



### Meet Virginia

Within the last year, Virginia Soderbery, 88 years old, underwent bilateral cornea transplant surgery. She was nearly blind and her active life was put on hold.

She couldn't volunteer at Kaiser Permanente Hospital, she couldn't tend to her rose and orchid garden, she couldn't see her darling kitty cat, Sadie, and she couldn't enjoy looking at her treasured collections of talking stuffed animals, cats, and antique kitchen utensils.

Virginia underwent a total of eight eye surgeries and today is most grateful to her doctor and her donors who restored her vision. She had several cataract surgeries on both eyes and finally DSEK surgery or cornea transplant surgery. DSEK stands for Descemet's Stripping Endothelial Keratoplasty. The bottom layer of a donor cornea, which is comprised of endothelial cells, is stripped from the cornea, and then can be transplanted under a patient's own cornea. The endothelial button, once transplanted,

attaches within a matter of days to the patient's cornea, resulting in a quicker recovery time, fewer complications, and clearer vision.

"I am so thankful to my doctor and for my cornea transplants. I've never said a word to anyone and I don't know what happened to the donors, but I am so grateful," she says.

Walking into Virginia's home in Del Cerro, San Diego is like walking into a museum. The living room is home to a least one hundred mechanical and talking stuffed animals, mostly Christmas and Easter characters. She loves them all and says her two nieces and two nephews are always adding to her collection.

Then there is her cat room where she displays her cat collection. Since moving into her house in 1968 with her husband (he has since passed away), Virginia has collected hundreds of cat figurines, pillows, blankets, puzzles, and pictures. You can find cat items sprinkled all over her house.

A true and tried volunteer for over eighteen years at Kaiser Permanente Hospital, she is known as "the cat and rose lady." In the pocket of her volunteer shirt, she carries photos of her cat, named Sadie Jane Hawkins, and of her garden.

**"I volunteer on 3-South and 3-North. I visit the patients and bring them water. When I show them my photos, they always smile. It's funny how flowers and a cat can make someone smile."**

Her garden is maze of rose bushes, orchids and other blooming plants. When she worked at Convair in the records department for thirty one years, she was the president to the Convair Gardening Association. The group met regularly at her home. Now she says she just meets with a few friends who enjoy her passion for gardening.

Virginia was born in Missouri and attended King City School. She grew up on a farm with two older brothers. She attributes her passion for gardening to learning early on how to grow corn, oats and soy beans.

Virginia's vision is a gift and she is grateful to have her sight back to enjoy her loved cat, Sadie, her collections and her beautiful garden.

*The San Diego Eye Bank provided both of Virginia's corneas for her surgeries.*

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## Message from Executive Director



Dear Friends,

I am proud to announce that the San Diego Eye Bank has a new website:  
[www.sandiegoeyebank.org](http://www.sandiegoeyebank.org).

Thank you for your continued support and your extreme generosity. To the families that graciously donated, may you find peace and comfort knowing that your loved one's gift of sight is a legacy. On behalf of my staff, I want to wish you a year filled with health and happiness.

Sincerely,

**Jeffrey G. Penta, M.B.A., C.E.B.T.**

## Meet Our New Employees



### **Chau M. Pham**

*Eye Bank Technician  
Procurement Department*

Chau started working at the San Diego Eye Bank on July 1, 2008. Chau has her Bachelor's of Science in Biology from Emory University and an Associate Degree in Culinary Arts from the Art Institute of California, San Diego.



### **Michael Peterson**

*Eye Bank Technician  
Procurement Department*

Michael started working at the San Diego Eye Bank on August 11, 2008. Michael is a graduate of La Sierra University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology.



### **Lorie M. Liwanag**

*Custom Cut Cornea Technician  
San Diego Eye Bank  
Excimer Laser Center*

Lorie started working for the San Diego Eye Bank on September 18, 2008. Lorie is working towards a Bachelor's of Science Degree in General Biology / Human Development at the University of California, San Diego.

## Letter from a Grateful Cornea Transplant Recipient

Dear Doctor,

In 2008, you transplanted a cornea from an anonymous donor into my left eye. I am writing to describe my thankfulness for this opportunity and to request that you pass along my deep gratitude to the donor's family.

