CONNECTING COUNTS
Through Their Eyes

Thanks to our donors, their families and our partners in donation, 817 people gave the gift of sight and health to others through eye and tissue donation in 2022. The gift of corneas restored sight to 934 people, and more than 10,000 others lives were impacted by donated tissues.

This work is not possible without the countless other lives touched through donation.

But it’s not about the numbers.

It’s about the individuals that make this possible. It’s about the donor families who in a time of grief, look beyond that to give the gift of sight and health. It’s about the expectant mom who chooses to help heal others through birth tissue donation. It’s about the surgeons who restore sight through a life changing cornea transplant. And it’s about the team of individual care providers involved in the process of supporting, recovering and preparing tissue for transplant. Our mission is not possible without them.

When a community truly cares for one another, everybody counts.

Marcy Dimond, CEBT, CTBS
Chief Executive Officer
Marie Bowden, CEBT, CTBS
Ocular Tissue Distribution Manager

Marie Bowden joined Dakota Lions Sight & Health 17 years ago as a recovery technician. Today she manages the processing and distribution of all ocular tissue for transplant with her team of professionals.

She said the world of ocular recovery and processing has changed dramatically. Distribution staff have so much more information available that allows them to more thoroughly evaluate potential donors and place right tissue for transplant.

Training the DLSH team in evaluation and processing of ocular tissue is one of Marie’s many roles. Marie has also provided training on specialized processing to other eye banks and surgeons nationwide.

And the best part of her day

“Is the excitement felt when we get the surgical report back from the clinic and know that the transplant went well. At the end of the day we want the best outcome for both the surgeons and recipients. After all these gifts are going back to the community we serve.”
Ashley Veurink, Birth Tissue Mother

“I was first approached to be part of Dakota Lions’ birth tissue program when it was decided that Ryder would be born via C-section. The nurse and the doctor sat me down and said, ‘Hey, there’s this program and it’s quite new.’”

That was how Ashley Veurink became one of the area’s first women to participate in Dakota Lions’ Birth Tissue program.

Her second child, Ryder, was born in August 2021.

The Dakota Lions Birth Tissue program is active in hospitals in South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota. The donation involves collecting the placenta and umbilical cord following scheduled cesarean section deliveries. These tissues contain special cells that stimulate healing in recipients, when transplanted by a physician. Conditions such as burns, ocular trauma, and difficult to heal wounds can all be treated by the application of birth tissue to speak healing. This is tissue that would otherwise be discarded following delivery.

Ashley said her obstetrician assured her that the procedure wouldn’t impact her or the baby. “She said it could only give me a positive experience. When we’re pregnant there is that feeling about birth and life, and to add to that by giving birth tissue is just a wonderful thing.”

The mother of two boys said it was an extremely positive experience. “I got to go home with my little miracle, my son. And I got to give the gift of healing to someone else through a donation. It would have been thrown away but instead it got to make a positive impact in someone’s life. Of course, I would do it again.”
For more than 30 years...

DLSH has been honored to help enable the gifts of sight and health by connecting donated tissues with recipients. What started as a vision of the Lions Clubs in 1963 has grown to be one of the leading eye banks across the nation. It is truly an honor to be entrusted by our partners, our donors and their families to carry these important gifts forward and to make a difference in the lives of others.

DLSH continues to find ways to innovate the delivery of donated corneal tissue to our partner surgeons through patient-ready grafts that decrease surgical time and healing time, while promoting better visual acuity.

In 2023 we plan to begin offering patient-ready DSEAK options.
MUSCULOSKELETAL, NERVE, SKIN & VASCULAR DONORS

To help enable the restoration of the BIRTH TISSUE SIGHT - RESTORING LIVES TOUCHED +10,000 TRANSPLANTS

Dakota Lions Sight & Health is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

934 TOTAL DONORS

2022 Stats

817 TOTAL DONORS

817 DONORS

138 SIGHT-RESTORING TRANSPLANTS

198 TISSUE DONORS

+10,000 LIVES TOUCHED BY OTHER TRANSPLANTS

Lions Club Contributions

Sharon Mark
The Polycarp Mousolf Trust and The Norma Mousolf Trust
Sidney Nelson
Duane Nickecr
Mildred Nussbaum
Paul Olson
Gloria Pack
Sharri Paranto
Leland and Mary Paulson
Sharon Pearson
Paul Penn
Jane Petersen
Barbara Polhikamp
Pauline Polotes
Elizabeth Pond
Roland and Rita Pond
Dennis Purvis
Gerald and Debora Raabe
Chesney and Patty Rice
Patricia Rogers
Daniel and Beverly Rognlie
Patricia Rod
Scheels
Scott and Glenda Schenmp
Everine Schipper
Diana Smith
Janice Soleta
Doris Splichal
Eunice Sprung
Brian and Ann Temple
Ted Thoms
Donald Tiegs
The Michael Twiss Family
Gladiys Vandal
Lyle and June Wagner
Weltmar South Dakota
Tracy Wickens
Martha Wilson
Norma Wittmeier
Barbra Yoder

