

FLORIDA LIONS EYE BANK Newsight



Miller School of Medicine • Bascom Palmer Eye Institute
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FALL • 2006

Eye Bank Presents HEROES Awards to VITAS Professionals

Staff members from VITAS Innovative Hospice Care® of Broward and VITAS Innovative Hospice Care® of Palm Beach recently were honored as HEROES recipients for their role in helping the eye bank to fulfill its mission.

HEROES, which stands for Helping Enables the Restoration Of Eye Sight, is an award presented by the eye bank to individuals and organizations who play an important role in Giving the Gift of Sight.

VITAS is a national hospice provider which serves those with terminal illness at home, inpatient units, hospitals and assisted living communities.

VITAS' patient care staff have sup-



(L-R) Judith Cornille, Chaplain Misti Johnson, VITAS CPE Supervisor; Don Dolan, VITAS Inpatient Team Manager; Deborah Caron-Galtre, VITAS Chaplain; Eye Bank Executive Director Elizabeth Fout-Caraza and Technical Director Dr. Jorge Pena.

ported our eye donation program in the past, however, with this new relationship, they have been working tirelessly to support donation.

“The commitment of the VITAS staff to eye donation was evident in our very first meeting,” said Judith Cornille, Director of Professional Development for the eye bank.

→ continued on the next page

IN THIS ISSUE:

Residents train at Eye Bank
Grateful recipient visits

2
3

Installation Dinner
Honoring donors

4-5
6-7

First Year Residents Train at the Eye Bank

The Bascom Palmer Eye Institute's three-year residency training program is consistently rated as the #1 Ophthalmology Residency Program in the nation by *Ophthalmology Times*. This is partly due to the unique and valuable experience the residents receive from the Florida Lions Eye Bank and its Ocular Pathology Laboratory.

Each July a new group of seven ophthalmology residents arrive at Bascom Palmer and during their first week, the eye bank staff spends one afternoon with the new physicians to familiarize them with the organization and its mission. As future stewards of the Gift of Sight these residents are also trained in the sterile removal of corneas from donor eyes.

"Their understanding of the process of corneal donation is critical to their understanding of our organization's goal. These corneas are not manufactured or created in a lab. They are gifts



First year Bascom Palmer residents gain valuable experience in the eye bank's Ocular Pathology Laboratory.

from donors and their families," said Executive Director Elizabeth Fout-Caraza.

In addition to their orientation, the residents also spend much of their first year training in the Florida Lions Eye Bank's Ocular Pathology Lab under Dr. Sander Dubovy. During this training they complete pathology studies on eyes and eye tissue which helps them understand and diagnose eye diseases. This experience will assist them in treating their future patients.

VITAS Receives HEROES Award

continued from Page 1

"They invited me to conduct eye donation training programs with each of the Broward VITAS teams." Approximately 200 hospice staff members now know more about these important CHOICES for VITAS patients/families.

There have already been three consents signed and many more are expected. Deborah Caron-Galtere, VITAS Chaplain in Palm Beach, assisted with

securing the first eye donation consent.

VITAS' internal newsletter, Vital Signs, soon will feature an article about this new relationship, entitled New Vision Emerges Between VITAS and the University of Miami. The newsletter reaches over 8,500 readers and the article will address many of the misconceptions about eye donation and the hospice patient.

A Smile is Worth a Thousand Words

“Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing.” - Mother Teresa

And it was a beautiful thing when Rashaad Williams, his mother and father recently visited the eye bank. Their smiles and expressions of gratitude brought rays of sunshine into the eye bank office!

Rashaad is a 19-year-old mathematics student interested in actuarial science. When he began rubbing his right eye frequently and noticing a change in his vision, he consulted his ophthalmologist in Trinidad and Tobago and the problem was diagnosed. Dr. David Maharaj began treating Rashaad for keratoconus. When the use of contact lenses no longer helped suppress the change in his cornea, Dr. Maharaj referred him to Bascom Palmer Eye Institute for a cornea transplant.

Dr. Carol Karp successfully transplanted a donated cornea into his right eye. The cornea, recovered and processed by the Florida Lions Eye Bank had been donated by the family of a young accident



(L-R) Eye bank Technical Director Jorge Pena, Rashaad Williams and his parents.

victim. “Dr. Karp is excellent,” his mother said.

In his first post operative visit, Rashaad’s vision was 20/60. He said he feels fine and looks forward to the possibility of more improvement in his vision after the sutures are removed.

Although the journey to and from their home involved over 8 hours of flying, the Williams family’s smiles reflect their appreciation of the preciousness of the gift of sight.

Recipient and Donor’s Wife Send Letters of Thanks

I received a cornea transplant in March of 2006. Now, I’m 28-years-old and my eye problem started when I was a child. At 14, I was told I would need a transplant. For many years no doctor would perform the transplant and through a miracle I found a doctor who would. I went from 20/400 in my left eye to 20/30 at 14 weeks after the surgery.

I received my donor tissue from you and that was the greatest gift. I was put on the transplant list on a Monday and on Thursday a donor was found. You have changed my life along with the life that was lost. I am a very different person now. I can now see my son clearly and that is the greatest feeling. Next year I will get the other eye done and I can’t wait. This has been a great experience.

Nadine Dupra

Dr. Dubovy and Florida Lions Eye Bank,

Thank you for your letter acknowledging the donation of my husband’s beautiful loving brown eyes. He was a gift to me from God. Best wishes for success in your dedicated work of sacrifice.

Marguerite Lee

Eye Bank's 2006 Installation

It was a magical and festive evening, filled with synchronicity and coincidence. The anticipation and planning for the 2006 Installation Dinner had begun many months before. The Lions Clubs had earmarked and donated nearly 100 wonderful items for the silent auction. The tables were set, the guests' gifts were placed at each setting, the exquisite blue, white and silver floral arrangements atop each table were breathtaking and everything was ready.

