



**Contact:**

Erika Novak

[Erika.Novak@sightlife.org](mailto:Erika.Novak@sightlife.org)

206-414-7146

**National Eye Donor Month observes 34th year celebrating the gift of sight in March 2017**

*SightLife and advocates nationwide show month-long support by emphasizing and educating on importance of cornea donation*

**Seattle, WA; Bethlehem, PA (March 2017)** – More than 48,000 Americans have their sight restored each year as a result of corneal transplants. SightLife, along with the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) and 86 other accredited eye banks across the country, are committed to making these life-enhancing procedures possible.

In working with donation partners in hospitals, hospices, coroner offices, and organ procurement organizations domestically, and with partners in 33 countries around the world, SightLife provided more than 30,000 corneas for transplant in 2016.

“Our work would not be possible without the individuals who make the selfless decision to register to be a donor and their families who give their support even in their darkest hour of losing a loved one,” said Monty Montoya, president and CEO of SightLife. “Further, we could not do this work without our dedicated partners who support our efforts and allow us to make cornea donation possible.”

First proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan in 1983, National Eye Donor Month promotes eye donation awareness and celebrates the lives of donors and corneal recipients. In March, SightLife will honor those who share in their mission of eliminating corneal blindness worldwide by raising awareness of donation, educating audiences on the work, and celebrating those who make cornea donation possible.

Unlike other organs and tissue, U.S. eye banks secure a sufficient number of corneas to avoid shortages or wait lists, but corneal blindness around the world continues to affect more than 10 million, especially in India where the current need is greatest. SightLife, an accredited member of the EBAA and a member of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB), launched its subsidiary, SightLife Surgical, in October 2016, which will accelerate its mission to eliminate corneal blindness worldwide – now by 2040 – by driving innovations that lead to advancements in the corneal ecosystem.

Follow the conversation on social media with the hashtag: #NEDM. You can also follow SightLife on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

**About SightLife**

Founded in 1969 and based in Seattle, SightLife is the only global health organization working relentlessly to eliminate corneal blindness worldwide by 2040. Sight restoration has a profound impact on recipients, their families and communities—no one should have to wait to experience the joy and possibilities that vision brings. With the launch of its subsidiary, SightLife Surgical, in the fall of 2016, SightLife became a combination non-profit and for-profit organization. This mission-driven structure maintains the non-profit status of SightLife as the parent organization and adds a for-profit “engine” to power and accelerate achievement of the mission. With partners in 33 countries, SightLife is increasing the number of corneal transplants performed each year to transform millions of lives around the globe. [www.sightlife.org](http://www.sightlife.org)

###