For the past 20 years, my eyesight has been progressively deteriorating. In the last few years, it had worsened to the point that it was negatively impacting my life in significant ways. I have always been a voracious reader. However, I have been unable to read at night with normal or even special lighting for several years. In addition, I have been unable to see distances very well. Some friends took me to a baseball game recently and I could not see the scoreboard or the field very well. I missed a major part of the joy of the game by not being able to see its details very well. Also, I used to be a photographer (some published photos, many exhibits, etc.). But in the last few years, I have not been able to see clearly enough to photograph the way I would like to. And I have let this experience pass out of my life. Overall, I had been withdrawing from the world somewhat, as my deteriorating eyesight kept me from experiencing my life more fully.

Although the new cornea is just a few weeks old, I am now able to see better at a distance with the operated eye than I can out of the un-repaired eye. The operation is giving me back a big part of my life. I expect to be able to soon read much better and I am hoping to take up photography again.

I am so thankful for this opportunity. I know that my benefit came at an enormous cost to another person. I want to let the family know how grateful I am to be able to gain my eyesight - and parts of my life - again. Many years ago, this surgery would not have been possible and I would have lost my sight at an early age. Now I have the chance to see well again and to renew my spirit of life. Please send my deepest and heartfelt gratitude to the donor's family. I will always be aware of this great act of kindness and generosity.

Sincerely,  
*Daniel*

## Hospitals Honored at San Diego Eye Bank Nurses' Advisory Board Seminar

Friday, September 26, 2008—The San Diego Eye Bank honored three local hospitals and two local hospices with the Point of Light Award. This award is given to facilities which have exemplified continued support, growth and commitment to the donor program. Nancy Biagioni, Director of Hospital Development, presented the awards during a luncheon at the San Diego Eye Bank's Nurses' Advisory Board seminar held at the Balboa Park Club.

Point of Light Awards were given to Scripps Memorial Hospital, La Jolla, accepted by Lisa Breedlove, R.N.; Alvarado Hospital, accepted by Anne Graheck, R.N.; U.C.S.D. Medical Center-La Jolla, accepted by Evelyn Snyder, R.N. and Linda Craddock, R.N.; Sharp Hospice Care, accepted by Marsha Perez, R.N.; and San Diego Hospice and the Institute for Innovative Medicine, accepted by Carol Stomberg, R.N.

Scripps Memorial Hospital, La Jolla, which is considered a large facility, showed a 54% conversion rate\* from January 2008 – June 2008. Alvarado Hospital, which is a medium facility, showed a 46% conversion rate. Lastly, U.C.S.D Medical Center, La Jolla, a small medical facility, showed a 44% conversion rate.

Two San Diego hospices have made a strong commitment to support the SDEB. Sharp Hospice Care and San Diego Hospice and the Institute for Innovative Medicine adopted policies and procedures to refer all inpatient deaths to the donor referral line. Sharp HospiceCare adopted this policy when the Sharp system made the change a number of years ago. In the spring of 2008 San Diego Hospice and the Institute for Innovative Medicine implemented their policy.

\*Conversion rate = (# of referrals - # of rule outs) ÷ # of donors

### Hospitals Honored with the Point of Light Award and Conversion Rates

Large:	Scripps Memorial Hospital, La Jolla	54%
Medium:	Alvarado Hospital	46%
Small:	U.C.S.D. Medical Center, La Jolla	44%

### Hospices Honored with the Point of Light Award and Conversion Rates

Sharp HospiceCare	44%
San Diego Hospice and The Institution for Innovative Medicine	46%

## Sharon Lund, Famous Author speaks at the San Diego Eye Bank's Nurses' Advisory Board Seminar



Sharon Lund captivated an audience of over 100 healthcare professionals at the San Diego Eye Bank's Nurses' Advisory Board seminar, Embracing Life & Death Through Our Stories, held at Balboa Park on Friday, September 26, 2008. Sharon, who is the author of Sacred Living, Sacred Dying: A Guide to

Embracing Life and Death, was featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show, in O Magazine, in the Los Angeles Times and other well known publications.

