

# FLORIDA LIONS EYE BANK NEWSIGHT

BASCOM PALMER EYE INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI MILLER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

SUMMER 2017



FLORIDA LIONS  
EYE BANK

Since 1962

Restoring The Beauty of Sight

## Florida Lions Eye Bank Forms New Foundation to Serve Research and Community Needs

Florida Lions Eye Bank is thrilled to announce the creation of a new non-profit organization dedicated to providing funding for ophthalmic research, services and education. This new organization, appropriately named Beauty of Sight

Foundation, will expand on what was once a side project of Florida Lions Eye Bank: awarding grants for ophthalmic research and supporting research fellowship positions.

Since its inception in 1962, Florida Lions Eye Bank has been the only eye bank to serve the six counties of South Florida in the recovery, processing, and distribution of corneal tissue for transplant. Originally developed as a resource for corneal transplant surgeons, Florida Lions Eye Bank's scope has grown over the last several decades. "We're more than just an eye bank," said Elizabeth Fout-Caraza, Executive Director. "As we became experts in our field, we were able to recognize needs in the medical community for research and research fellowship funding."

For years, Florida Lions Eye Bank fulfilled these needs, providing more than \$250,000 in grants each year to researchers focused on curing



blindness and preventing vision loss. Among the recipients of these grants is the Ophthalmic Biophysics Center, a facility lead by Dr. Jean Marie Parel and dedicated to performing translational research benefiting patient eye care.

"Dr. Parel's research in ophthalmic instrumentation, including partnering on the invention of the vitrector, has saved the vision of millions of patients worldwide," said Sander R. Dubovy, MD, Medical Director of Florida Lions Eye Bank and the Victor T. Curtin Professor of Ophthalmology at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. "This is just one of the laboratories that we have been honored to support."

This year, Florida Lions Eye Bank made the decision to create Beauty of Sight Foundation to give these charitable efforts their own platform. "We felt this work was important enough that it warranted its own organization," stated Fout-Caraza. Beauty of Sight Foundation will concentrate on the charitable aspects of preventing vision loss and curing blindness. It

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# Florida Lions Eye Bank at the Annual EBAA Meeting

In March 2017, Florida Lions Eye Bank underwent an inspection by the Eye Bank Association of



America, and passed with flying colors. The Eye Bank Association of America, or EBAA, is the nationally-recognized accrediting body for eye banks, responsible for ensuring that donor eye tissue is recovered, stored, processed, and distributed in a safe manner.

The inspection, which lasted for two days, evaluated Florida Lions Eye Bank's adherence to important medical and regulatory standards. Due to its rigorous compliance Florida Lions Eye Bank was awarded a three-year accreditation by the EBAA, the highest level of accreditation given. Florida Lions Eye Bank has received a three year accreditation at every inspection since 2011. It became an EBAA member eye bank in 2010.

The announcement of Florida Lions Eye Bank's



accreditation was made at the annual EBAA meeting in June 2017. This year's meeting, which took place in Salt Lake City, Utah, was attended by hundreds of eye banking professionals and physicians from across the nation.

Not only was Florida Lions Eye Bank recognized with accreditation at this prestigious conference, but it was honored as a guest speaker. Executive Director Elizabeth Fout-Caraza and Medical Director Sander R. Dubovy, MD, spoke about the impact the Zika virus had upon eye banking processes in South Florida. Both presenters discussed the challenges and opportunities for innovation that resulted from being the only eye bank at the epicenter of the 2016 United States Zika outbreak.

## Beauty of Sight Foundation Launch - *from previous page*

will award research grants, sponsor ophthalmic fellowships, provide community education, and raise global awareness. Florida Lions Eye Bank will remain the center of clinical operations, recovering, processing, and distributing ocular tissue for transplant and research, and operating the only ocular pathology laboratory in South Florida.

