

***“Start by doing what’s necessary;
then do what’s possible;
and suddenly you’re doing the impossible.”***
– Francis of Assisi



ROCKY MOUNTAIN LIONS EYE BANK

Share the circle of light

2019-2020 Annual Report to the Community

Our Mission:

***To fulfill the wishes of
eye donors and their families
to help another overcome blindness
through transplantation and research.***



A Project of the Lions of Colorado and Wyoming

It has, somehow, been a year since I moved into the role of executive director at the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank (RMLEB). In my previous 21 years with RMLEB, I never imagined that with the title of executive director would come the duty of disinfecting the staff bathroom and copy machine every morning, as part of our infection control plan to combat COVID-19. After all, we all have a role to play to help keep each other as safe and healthy as possible.



COVID-19 has changed many things in our daily lives both at work and at home — some for the good, some not so good, but we've all learned to adapt and do what is necessary. It isn't easy in the face of such loss caused by the pandemic — losses like those we confront daily in our work at the eye bank. We know the anguish loss of life brings to families and communities and this additional collective grief gives us all here a deeper level of empathy in our work.

Looking back over the year, the pandemic caused many challenges, from implementing new employee social distancing standards to the delay of the completion of our new processing facility. Throughout, our amazingly dedicated board of directors and staff faced the hardships head-on. With your ongoing support, the RMLEB team will continue to provide full eye banking services to our community of donors, families, recipients, hospitals, surgeons, partners, and everyone else we serve.

In the face of adversity, those with good character and talent quickly rise to the challenge. The wonderful group of people I am lucky enough to work with every day have sacrificed so much on a personal level this past year in order to further the RMLEB mission. It's hard to put into words how proud I am of these professionals that have risen to the challenge. Thank you to all the RMLEB staff, and all those that support our staff in their daily activities, for facilitating the gift of sight on behalf of the Colorado and Wyoming communities we serve.

From RMLEB to all of you, we hope for the best and wish you good health.

John Lohmeier
Executive Director

The Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank has not shut down at any point in the pandemic.

Because RMLEB places tissues for transplant around the world, we saw the effects of COVID-19 early. As elective surgeries were canceled in Asia and then in Europe, it became clear that our operations would be affected here at home. It wasn't long before elective surgeries in the U.S. would also be halted.

Even through Colorado's period of quarantine, the eye bank retained all employees and remained open to provide eye tissues for emergency cases only. **We went from managing an average of 8 donors per day, to an average of one or two a week during the prohibition of elective surgeries in most of the country. Nonetheless, the work of screening every potential donor continued.**

Staying open and on stand-by allowed us to implement COVID-19 recommendations to our medical standards in real time and to ramp up quickly as the country returned to performing corneal transplants. Given our readiness and the high donation rate in our two-state area, many looked to RMLEB for help. **In June, we provided eye tissues to 29 other eye banks around the country to help meet the increased domestic need for transplant corneas.**



“Working at the eye bank is no walk in the park. There are times this job can test you intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Regardless of the challenges, I have never been a part of something so rewarding in my life.”

— Ashi, Quality Assurance Coordinator

For the fiscal year July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

↓ 12 %

2,393

Eye Donors from Colorado and Wyoming*

Wyoming*: 182

Colorado: 2,211

2,481

↓ 1 %

Sight-restorative Transplants

↑ 18 %

386

Tissues Used in Research and Training

*Except Sweetwater, Uinta, and Lincoln counties



“In my role, I am able to see all aspects of the organization and how each of the departments collaborate to help fulfill our mission. It’s truly amazing. I am proud and honored to be part of the Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank as well as working with everyone that shares the same vision and is dedicated to the mission of the organization.”

— Kevin Smith, Accounting Manager

Research



A donated retina recovered for research.

Following last year’s published research on techniques used in cornea transplantation with the Center for Bioengineering Innovation and Design at Johns Hopkins University, RMLEB furthered its reputation as a competent partner in medical research. **Our involvement in research projects at institutions around the world grew this fiscal year and we expect more published research in the coming**

months. While our core mission remains eye tissue transplantation, we recognize the importance of scientific innovation in the medical and surgical treatment of blindness and the advanced eye banking techniques necessary to support them.

“From forwarding correspondence between recipients and families to teaching hospital personnel about the donation process, no two days are the same in the public relations department. It’s hands down the most rewarding, stimulating, and interesting job I’ve ever had.”