Elgin Lions Club
Eureka Lions Club
Fargo Lions Club
Grand Forks Lions Club
Grand Forks Red River Lions Club
Grand Forks South Forks Lions Club
Gregory Lions Club
Halliday Lions Club
Hazeltine Lions Club
Hilly City Lions Club
Huron Lions Club
Ipswich Lions Club
Jamestown Lions Club
Jud Lions Club
Kulm Lions Club
Lake Metigoshe Lions Club
Lamoure Lions Club
Leife Lions Club
Lennox Lions Club
ManDan Dacotah Lions Club
Minot Lions Club
Minot Magic City Lions Club
Mitchell Lions Club
New England Lions Club
New Rockford Lions Club
Newell Lions Club
Pariston Lions Club
Piedmont Valley Lions Club
Redfield Lions Club
Scranton Lions Club
Sioux Falls Sioux Empire Lions Club
Sioux Falls Siouxslraine Lions Club
South Heart Lions Club
Stanley Lions Club
Streeter Lions Club
Taylor Lions Club
Tuttle Lions Club
Valley City Lions Club
Watford City Lions Club
White River Lions Club
Williston Komer Lions Club
Williston Lions Club
Yankton Lions Club

In Honor Contributions

Jeffrey Collins by Todd and Nancy Collins
Dr. Daniel Teresa by Lzarine Zimprich

In Memory Contributions

Daniel Bosenen by Ethel Bosenen
Lanny Boese by Todd and Renee Augustad
Lorraine Bradley by Don Bradley
Guy Bren by Janice Bren
Barbara Birnie by Jeryllyn Birnie
Philip H. Damm by Sally Damm Norby
Jean DeKramer by Madison Lions Club
Kathy Dusing by Dawn Gibson

Merlin Faith by Terri Bimbaum; Judy Bohnenblus; John and Bobby Brown; David and Kathleen Crabbs; Darrell Erickson; Brenda Faith; First Interstater Bank; Robert and Ronda Gusinsky; Kevin and Kathy Habenstra; John and Beth Hildebrandt; Douglas Jackson; Ketel Thorstenson LLP; Leroy and Joanne Ketel; Loren and Kathy Miles; Vl Rosenthal; Neal and Susan Schlottman; Subar; Kevin Wolf; Penelope Young
Elmer Fritz by Deuel Country Lions Club; Stephen and Kim Stroud
Lloyd Hansen by Roberta Hansen
Gary Hanson by Carol Hanson
Shelia Healy by John Healy
Artan Hever by Noonan Lions Club
Janice Hume by Beth Hume; Larry Kamerling
Gerald Itrike by Darwin Dirks
David Johnsson by Madison Lions Club
Mel Kary by Eureka Lions Club
Josephine Kolecka by Monica Walder
Jean Kooppman by Nathan Daily; Elaine Dunkelberger; Michael Frankan; Rodney Hanson; Klao and Pamela Homan; Barb Koopman; Jean Kooppman; Dean and Bonnie Rott; Doris Schldhauer
Robert Kritenbrink by Sally Kritenbrink
Veronica Lakstigala by Sally Kocon; Marjorie Kragen; Kathryn Larson; Sioux Falls Area Music Teachers Association
Lowell Latimer by Roger Braaten
Rolle Linn by Brian and Ann Temple
Elvin Lucie by Dorothy Hanscom
Kathy Mattson by Vicki Wentz
Elizabeth Menches by Madison Lions Club
Harald Narum by David and Pam Narum
Morris Nelson by Washburn Lions Club
Gregory Oeder by S. Berg
Sterling Palmerton by Robert Nixson
Agnes Pape by Barbara Hukl
Orland Paulsen by Mary Lou Paulsen
Ron Pedersen by Arnegard Lions Club
Paul Page by Terry Bimbaum
June Van Asch
Jeffrey Edlund
Julie Edlund
Patsy Edlund
Judy Edlund

Our Mission

To help enable the restoration of the gifts of sight and health.

