The new manager of Mohsin Eye Bank, one of SightLife’s 12 partners in India, inherited a big problem: donor corneas awaiting transplant were often late to the airport. A missed shipment meant that one of the millions of people suffering from treatable corneal blindness in India would be left waiting for the gift of sight. To him, this was unacceptable.

Determined to eliminate barriers to restoring sight, the manager spoke to the technician responsible for making the delivery and discovered the reason for the delay: the technician, who didn’t own a single item of warm clothing, was attempting to make early morning deliveries on his motorcycle in the bitter cold. The manager immediately removed his own sweater and handed it to the technician. Thereafter, deliveries were made on time and the Mohsin Eye Bank’s productivity grew an astonishing 80% in 2012.

When I heard this story, I realized that our global partners are absorbing not only best practices in eye banking, but also SightLife’s culture of going above and beyond every day in the service of our global mission to end corneal blindness. SightLife team members get to the root of problems, finding solutions that are frequently elegant in their simplicity and effectiveness. Their efforts combine to move our cause forward, and sometimes, even a sweater makes all the difference.

In 2012, SightLife and our global partners transformed the lives of 13,945 individuals by restoring their sight and unlocking life’s possibilities. Corneal transplants are among the most successful and transformative of all health interventions. We must continue to build and grow strong partnerships so that no one suffering from curable corneal blindness will be left waiting.

Thank you for your continued support of SightLife’s global mission. With your help, many more people will soon see the world through new eyes.

Sincerely,

Monty Montoya
President and CEO
Dharender lives five hours north of New Delhi, where he attends ninth grade and shares his home with his parents and four older brothers. He loves studying Hindi, but isn’t so fond of math class. That’s pretty typical for someone Dharender’s age, but his life wasn’t always so normal.

As a toddler Dharender fell, injuring his eye. Over the next decade, his vision continued to decline, and eventually he’d gone completely blind in one eye.

The impact of blindness on children can be dramatic. Friends stop playing with them and schoolwork becomes extremely difficult—many quit school altogether. In developing countries, a blind child may be considered an outcast by the community.

Dharender tried to remain positive and one day his family learned that he would receive a life-changing corneal transplant from SightLife partner Dr. Shroff’s Charity Eye Hospital in Delhi. In a single year, Dr. Shroff’s hospital provides eye health screenings to thousands of children, but Delhi has 17 million residents served by only two eye banks.

At his one-month post-surgery follow-up, Sightlife India Program Manager Yogesh Jadhav handed shy Dharender a camera, asking him to photograph his new world. Yogesh watched, delighted, as Dharender immediately ventured out into the chaotic streets of Delhi, snapping pictures of fruit stands, street vendors, sleeping dogs and old men drinking chai tea around crowded café tables. At a mosque, the colorfully tiled walls were brand new to him.

In a few hours, Dharender’s transformation was complete: from shy kid to confident photographer. As Yogesh said goodbye, Dharender smiled, still clutching the camera in his hands. He was definitely hooked on seeing the world through new eyes.

See more of Dharender’s photos at www.sightlife.org/throughneweyes
DOMAND OPERATIONS HIGHLIGHTS 2012

LIONS CLUBS

Since 1925, Lions Clubs have been committed to serving as “Knights of the Blind.” Lions in Washington and Northern Idaho expanded that mission in 1969 by starting the Northwest Lions Eye Bank (now SightLife).

SightLife supports the local community through its support of the Northwest Lions Foundation. The Foundation works with local Lions Clubs to offer prevention and detection services such as the Lions Health Screening Unit and financial support for sight care. The Lions Health Screening Unit provides free hearing and sight screenings for an estimated 30,000 patients each year, the vast majority of whom are children.

The 62-foot-long, medically-equipped Lions Health Screening Unit (LHSU) pictured above travels throughout Washington and Northern Idaho to give free health screenings at schools, fairs, and other public events. Checking for glaucoma, diabetes, high blood pressure, and sight and hearing loss is key to interventions in potentially life-threatening health problems.
As surgeons, we tend to stay conveniently distant. This experience reminded me of the beauty of the work we do.