— Colton, Public & Community Relations Coordinator

Innovation

While much of the world was on hold during COVID-19 restrictions, construction in Colorado was allowed to continue. The eye bank completed the re-modeling of the *Lion Jack and Christine Nisselius Eye Banking Annex*.



This state-of-the-art facility includes a fully-enclosed, controlled processing environment that not only increases capacity, but also meets strict new international standards recently set in the European Union.

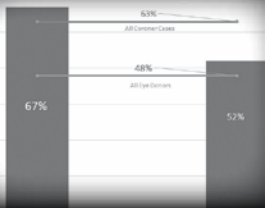
“I am proud to work for such a great organization and make a difference — one that has taught me so much and has allowed me to grow, that took care of its employees during this pandemic, and one that fulfills the wishes of eye donors and their families.”



— Jessica, Processing Technician

Focus on Outcomes

A retroactive study at RMLEB showed that the decisions a coroner makes about eye donation directly impact transplant rates. **When a coroner allows the eye bank to recover the eye tissues and collect evidence from the eye before the autopsy, the transplant rate goes up 15 percent** compared to cases where the eye bank must wait for the autopsy. Timing of the recovery of eye tissues is critical and RMLEB hopes this study will help the eye bank and coroners find a mutually beneficial way of implementing the practice in most cases to maximize transplants.



Financial Health

For the fiscal year July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

*Revenue & Expenses

Support and Revenue	Fiscal Year: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020
Processing Fees	6,376,066
Interest/Other Revenue	192,788
Memorials/Gifts	91,400
Lions Contributions	31,415
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	6,691,669

Expenses	Fiscal Year: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020
Tissue Processing	1,976,685
Personnel	3,161,763
Public & Professional Relations	176,116
Depreciation/Amortization	87,395
Administration	57,074
Grants, Eye Surgery Fund	21,303
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,480,336

EXCESS REVENUE	1,211,333
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*All financial statements unaudited at the time of publication.

*Balance Sheet

June 30, 2020

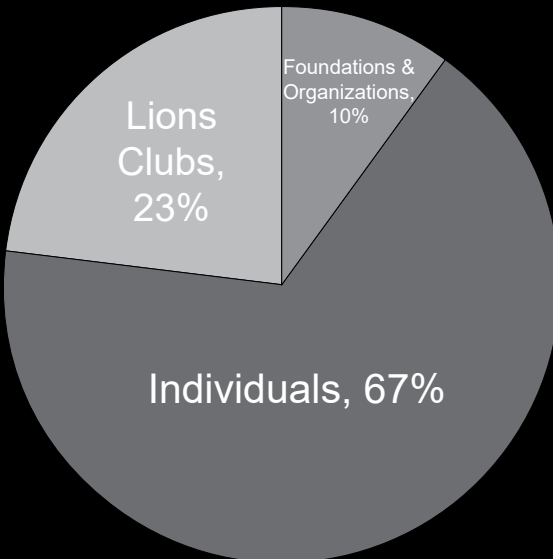
Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	1,568,041
Investments	10,722,109
Accounts Receivable/Prepays	897,855
Fixed Assets	766,561
Other Assets/Inventory	113,005
TOTAL ASSETS	14,067,571

Liabilities & Fund Balances

Liabilities	800,960
Fund Balances	13,266,611
TOTAL LIABILITIES	14,067,571

Financial Contributions



“There was a young man, around my age, who passed away from complications of a rare disease. I started to explain to his mother that he was eligible to donate his eye tissue but before I got very far, she broke down in tears. She put me on speakerphone with her husband and they told me that they were ecstatic that their son might be able to help someone else, that he was a giving person, and that I had brought light to a painful, tragic day. While they spoke, I felt myself tear up and my throat tighten. After the formalities of authorization, they thanked me for what we do and for giving them some hope that their son might be able to restore sight to someone who couldn’t see. After we hung up, I looked at my trainee and said, ‘This is why we do what we do.’”



— Claudia, Technical Trainer

2019-2020 Leadership

Board of Directors

Officers

President: Bruce Heimback
Vice-President: Mike Bussey
Treasurer: John Ballagh
Secretary: Joe Rall

Board Directors

Brian Ballard
Wes Dorman
Carole Kitchell
Terry Lutts
Jim Rapp

Medical Directors

Richard Davidson, MD
S. Lance Forstot, MD

Executive Director

John Lohmeier

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