The program's objective was to understand how we can experience grief and the death of a loved one differently by affirming relationships do not die following a physical death but continue to grow; to challenge the participant's perceptions of death and the preparation of our own death; and to increase awareness among healthcare professionals for the need of transplantable and research eyes, organs and tissues.

Attendees enjoyed the breakout sessions and had the following to say:

**"The seminar reaffirmed the spiritual aspect of being a nurse."**

**"I was reminded of the importance of taking care of ourselves in order to retain the joy and privilege of taking care of others."**

**"It was interesting seeing and hearing the different perspectives and connecting with other professionals in the same industry."**

**"I learned more on how to support a family's grief."**

## Family Services Department

By Erika Schnapp, Supervisor, Family Services Department



The San Diego Eye Bank Family Services' program was established in 2006. The family service coordinators are responsible for communicating with the hospital

after a death has been reported, screening potential donors and obtaining vital information needed to be able to offer the option of tissue/cornea donation.

Each and every family is unique in its individual needs following the death of a loved one and our goal is to first ensure that every family is offered the option of tissue/cornea donation and through the process offer support and provide resources to the family in a way that is helpful for that particular family, regardless of whether or not the family chooses to donate.

Locating the next of kin can be a time consuming process and timing is critical. If the family chooses to donate their loved ones tissues, they must be recovered within an 8 to 12 hour time frame depending on the type of tissue. Our goal is to speak to the family over the telephone before they leave the hospital while they are making all end of life decisions for their loved one.

The Family Service coordinators will broach the subject of donation only when they feel that the family is emotionally ready for that discussion. Often, the coordinators and the next of kin arrange to talk about this option in depth at a later time and obtain the vital information, such as verification of the correct next of kin (NOK) and contact information and ensuring the NOK makes a fully informed decision about donation. Every situation is different. Regardless of the circumstances, meeting the unique needs of everyone involved is what drives the coordinators. It is the Family Service coordinator's duty to support, educate and provide every family with the option of donation.

Prior to the implementation of this new department, the technicians working in the Procurement Department were responsible for communication with the hospitals, approaching families, and the recovery and the processing of the donated tissue.

I am proud of our department. Our job is extremely rewarding and gratifying.

*Erika Schnapp, the family services supervisor, started working for the SDEB in 2004 as an eye bank technician. She has a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Biology and a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Psychology.*

# San Diego Eye Bank Supports SEE International

by Kari Bass, Administrator of International Clinics, SEE International

Thirty-seven million people suffer from cataracts, which can be removed by a 30 minute surgery. Of those suffering from curable blindness, 90% have no access to health care. That's why 34 years ago, ophthalmologist Harry Brown, MD founded Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International to restore sight to individuals in developing countries.

Through short-term surgical clinics, working with local ophthalmologists and at the invitation of health authorities, SEE ophthalmic teams have restored sight to over 360,000 people worldwide. However, cataract surgeries in developing countries require a technique that most U.S.-based doctors do not perform on a regular basis, and is not taught in U.S. universities or hospitals.

Because of the density of advanced cataracts, and lack of infrastructure for advanced equipment, a manual process must be used called Manual Small Incision Cataract Surgery (M/SICS).

On November 1 and 2, 2008, SEE held the fourth annual M/SICS Course and Wet Lab, training 25 affiliate eye surgeons, many who will utilize the technique in the next year on a SEE expedition.

The training was based on materials developed by Madhavi Ghanta, M.D., and the Goutami Eye Institute in India, and delivered by SEE Affiliate guest faculty. Janak Shah, M.D. of Mumbai, India also presented his materials and coursework based on this technique, which he utilizes in over ten SEE missions per year throughout India.

Besides the comprehensive lecture, course participants practiced their new skills in a wet lab first with pig, and then cadaver eyes donated by the San Diego Eye Bank. "The most critical takeaway from the course is to understand the basic steps to successful Manual Small Incision Cataract Surgery, to get hands-on experience in the wet-lab, and the confidence to perform in the field," explained guest faculty. The human eyes donated by the San Diego Eye Bank are critical to this hands-on experience.

Faculty also notes, "The greatest benefits of Manual Small Incision Cataract Surgery are the safety and the speed—we can perform at least twice as many cataract surgeries during our eye mission trips—15 minutes compared to a routine extracapsular cataract extraction that usually takes 45-60 minutes. In addition, patients have fewer incidents of infection and heal faster, and have their vision restored in a few days compared to a few months with typical extracapsular cataract surgery."