The launch of Beauty of Sight Foundation was celebrated on June 1, 2017 near downtown Miami. Guests, including physicians, researchers, biomedical engineers, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and other visionaries, enjoyed a breathtaking view of

Biscayne Bay while listening to presentations about the new foundation.

Just a few months after its incorporation, Beauty of Sight Foundation has already received several generous donations, and disbursed a grant of \$150,000 to an ophthalmic research facility in South Florida. The foundation's board of directors is extremely optimistic about the impact Beauty of Sight Foundation will have upon the future of ophthalmic research.

For more information about Beauty of Sight Foundation, including events and fundraising activities, please visit [beautyofsight.org](http://beautyofsight.org).



## Annual Installation Dinner Honors Lions Leadership

Florida Lions Eye Bank hosted its annual Installation Gala, celebrating the induction of its new board of directors for the 2017-2018 year. This group of visionary leaders was installed on June 3, 2017 at a celebration in Sunrise, Florida. Leading the board as president is George Letakis, who outlined his plans for the exciting year ahead. The Installation Gala featured a formal dinner, live music, presentations from

Executive Director Elizabeth Fout-Caraza and Medical Director Sander R. Dubovy, M.D., as well as a warm send-off from outgoing board president Larry Schiff. Notable awards included the presentation of a Presidential Medal to Juan Tejera and the Ross Carr Memorial Award presented to Lino de la Hara. A silent auction of donated items was enjoyed by all attendees, with proceeds benefiting Florida Lions Eye Bank.







# Donor Family Celebration a Memorable

On Saturday, May 20, 2017, Florida Lions Eye Bank proudly hosted the third annual Donor Family Celebration at Flamingo Gardens in Davie, Florida. More than 250 people gathered to honor the 1,042 South Floridians who became eye donors in 2016. The families and loved ones of each of these selfless donors was invited to a fun, but reflective, event to celebrate the gift their loved ones gave through eye donation. Festivities included lunch, crafts and activities, music, face-painting, a butterfly release ceremony and admission to the 60-acre tropical garden and wildlife sanctuary.

Many of the guests expressed their positive feelings about their loved ones' eye donation. Tana, whose late husband, Brian, became an eye donor in December 2016, said, "I wanted to thank you for giving us all a place to honor our very precious loved ones." Tana recalled that during her husband's life, they discussed



and supported eye, organ and tissue donation. "But the actual moment that it happens is more emotional than we could have imagined. From the first call, everyone from Florida Lions Eye Bank has been kind, compassionate and understanding. Thank you is not enough. I pray that my husband's eyes are still seeing beauty now," she said.

Cindy, wife of donor Carlos, also showed her appreciation for the celebration, saying, "It was all very beautiful and I will never forget it. It means so very much to me and Carlos's family





# Memorable and Touching Occasion for Families



remember Pete and his ongoing contribution to his fellow human. He was happy to be a donor! I was happy to help make his wishes come true!"

Florida Lions Eye Bank understands that every joyful story of donation means that someone who is loved has passed away. Although the Donor Family Celebration was a enjoyable event, many guests felt their loved ones' absence acutely, and expressed these bittersweet feelings. Gloria, donor mother, stated, "Our family is thankful for honoring our Karina at the Donor Family Celebration. My daughter was killed by a drunk driver when she was only 24 years old, but we were glad to be able to donate her eyes."

to know that someone has been blessed with eyesight."

Laureen, whose husband, Peter, donated his eyes in June of 2016, felt the celebration was meaningful for her family, helping to feel connected to others. "We met several families that all share heartbreak yet felt honored and blessed to be included in this special day. Pete's and my grandchildren had a great time! They talked about their grandpa a lot, which was so healthy and good for them. It was a glorious day for our family and such a happy way to

Liliana, another donor parent, said, "We had a great time, although it's very sad because my son is no longer here. But we're happy that he is able to help someone else." Florida Lions Eye Bank is honored that in spite of their losses, these individuals and hundreds of others celebrated their loved ones' eye donations.





