

Saving Sight Council of Governor's Report – April 2026

- Through the first half of its current fiscal year, ending December 31, 2025, Saving Sight's eye bank distributed 1,626 surgical tissues for sight-saving transplants and surgeries worldwide. Of those, 652 tissues — 40% of all tissues distributed — were utilized right here in our service area of Missouri, Kansas, and Illinois. An additional 466 tissues went to transplant recipients elsewhere in the United States, and 508 tissues were distributed to recipients internationally. Saving Sight is on track to serve thousands of individuals this fiscal year.
- Saving Sight's Vital Tears program continues to reach patients across the country. Through December 31, 2025, the program has processed 13,480 autologous serum eye drop orders in the current fiscal year, supporting patients with dry eye and chronic ocular surface conditions. Since Vital Tears launched in November 2015, Saving Sight has now processed more than 120,000 total orders for these healing eye drops — a remarkable milestone — serving patients in all 50 states.
- Saving Sight's birth tissue donation program, First Gift, continues to grow and make an impact. Since the program's launch at Mosaic Life Care in St. Joseph, MO in April 2025 and its expansion to MU Health in Columbia, MO in September 2025, First Gift has received 294 referrals and 188 tissue acquisitions — an extraordinary 90% consent rate. Placental tissue donated through First Gift is processed into healing grafts used in ocular surgeries to promote healing, reduce inflammation, and preserve vision in patients with conditions like corneal defects, chemical burns, and dry eye disease. Each mother's donation can provide healing grafts for up to 75 people.
- Thank you to all Council of Governors members who submitted nominations for Saving Sight's 2026 Lion Ambassador of the Year Award. Nominations closed on April 1, 2026. We were thrilled to receive nominations for the following individuals:
 - Lion Laurie Taylor, nominated by MD 26 M-1
 - PID Don Noland, nominated by MD 26 M-3
 - PCC Wayne and Lion Susan Cunningham, nominated by MD 26 M-4
 - PDG Bob Crump, nominated by MD 26 M-6
 - Lion Janice Bonnot, nominated by MD 26 M-7
 - Lion Dr. Teri Page, nominated by the MD 26 Council Chair

The winner will be announced at the Lions State Convention and invited to Saving Sight's June 13 Board meeting to receive a \$1,000 donation to a charity of their choice.

We change lives by saving sight.®

The Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation, d/b/a Saving Sight is a 501(c)3

- Save the date! Saving Sight's board of directors is planning its annual Lions Leadership Program event. Invitations to this event will go to incoming second Vice District Governors this spring in advance of the event planned in Kansas City for Friday, June 12-Saturday, June 13. The event will include a tour of Saving Sight's Kansas City office, an information session about our programs, and opportunities to connect with the board on Friday night and Saturday during their quarterly meeting.
- Stay in touch with Saving Sight and follow us on social media on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter at @wesavesight. You'll find inspiring stories of the people we serve and information on how you can get involved with our mission. Sign up for Saving Sight's quarterly newsletter, Lions InSight, at <https://saving-sight.org/lions/>.

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