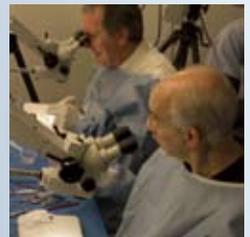
Skill transfer of this technique also occurs in the field. For example, SEE volunteer eye surgeons sometimes have the host ophthalmologist watch them perform the surgery the first day to learn the technique. On the second day, both doctors operate side-by-side so the visiting affiliate can provide constant feedback to the host doctor.

"Training in this suture-less and portable technique is an example of SEE's commitment to quality outcomes for our patients," said Kim Welton, SEE General Manager.

SEE offers a big thank you to all those who made the course possible and who believe in the mission of SEE: donation of materials by San Diego Eye Bank; facilitation and set-up by John Crowder, MD (SEE Board Member and Medical Director), Elizabeth Link, RN from the Cottage Eye and Laser Center, Arturo Martinez, ST from UCSD Medical Center; an educational grant from Allergan; donated supplies by Alcon; and the use of a 3DHD unit from TrueVision for live instruction of the technique.

Surgical Eye Expeditions (SEE) International is a non-profit humanitarian organization that provides medical, surgical, and educational services by volunteer ophthalmic surgeons with the primary objective of restoring sight to disadvantaged blind individuals worldwide.

**If you want to make a donation or would like more information about SEE, you can go to [www.seeintl.org](http://www.seeintl.org) or call (805) 963-3303.**



# SDEB Quarterly Report

*First quarter reporting is for July, August and September of 2008.*

*Second quarter reporting is for October, November, and December 2008.*



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## Excimer Laser Center

- 89 cases (first quarter) and 56 cases (second quarter) were performed.

## Family Services Department

- There were 2228 (first quarter) and 2349 (second quarter) total deaths reported to the San Diego Eye Bank.
- The San Diego Eye Bank's Family Services Department offered the option of donation to 873 families (first quarter) 989 families (second quarter).
- 532 (first quarter) and 566 (second quarter) Next-of-Kin's or Families consented to donate.

## Donor Demographics

- The youngest donors were 19 years old (first quarter) and 13 months old (second quarter).
- The oldest donors were 99 years old (first quarter) and 100 years old (second quarter).

## Recipient Demographics

- The youngest transplant recipients were 19 years old (first quarter) and 21 years old (second quarter).
- The oldest transplant recipients were 93 years old (first quarter) and 95 years old (second quarter).

Tissue Distribution	First Quarter Total	Second Quarter Total
Surgical	207	261
Research & Training	499	455

Geographical Distribution	First Quarter Total	Second Quarter Total
United States	648	593
International	58	120

International Cornea Project	First Quarter Total	Second Quarter Total
International	228	422



## Register Online to *Become a Donor*

You can now register to become an organ and tissue donor online at [www.donatelifecalifornia.org](http://www.donatelifecalifornia.org). An organ donor can save eight lives and donated tissue can enhance up to 50 people's lives. Currently, there are over 4 million people who have registered in California.

Donate Life California was formed in 2004 as a way to generate support for California's four federally designated non-profit organ procurement organizations as well as all eye and tissue banks in California. When you go to the Department of Motor Vehicles to renew or get your driver's license or ID, you can sign up on the registry to become a donor and the pink dot is automatically printed on your license or ID. The registry guarantees that your wishes to become a donor after you die will be facilitated. It is still important to tell your family and loved ones that you want to be a donor so they are clear about your decision.

There are nearly 20,000 people in California waiting to receive an organ transplant, which accounts for 21% of the 94,000 people waiting in the United States. Unfortunately, one third of them will die while waiting for their lives to change.

The San Diego Eye Bank works closely with the San Diego based organ procurement organization, Lifesharing. If you have any questions or would like more information pertaining to eye and cornea donation please visit the San Diego Eye Bank's website at [sandiegoeyebank.org](http://sandiegoeyebank.org).

## News To Envision

News to Envision is the official newsletter of the San Diego Eye Bank®. Publication is made possible in part by a financial grant from the Earl and Doris Peterson Fund managed by the California Community Foundation.