Deborah Strych struggled for months to find the right words to express her gratitude before meeting her cornea donor’s family last December. In the end it was the tearful, silent embrace she shared with Gina Miller that said it all. “I’m so thankful,” Deborah told Gina at last. “It’s an unbelievable gift that you and Tony have given me.”

Gina Miller’s boyfriend, Tony Radulescu, was a Washington State trooper who was killed in the line of duty on February 23, 2012. “He was a one-of-a-kind man and I loved him with all my heart,” Gina said.

A Romanian immigrant who arrived in America in his teens, Tony was proud to serve his new country in the armed forces and the Washington State patrol. His kindness, ready smile and wit made him a favorite among family, colleagues and friends.

Tony also was a registered organ donor, so five days after his death, Deborah received one of his corneas. A nurse practitioner, Deborah was gradually going blind due to irregularly shaped corneas and complications from surgery. She had blurry, double vision and was seeing halos around lights. Driving at night and reading text were impossible and she was afraid she would soon have to retire and abandon the low-income patients she served at Pittsburg Health Center in California.

Dr. Naveen Chandra, a corneal surgeon at Kaiser Permanente in Walnut Creek, California, performed Deborah’s transplant and was invited by SightLife to attend the meeting between his patient and Gina. Dr. Chandra has performed about 30 corneal transplants per year for the past 12 years but had never met the family of a donor. “Witnessing that heartfelt reunion really affected me,” he said. “As surgeons, we tend to stay conveniently distant. This experience reminded me of the beauty of the work we do.”

Dr. Chandra was both intrigued and surprised by Deborah’s hesitation about meeting her donor’s family. Watching her struggle with feelings of guilt and even unworthiness, he realized he’d never really considered the emotional journey that patients make as they deal with the loss of life that enabled them to see again. “That’s the other side of the equation,” he said.

Gina brought mementos to share with Deborah, including a folded American flag that was presented to her at Tony’s funeral, Tony’s state trooper badge and stacks of handwritten notes from strangers who wrote to express their condolences. The two women also worked together on Tony’s float for the Donate Life Rose Parade.

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Thank You for Helping Us Reach Our Goals

We are grateful to the many individuals, Lions Clubs, corporations, and foundations who have partnered with SightLife to combat curable corneal blindness in the Northwest and around the world. It is this support that allows SightLife to live out its mission. Whether it's building up the capacity of eye banks in developing countries to restore sight in their communities or providing Patient Care Grants to help restore sight in our own communities, your contributions help SightLife save and change lives every day.

$100,000 +
Indiana Lions Eye and Tissue Transplant Bank
North Carolina Eye Bank, Inc.

PAHB Foundation

$25,000 - $99,999
Abbott Medical Optics Inc.
Bausch + Lomb
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OSIBS International
Seattle Ballard Lions Club
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$100 - $499
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LifeCenter Northwest
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Chris Lasher
Theresa & Danny Lennon
Charles P. LeWaine
Lawton Lions Club
Tom Leary
Lakes Lions Club
LiaCenter Northwest
Lions Club of Sparway
Chelsea Logan
Shortly after birth, Bali’s right eye turned an opaque yellow. After being erroneously diagnosed with jaundice and given a treatment that did nothing to cure her sight, Bali and her family made the 350 km journey from their rural village to the L.V. Prasad Hospital in Hyderabad, India, where she received a cornea transplant.
Thank you for your guidance.

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**EMPLOYER GIVING PROGRAMS**

- Boeing Employee’s Community Fund
- Duke Energy Foundation Matching Gift Program
- Microsoft Matching Gifts Program
- Morgan Stanley
- Washington State Combined Fund Drive

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**Thank you for your guidance.**
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**Financial Review**

- **Revenue, Gains, Other Support**: $19.5 million
- **Eye Bank Operations**: $17.5 million (90%)
- **Contributions and Other Revenue**: $1.4 million (7%)
- **Investment Return**: $0.5 million (3%)
- **Lions Programs**: $0.1 million (<1%)

Only 11% of SightLife’s spending goes for administration and fundraising. The rest is directly invested in our nonprofit programs.