# Eye Bank Hosts Open House for Florida Lions

The annual Florida Lions Eye Bank Open House is a rite of spring!

Florida Lions from clubs throughout Multiple District 35 gathered at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute to learn about the eye bank's latest activities and accomplishments. Presentations were given by Medical Director Sander Dubovy, M.D. and Executive Director Elizabeth Fout- Caraza and cornea transplant recipient Daniella Barbary. Ms. Barbary, a Lion and wife of a kidney transplant recipient, spoke about how her quality of life improved after a corneal transplant with tissue from the Florida Lions Eye

Bank. Ms. Barbary expressed her gratitude in speaking to fellow Lions about eye, organ and tissue donation. "It was wonderful to be at the Open House and tell everyone about my corneal transplant and to thank my donor and his family."

After the presentations, guests toured Florida Lions Eye Bank laboratory, the Pathology Laboratory and the Ophthalmic Biophysics Center. The evening concluded on the patio with dinner, drinks and music. Each year, Florida Lions Eye Bank opens its doors to thank the Lions Clubs who have shown their support of its mission of Restoring the Beauty of Sight.



# Florida Lions Eye Bank Donations

FROM DECEMBER 1, 2016 - JUNE 30, 2017

## General

Mr. Roberto Aguilera  
 Mrs. Dolores B. Allen  
 Amazon Smile Foundation  
 Ms. Pamela Aniello  
 Lion William E. Arthur  
 Mr. Manuel Arvesu  
 Ms. Eva M. Bartolet  
 John E. and Nellie J. Bastien  
 Memorial Foundation  
 Mr. David L. Blalock  
 Mrs. Sandra Borok  
 Mr. James E. Brewer  
 Mr. Arnold T. Butkus  
 Mr. Royal Chernock  
 Mrs. Shirley Christian  
 Mr. Juan Constante  
 Mr. Elio Cruz  
 Ms. Edith E. Davidson  
 Ms. Phyllis De Lizza  
 Mrs. Elaine Dubovy  
 Sander Dubovy, M.D.  
 Mr. John Erskine  
 Lion Page H. Ferrell  
 Mrs. Velia Focaracci  
 Mr. Atilio Fortuny  
 Dr. Kenneth F. Golden  
 Dr. Patricio Grayeb  
 Ms. Maria E. Guas  
 Mr. and Mrs. Michael Harmelin

Mr. W. T. Harmon  
 Mr. Leonard Hatala  
 Ms. Betsy Hawkins  
 Estate of Florence Herwitz  
 Mrs. Marilyn Jacobs  
 Mrs. Corine Johnson  
 Mr. John N. Jones  
 Mrs. Elsa H. Jones  
 Ms. Jeannette M. Jordan  
 Ms. Helen Kastenbaum  
 Raananah Katz, M.D.  
 Mr. James R. Kelly  
 Ms. Nancy Kranz  
 Ms. Karen LaBrie  
 Mrs. Virginia Lepper  
 Mrs. Linda Lubitz-Boone  
 Mr. William F. Lyons  
 Ms. Elvira Madan  
 Ms. Barbara McNinney  
 Mrs. Gladys Miguel  
 Morrison Brown Argiz & Farra, LLC  
 Mr. Larry Morrison  
 Mr. Peter O. Muller  
 Mrs. Lillian R. Murray  
 Mrs. Ofelia M. Nibot  
 Ms. Elin B. Nilsson  
 Lions Eye Bank of NW PA, Inc.  
 The Calvin and Flavia Oak Foundation  
 Mrs. Evelyn R. Owens