*Editor: Britta Sullaway*

## Mission Statement

The San Diego Eye Bank® is a California non-profit corporation, dedicated to the preservation and restoration of sight through the collection, processing and distribution of human ocular tissue; progress in medicine through the support of research; the maintenance of an eye center for diagnostic evaluation and therapy; and the sponsorship of educational programs for the medical community and general public.

## Accomplishments

The San Diego Eye Bank is the largest eye bank in California, based on the number of ocular tissues collected and the number of corneas used for surgical transplant. In addition, the SDEB is one of the leading suppliers of ocular research tissue in the world.



## International Cornea Project®

The International Cornea Project®, which collects and distributes corneas worldwide, is one of the largest international distributors of corneas for sight restoring transplant surgery. The International Cornea Project® is a member of the Pan American Association of Eye Banks and an affiliate member of the Eye Bank Association of America.

## Making A Financial Donation

Making a financial donation just got easier. You can make a donation online by going to: [www.sdeb.org/html/donations.html](http://www.sdeb.org/html/donations.html). You can also mail a donation to:

**San Diego Eye Bank**  
9444 Balboa Avenue, Suite 100  
San Diego, CA 92123

Please indicate if you are making the donation in memory or in honor of a loved one. Memorial funds can also be established. All donations made in the amount of \$1,000 become part of the Martin Koke, M.D. Founder's Club and are acknowledged on an engraved plaque displayed at the San Diego Eye Bank. Contributions to the San Diego Eye Bank, a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, are deductible for computing income and estate taxes.



CREATING A WORLD OF VISION...®

**San Diego Eye Bank**  
9444 Balboa Avenue, Suite 100  
San Diego, CA 92123

Direct: 858-694-0444  
Toll Free: 1-800-393-2265  
1-800-EYE-BANK  
Distribution Fax: 858-694-0581  
Administrative Fax: 858-565-7368  
Email: [sdeb@sdeb.org](mailto:sdeb@sdeb.org)  
Website: [www.sandiegoeyebank.org](http://www.sandiegoeyebank.org)

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## Calendar Of Events

### June 16, 2009

Conference Call Partners Educational Symposium  
Hilton Hotel, Seattle, Washington

### June 17-20, 2009

Eye Bank Association of America Annual Meeting  
The Westin Seattle, Seattle, Washington

### July 18, 2009

**Modern Laser Techniques: The PEARLS of Everyday Use**  
presented by **Christopher Blanton, M.D.**

Time: 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.; Location: San Diego Eye Bank.  
Fee: No charge for San Diego Eye Bank members and \$25 registration for non-members. Donuts and coffee will be served.  
To register, contact Danielle Davis at 858-694-0444 or [excimer2@sdeb.org](mailto:excimer2@sdeb.org).

### August 1, 2009

**Pentacam: Interpretation and PEARLS of Everyday Use**  
presented by **Michael W. Belin, M.D.**

Time: 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.; Location: San Diego Eye Bank.  
Fee: No charge for San Diego Eye Bank members and \$25 registration for non-members. Donuts and coffee will be served.  
To register, contact Danielle Davis at 858-694-0444 or [excimer2@sdeb.org](mailto:excimer2@sdeb.org).

### September 15, 2009

**The Vision of Opportunity:**  
**San Diego Eye Bank Nurses'**  
**Advisory Board's 19th Annual Symposium**

Topics include cultural diversity, end of life issues, talking to children about death, the donation process from referral to distribution and much more.

Time: 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. Location: Balboa Park Club

Fees and Discounts: Register by 8/15/09: \$65 or register three or more and pay only \$60/person; after 8/15/09: \$75; after 9/9/09: \$95.00. On-line registration opens 7/1/09.

Registration includes breakfast, picnic lunch, 6.0 CEU's for RN's and 5.0 CEU's for LCSW's.

For more information go to: [www.sdeb.org](http://www.sdeb.org)

### October 24-27, 2009

American Academy of Ophthalmology /Pan American Association of Ophthalmology Joint Annual Meeting  
San Francisco, California

Exhibitor: San Diego Eye Bank / International Cornea Project;  
Exhibit Location TBA

