of

OF Light

wondering what the patient wants,” said Avery.

Unfortunately, when deaths occur unexpectedly in hospitals, families may unknowingly learn that their loved one was registered as an organ and tissue donor, or, if not registered, they’re left to wonder if their loved one would have wanted to give the gift of donation. The hospice donation program helps eliminate these issues when possible.

The hospice donation program also differs from hospital donation programs in a couple of other ways. First, patients are screened by hospice staff upon admission for eligibility to donate eye tissue. This differs from hospital donation programs where donation eligibility screening is done at the time of a patient’s death, as mandated by federal law. Second, hospices have no federal obligation to facilitate donation. Hospices like PPHPC participate because it empowers patients and families.

“We learned that there are a lot of people for whom this is part of their legacy plan, and they were surprised to find that if an agency actually doesn’t check the Registry, make the connection, and at the time of death call, their wish may not be honored,” said Avery. “And there’s a whole other group of patients who thought because

they are hospice patients, that no one would want any [of their tissues], and we’re thrilled to find out that they can still make a difference even though they’re ill.”

If eligible to donate based on a medical screening, the staff will place a phone call to determine if the patient is a registered donor or not. At the appropriate time, a chaplain



Photo by Sandra Adams

John Bauer and Darlene Avery discuss the progress of the donation program during a recent meeting with RMLEB.

or counselor will have a conversation with the patient and their family about donation. At the time of the patient’s death, the staff will make another phone call to coordinate the donation process with the eye bank.

Avery said that the donation program has been fully embraced by both patients and hospice staff. Patients want to have their wishes fulfilled, and

the staff members want to help make this happen.

Bauer has also seen a positive reaction to the option of eye donation among patients and staff. He said that the concept of donation has really resonated throughout the hospice, and that patients who embrace donation see it as a gift of themselves to someone else. “It’s giving back,

I think, in one of the most unique ways that a human being can do anything. That kind of hit home here,” said Bauer. “You’re literally giving something of yourself, your own tissue of your own body.”

At its core, the donation program is all about giving eligible donors the opportunity to express, and hopefully fulfill, a wish to help someone else as their final act in this world. These expressions of the wish to donate, and even to not donate, have taught the hospice staff more than they could have imagined about their patients’ values and communication within families, according to Avery.

Each patient who expresses a wish to donate their eye tissue will become a part of the circle of light, regardless of the final outcome of their donation. This wish is the gift, and it has the power to change the world for someone else.

Lion Ernie Davies Honored by RMLEB with Memorial Fund

Lions clubs of Colorado and Wyoming, as well as individual Lions, can aid in the mission of the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank by contributing to the Lion Ernie Davies Memorial Fund.

Lions Davies was a former RMLEB Board member, a past District Governor for the District 6NE Lions, and a member of the Columbine Lions Club in Longmont, Colo. He was a well-loved and respected Lion, and since his death in the spring, more than 40 individual and Lions club contributors have given the eye bank more than \$1,300 to his memorial fund.

Contributions to the fund go toward a new set of international clocks that eye bank technical staff will utilize while working to distribute eye tissue to corneal transplant surgeons world-wide.

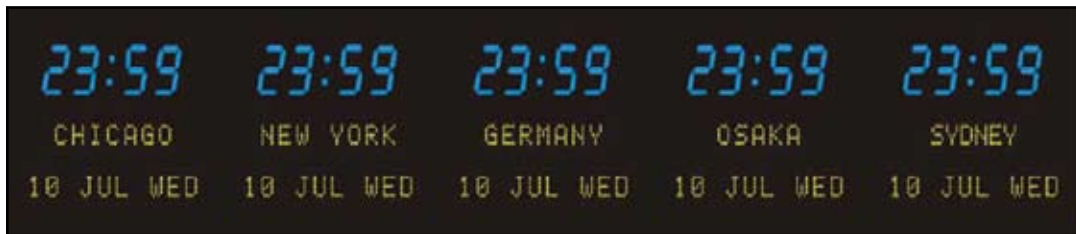
The new clocks will be in digital format, and will include a panel of five clocks with the ability to display 10 different time zones. This will be a significant upgrade from the current 24-hour analog clocks, which only display five time zones and are more difficult for new staff members to read.

A plaque will be installed to honor the contribution of Lion Davies to the eye bank and those contributors to his memorial fund. The clock and plaque will become regular features of the RMLEB tour.

Contributions to the fund can be made by visiting the RMLEB Web site, www.corneas.org, and using the Contribution Form. Thank you to all Lions clubs and individual Lions who have already made a contribution to the fund.



Lion Ernie Davies, a former RMLEB board member and very involved Lion.



The top graphic is an example of the digital international clocks that will be made possible with contributions to the Lion Ernie Davies Memorial Fund. The clocks will be a significant upgrade from the current analog clocks, shown on bottom, that the RMLEB technical staff uses in the Mission Control room.

Donor Registry

> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

handout was given to each person entering the driver license office. This gave each customer the opportunity to read about organ and tissue donation while waiting to be called to the counter. Percival selected the Aurora, Colorado office for the test.

“We chose the Aurora office because it is one of the biggest and historically has a low percent of folks saying yes to donation,” said Percival. “The greeter at the front door hands out a flyer with every ID Matrix [two page listing of the document requirements in Colorado to be issued a driver license].”

The key messages listed above, along with other information about becoming a registered donor were printed on “paycheck stuffers,” an informative flyer to be given to all those going to the Aurora DLO.

When asked if he had seen or heard a response such as this before, Aurora DLO Office Manager, Ellory Robbins said, “They [DLO visitors] used to look around and say ‘I don’t know,’” when presented the option of becoming a donor.

“There are so many people [that visit this office]. Things are so busy at this location,” said Robbins.

Since the inclusion of the informative handout to normal paperwork, Robbins said that people seem to be much more prepared to hear about and discuss becoming an organ and tissue donor.

According to data collected by the DLO and the DAC, the percentage of those that joined the registry through the Aurora office rose nearly 8 percent in a four-month span beginning in February 2008.

Robbins said, “Danielle came in

and told us there was an improvement [to the percentage of those that joined the registry] and we attribute that to the handout.”

When asked why he thought the flyer was so effective, Robbins said, “people actually sit down and they have the chance to read about donation.”

He also explained this office has informative posters hanging from the ceilings and walls, but “the flyer is something they have in their hand.”

Robbins said, “We also let them know they are not liable for costs of transplants and donation makes a difference... [people] fear that their family would be liable for expenses.”

“It gives insight into the program because most people don’t have any idea about the donation program.”

Lions Conventions Highlights

The Colorado Lions Convention in Greeley and the Wyoming Lions Convention in Rawlins, both in May, provided the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank with an opportunity to share its mission with a wide range of Lions.

Ed Jacobs, the RMLEB Executive Director, spoke to the Lions at both conventions about the successes the eye bank has enjoyed in the last year, and about how Lions can get involved and help ensure continued fulfillment of the eye bank’s unique and far-reaching mission.

At the Colorado Lions Convention, Gayle Collins of Louisville, Colo., spoke to Lions in attendance about her

experiences as a corneal transplant recipient. In April 2008, Collins received a corneal transplant in her right eye due to complications from post-refractive surgery she underwent in the past.

The cornea Collins received came from an eye donor in Colorado who wished to help restore the sight of someone else through donation. Shortly after her cornea transplant, Collins contacted the donor’s family through the eye bank to express her gratitude for the gift of sight she received.



Gayle Collins, a corneal transplant recipient from Louisville, Colo. speaks to attendees of the Colorado Lions Convention in Greeley May 16.