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Governor Kathleen Sebelius Declares March Eye Donor Month in Kansas

Hays, Kan. (March 19, 2009) – Through the Heartland Lions Eye Banks, 470 Kansans gave their fellow citizens a new outlook on life in 2008 by donating their corneas for transplants nationwide. To acknowledge the generosity of these individuals and to encourage others to pledge to give the gift of sight, Governor Kathleen Sebelius declared March Eye Donor Month in the state of Kansas.

Joining Governor Sebelius for the signing of the proclamation on Friday, March 13, 2009 were Sylvia Reinhardt, R.N., Hospital Services Coordinator for the Hays, Kan. branch of the Eye Bank, and Denise Haynes, a Hays cornea recipient. Both Reinhardt and Haynes understand the difference a cornea transplant can make in one's life, and along with Governor Sebelius, hope Kansas residents will pledge to become eye and organ donors by indicating their wishes on their driver's licenses or filling out a donor registration form on www.mwtn.org/html/admin/donorregistry.pdf.

Said Reinhardt, "By registering as an eye donor and sharing your decision with your family and friends, you have the power to give sight to someone right here in Kansas. Even if your eyesight isn't 20/20 or you have a chronic health condition, there's still a good chance you can donate."

The Heartland Lions Eye Banks is a division of the Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation, a 501c(3) organization with the mission to preserve and restore the sight of people throughout Missouri and around the world. The Eye Bank operates seven branches throughout Missouri, Kansas and Illinois with headquarters in Columbia, Missouri. HLEB is the fourth largest eye bank in the U.S. and offers high quality donor cornea tissue to transplant surgeons around the world. In addition the Eye Bank is committed to research for causes and cures for eye diseases.

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