Dakota Lions Sight & Health is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization.
Financial Summary

Support and revenue
- Operations: $4,358,680 (70%)
- Other Revenue: $61,407 (1%)
- Contributions/Fundraising: $1,768,110 (29%)

Total Support and Revenue: $6,188,197

Expenses
- Lab/Program Expenses: $3,449,067 (80%)
- Administrative Expenses: $591,605 (14%)
- Other Expenses: $249,249 (6%)

Total Expenses: $4,289,921

Increase to Net Assets: $1,898,276

In 2021...

we launched our birth tissue donation program, with a goal of establishing the program in the five larger hospitals throughout North and South Dakota. That goal has been met and we have partnered with an additional six hospitals to offer the donation option to moms who are having a planned c-section. This is currently our fastest growing program. The donated tissue is used for the treatment of corneal trauma, non-healing wounds, burns and more. Even more exciting, we see the tissue coming back into our service area to impact hundreds of lives in our community.

In 2023 we plan to expand the reach of this program to other hospitals throughout the region where currently this is not an available option.

Thank you for your continued partnership on this journey. Together the future is brighter than ever.
Judy Ishmael, Cornea Recipient

Judy Ishmael just celebrated her 64th birthday by camping along the Missouri River with her kids, their spouses, and her grandkids. Thanks to a sight-saving cornea transplant, she is able to enjoy precious events with her family.

“I was diagnosed with Fuchs’ Dystrophy and Epithelial Basement Membrane Dystrophy in 2020. Judy’s optometrist referred her to an ophthalmologist. “I learned that I needed a transplant and I learned about the Dakota Lions tissue and eye bank. I was so grateful that someone would be willing to donate tissue to a total stranger. To give the gift of sight to someone, to anyone at such a time of loss, is honoring your loved one’s wishes to be a part of something bigger.”

She and her family are grateful that someone checked the Donor box on their driver’s license. “Our kids feel strongly about being donors, and are donors, but since my transplant they feel more so.”

Saying “Thank You” is not adequate to convey her feelings, she said. But, in Judy’s words, You gave me the chance To see my grandbabies’ faces and smiles To see their faces light up when grandma comes to visit To share new adventures with my husband and best friend To see and exclaim over the beauty of a South Dakota sunrise.

Thank you, two little words but so many sights to see.

“Life’s short and sometimes messy,” Judy said, “but if you have a chance to help another person by tissue donation, a part of your loved one will live on and YOU will have made a difference in someone’s life.”
Cheryl Miller, Donor Family Member

Cheryl Miller’s husband was a huge motorcycle enthusiast and one of those individuals who made a clear difference in someone’s life.

In 2012 Timothy Miller was first diagnosed with small cell lung cancer in his right lung. His doctors treated the cancer with chemotherapy and radiation. But that was just the start of their journey.

“Then he got brain tumors and we got that treated. He was clear for three years,” Cheryl said. While Tim was in remission, he and Cheryl made the most of their time together. “Tim loved what he called his ‘air therapy’ – time on the open road riding his Harley.”

“Two years ago he went to the doctor on Friday because he couldn’t quit coughing. He figured he had pneumonia. On Saturday night we found out that lung cancer had taken his left lung. That Monday morning at 8:32 he passed away. He passed away just hours after that last diagnosis.”

The couple had discussed becoming eye and tissue donors when Tim was in his first round of chemo and radiation ten years ago. Cheryl said Tim wanted to be a donor to ensure that he could help somebody else through donation. She said, “Tim said, ‘If I can make someone’s life better, then I want to do it. I want to give somebody else something.’”

What would Cheryl tell a family member who is faced with end-of-life choices?

“I would tell them that you might be losing your special someone, but it’s also helping somebody with a chance to have a better life. Be that special someone who can offer that other person a chance.”
Michael Eide, MD, has been practicing for more than a dozen years at Ophthalmology Ltd. in Sioux Falls. With a subspecialty in cornea care, he is also the Assistant Medical Director for Dakota Lions Sight & Health.

He said cornea processing has changed the way physicians perform surgery. "Originally, the eye bank was in charge of recovering the corneas and letting us know what's available. Today, Dakota Lions prepares the corneas so that we don't have to do that in the operating room. That's not only a time-saving issue for the surgeon, it has also helped to lower complication rates."

But it’s not simply having Dakota Lions process the tissue that has improved outcomes, according to Dr. Eide. The processing procedures themselves are more advanced. "Now we're using different parts of the cornea for different surgeries. Sometimes we need to use the 'strong part' of the cornea, other times we want the part that has more delicate cells for transplants."

We've seen the processing get more fine-tuned and more refined with every passing year,

so that we're using just that part of the cornea that we need to use for each patient."

For Dr. Eide, patient satisfaction is paramount. "It's great to have a patient tell you, within a week of their surgery, that they're seeing things they haven't seen in years...like being able to find their grandkids at the game or out on the court because they couldn't see the numbers before."