Then, shortly before the cocktail hour was to begin, there came loud cracks of thunder, lightning and sheets of rain. None of this deterred any of the invited guests, many of whom traveled more than two hours to thank President Mike San Miguel for his service and to install Bill Arthur, as President of the Florida Lions Eye Bank.

This is Bill Arthur's second term as President. He was first installed as president more than 20 years ago, during Mary Anne Taylor's first year as executive

director. The staff at the Forest Glen Country Club in Naples couldn't have been more accommodating and the dinner was beautifully prepared and delicious. The "dessert smiles" stretched from one corner of the room to the other as Bill Morganstern of Fotografie, who donated his services, captured the evening perfectly and as soothing music poured from the keyboard in the background.



Incoming Eye Bank President, Bill Arthur (R) presents Outgoing Eye Bank President Mike San Miguel, with a token of appreciation for his year of leadership and service.



LOOKING GOOD! District 35-I Director Jim Klug gets a helping hand at the start of the installation dinner.



Installation attendees, including Outgoing president Mike San Miguel (L), peruse the silent auction items.

Dinner A 'Perfect' Success

Elaine Bouchér of Your Personal Florist, not only donated her time, talent and the floral arrangements, but also eloquently and humorously shared her experience as a corneal transplant recipient (please see story on Page 8). Past President Ken Shivel led the installation of the 12 new Officers. The evening ended with the announcement of the door prize winners and silent auction items, which rased almost \$1,000.

Generous sponsors, such as the Lubitz

Financial Group and Northern Trust Bank, also helped make this year's installation a phenomenal success. The contributions will assist the Eye Bank in achieving its mission to **Give the Gift of Sight**. In the words of the Executive Director, Elizabeth Fout-Caraza, "It was perfect!"



Outgoing President Mike San Miguel (R), with District A Director, Luis San Miguel (second from left) and his wife, and Judith Cornille during the cocktail hour before dinner.



Past President Juan Tejera (left) with Vice President District I, Gordon Hare.



Treasurer, Luis Figueras (L) and Past President Lino de la Hera (R) and their wives share a table at the Installation dinner.



Past Presidents Charlie Smith (L) with Past President Ken Shivel.

Donations

Received from May 1 - August 15, 2006

The Florida Lions Eye Bank is grateful for the generous and local support of our many contributors. We appreciate the confidence they have shown in our missions to supply corneas and scleras for sight-saving surgery.

\$1001 and above

Florida Lions Foundation for the Blind

\$501 to \$1,000

L. Jules Arkin Family

\$101 to \$500

Mrs. Violet S. Evens

Up to \$100

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Mr. Harvey E. Younes
Mrs. Sarah Zaretsky
Ms. Ruth Zucker

Giving Thanks at Year's End

Fall is traditionally a time to reflect on our many blessings and to make plans for the future. For many, these plans include sharing with others through charitable gifts. A gift to the Florida Lions Eye Bank supports not only our mission to Give the Gift of Sight, but also reinforces your commitment to make a difference in your community. Many types of gifts allow you to fulfill your charitable intentions and may result in some significant tax benefits.

Cash is still the most popular way to make a charitable gift. With a cash gift to Florida Lions Eye Bank before December 31, 2006, it is possible to eliminate income tax of up to 50 percent of your taxable income.

Gifts of appreciated securities or stock is also an excellent way of giving. If you have owned stock for more than one year, donating it to Florida Lions Eye Bank offers you a two-fold tax savings. First, you avoid any capital gains tax on the increase in value of

your stock. Second, you receive a tax deduction for the full fair market value of the stock on the date of the gift, up to 30 percent of your adjusted gross income, with an additional five-year carry forward.



Other ways to support include *insurance policies with the Eye Bank as the beneficiary, real estate given outright or subject to life interest, numerous forms of charitable trusts, bequests in your will or a living tribute.*

The Florida Lions Eye Bank can give you additional information on gifts you may be considering. Please call 305-326-6359 or 1-800-329-7000, ext. 6359.

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Elaine Bouch er Gives the Gift of Flowers

When Marjorie Harrison, Eye Bank Donor Coordinator in Collier County, was tasked with finding centerpieces for the 2006 Installation Dinner she immediately thought of Elaine Bouch er of *Your Personal Florist*. Elaine was the florist for two of Marjorie's children's weddings and Marjie knew that Elaine would do a wonderful job. When asked if she could provide reasonably priced flowers for the dinner, Elaine responded, "I owe the Lions my life! Of course I will do it."

As a corneal transplant recipient over 21 years ago, Elaine had always hoped to be able to "give back" to the Florida Lions Eye Bank. And she did just that!

Not only did Elaine donate all of the beautiful centerpieces and arrangements but she also shared her story. She had contracted a virus, similar to a "cold sore" in her eye. Her cornea slowly deteriorated, leading to blindness in her left eye. Her cornea transplant surgeon, Dr. Gorovoy of Fort Myers restored the vision in her eye with a cornea from the Florida Lions Eye Bank.

The donated cornea, which she now describes as "41 years old," was from a 20-year old victim of a car accident. Over the years, Elaine has experienced a "couple hints of re-

jection," but the problems have been successfully resolved.

Because she is so grateful for the **Gift of Sight** and because she has instilled in her children the concept "you have to give back," she is also proud to say that all of her children are eye donors. Elaine Bouch er's generosity, kindness, sense of humor and compassion are the gifts she gave to the Florida Lions Eye Bank.



Elaine Bouch er with Marjorie Harrison, Eye Bank Donor Coordinator, and Marjie's husband, Tom Harrison.