Mrs. Linda Parras  
 Lion Lou M. Penzi, Jr.  
 Mrs. Maria D. Perez  
 Erica Person M.D.  
 Mrs. Caroline S. Pfeiffer  
 Mrs. Gloria Plastow  
 Mr. Rollins Reiter  
 Mrs. Barbara Robbins  
 Mrs. Claire Rosenblatt  
 Mrs. Bonnie Schiffman  
 Ms. Carrie Scott  
 Mr. Argemiro Sierra  
 Mrs. Gail Simmons  
 Mr. and Mrs. Alberto Sisso  
 Lion Ron J. Shayne  
 Lion Jerry Skufe PDG  
 Mrs. Elaine Solas  
 Ms. Leona Spector  
 Mr. David Stein  
 Mr. Timothy Strachan  
 Mr. Robert K. Sutton  
 Mrs. Ayda Talavera  
 Lion Juan Tejera  
 Mr. William Thode  
 Mrs. Alba P. Vecino  
 Mrs. Elayne Wasserman  
 Ms. Irene Wieder  
 Mr. Michael Zager  
 Mr. Paul A. Ziarnowski

## Lions Clubs

Alachua Lions Club  
 Aventura North Miami Beach Lions Club  
 Belle Glade Lions Club  
 Bonita Springs Lions Club  
 Bradenton Lions Club  
 Chattahoochee Lions Club  
 Dania Lions Club  
 Delray Beach Lions Club  
 Englewood Lions Club  
 Fort Pierce Lions Club  
 Ft. Lauderdale Lions Club  
 Hollywood Colombian American  
 Lions Club  
 Homosassa Lions Club  
 Indiantown Lions

Key Biscayne Lions Club  
 Lake Wales Lions Club  
 Lake Worth Lions Club  
 Largo Lions Foundation  
 Lions Golf Tournament  
 Miami Buena Vista-Biltmore Lions Club  
 Miami Colombian Lions Club  
 Miami Dade Interamerican Lions Club  
 Miami Five Stars Lions Club  
 Miami Interamerican Ecuador Lions Club  
 Miami Lakes Lions Club  
 Miami Lautaro Lions Club  
 Miami Lions Club  
 Mount Dora Lions Club  
 Navarre Lions Club

North Port Lions Club  
 Ormond By The Sea Lions Club  
 Palm Bay Happy Lions Club  
 Port St. Lucie Downtown  
 Port St. Lucie West Lions Club  
 Sebastian Lions Club  
 Sopchoppy Lions Club  
 South Florida Asian-American Lions Club  
 South Florida Maritime Lions Club  
 The Lake Sumter Lions Charities  
 The Lutz-Land O Lakes Foundation  
 Wauchula Lions Club  
 West Miami Sunshine Lions Club  
 West Palm Beach Lions Club  
 Zephyrhills Lions Club





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## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### Raising Awareness for Donation on National Blue and Green Day

Florida Lions Eye Bank, in partnership with Life Alliance Organ Procurement Agency, UM Brain Endowment Bank, and UMTB Donor Services, organized a community celebration to promote eye, organ and tissue donation. On April 21, 2017, representatives from all four agencies, as well as families of eye, organ, tissue, and brain donors, medical professionals, transplant recipients, and members of the community gathered at Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Headquarters in Doral to celebrate National Blue and Green Day.

More than 300 people assembled to listen to presenters share heartfelt stories about the role donation played in their lives. Among those who spoke were Steven Abbate, whose son, organ donor Lucas Abbate, inspired the 2010 film *The 5th Quarter*. The highlight of the presentation was a touching meeting between a pediatric liver recipient and the family of the young man whose donation saved her life. After the presentation, guests enjoyed an outdoor celebration featuring music, popcorn, food



trucks, artwork, and a group photo with Miami Dade Fire Rescue's trucks.

National Blue and Green day is observed every year on a Friday in April. On this day, everyone touched by donation and transplantation is encouraged to wear blue and green in an effort to promote the impact of eye, organ, and tissue donation, and raise awareness of the ongoing need for eye, organ, and tissue donors. For information about next year's Blue and Green Day celebration, contact Florida Lions Eye Bank at [info@fleb.org](mailto:info@fleb.org).