

# A MOTHER'S CHOICE, A LASTING IMPACT

*It was easy and heartwarming — something I'll always be happy I could be a part of.*

At the recent Lions State Convention, many attendees had the opportunity to learn more about Saving Sight's First Gift program during a breakout session. The excitement and curiosity in the room were clear because First Gift represents a new and powerful way to impact lives.

For those who attended, Courtney's story is a meaningful example of that impact in action.

When Courtney welcomed her son, Heath, in November, she also made a decision that would extend the impact of his birth far beyond their family. At the time, Courtney, a mother-baby nurse at MU Health Care, wasn't familiar with the First Gift program. But when she learned about the opportunity, the choice felt natural.

"I love science and helping where I can, so donating was a no-brainer," she shared. "It just felt right."

Courtney describes the process as simple and supportive. Introduced by her care team, she felt informed—



never pressured—and confident in her decision.

"It didn't add stress to my experience at all," she said. "It was easy and heartwarming, something I'll always be happy I could be a part of."

Through First Gift, donated birth tissue can go on to help dozens of patients—supporting healing after injury, surgery, or disease. What might otherwise be discarded becomes a powerful gift, restoring comfort, health, and in many cases, sight.

Today, Courtney brings that same perspective to her patients. As a nurse, she focuses on clear, compassionate education making sure every mother feels supported, whether they choose to donate or not. When appropriate, she shares her own experience as a way to

build trust and connection.

"It means everything that my baby's birth can help so many others," she said. "When I think about the patients who benefit, I think about the milestones they're hoping to reach. If this can bring hope back to families, that goes a long way."

For Lions who attended the First Gift session, or those learning about it for the first time, Courtney's story is a reminder of how this program brings together science, compassion, and opportunity in a truly unique way.

For Courtney, it's a story she looks forward to sharing with Heath one day, a reminder that even in life's most personal moments, there are opportunities to create a lasting impact.