

for Sight



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Donation

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A Year of Milestones & Achievements

Welcome to the 2025 edition of *forSight*, AltruVision's annual newsletter dedicated to celebrating the transformative power of vision restoration and the generosity that makes it possible. As we reflect on the past year, I am thrilled to share that 2024 marked an extraordinary milestone for our organization. Thanks to the unwavering support of our global community, we set new records for both cornea donors and transplant recipients, bringing the gift of sight to more individuals than ever before.

This success is a testament to our enhanced partnerships around the world. In 2024, we deepened collaborations with organizations and communities to reach populations with the greatest need and the fewest resources. From rural villages to underserved urban centers, our mission to restore vision continues to expand, driven by a shared commitment to equity and compassion.

As we look back on our journey, we also celebrate historic leadership milestones. In 2009, Mary Devon O'Brien made history as the first woman to serve as AltruVision's Board Chair, setting a powerful precedent for inclusion and innovation. In 2024, we proudly welcomed Jerilyn Giardina as our Executive Vice President—the first woman to assume an executive role at AltruVision. Their leadership inspires us all as we forge ahead into 2025.

This year's cover story is one for the history books. For the first time in AltruVision's history, a donor mother had the opportunity to meet the recipient of her loved one's gift of sight. This poignant encounter showcases the healing power of donation—not just for those who regain their vision, but for the families whose generosity creates a legacy. It's a story of connection, hope, and the profound impact of a single selfless act. (See page 4)

As we move forward, let us remember a fundamental truth: none of this work is possible without cornea donors. Transplants cannot take place without a generous individual making the decision to give. As our name implies, vision is only restored through the ultimate act of altruism. We invite you to join us—whether by spreading awareness, supporting our efforts, or considering the life-saving choice to register as an eye, organ, and tissue donor.

Thank you for being part of this remarkable journey. Together, we are illuminating lives and building a brighter future, one act of kindness at a time.

Warm regards,
Jim Quirk
President and CEO



Honoring Aubrey: A Legacy of Service, Adventure, and Giving

Aubrey Mitsch, a vibrant soul whose light and kindness touched everyone she met, passed away in October of 2020, at the age of 30. Aubrey's life was filled with adventure, laughter, and an unwavering passion for helping others. "Knowing that Aubrey's donation has restored vision to an individual in need has been an incredibly moving and healing experience," her parents George and Sherri shared. "We are so grateful for the opportunity to honor Aubrey's legacy through the gift of sight."

As an Army medic and aspiring Physician Assistant, she dedicated herself to serving those in need. Aubrey's selflessness even extended to donating her own eggs, enabling other women to fulfill their dreams of motherhood.

To honor her legacy, her parents, George and Sherri, established the Aubrey Mitsch Foundation, to continue their daughter's mission of service. The organization's three pillars are: scholarship, motorcycle safety, and organ/tissue donation advocacy.

Aubrey's adventurous spirit led her to travel the world, from safari adventures to ancient sites, and she embraced every challenge life presented. Whether hiking, kayaking, salsa dancing, or obstacle racing, she lived life to the fullest. Aubrey's infectious smile, boundless energy, and deep love for her family, friends, and fellow soldiers remain an inspiration to all who knew her. 🐦



A Vision for the Future

It brings me great pleasure to share the progress and transformative work we have made, together, in our ongoing mission to restore sight through cornea transplantation in our local community and around the world.

Eye banking is a quickly evolving profession with constant advances in technology. Through all the changes, AltruVision remains steadfast in our commitment to innovation and service. As eye banks around our country consolidate, AltruVision remains one of the larger independent eye banks, accredited by the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA), ensuring those in need of a cornea transplant continue to have access to the highest quality ocular tissues available. This year, our international efforts continued with Dr. Irving Raber's recent mission trip to Rwanda and my visit to Kenya. Thanks to the Sadeer B. Hannush International Gratis Tissue Program—launched in 2022 and made possible by the generosity of our incredible community—we were able to provide 55 cornea transplants at no cost to patients in those countries.

At AltruVision, we believe the future of vision restoration lies in technological advancement. That is why we are investing in cutting-edge innovations such as OcuCell, which will give us the ability to engineer corneal grafts by generating lab-grown cells. This will expand the supply of available tissues and allow enhanced quality controls aimed at improving long-term outcomes for patients. These advancements are not merely trends but the foundation of a new era in ophthalmology—one where regenerative medicine brings renewed hope to patients around the world. Notably, our President and CEO, Jim Quirk, continues to serve as Chairman of the EBAA.

Beyond technical advancements, we remain deeply rooted in our mission to support donor families and recipients. The Delaware Valley has been our home, and we continue to honor the generosity of our donors by facilitating meaningful connections between families and the individuals whose lives they have changed. These relationships underscore the true impact of our work—an impact measured not only in restored sight but also in community relationships.

As we look ahead, AltruVision is committed to our mission while upholding the compassionate service that defines us. With innovation, dedication, and a commitment to the families we serve, the future is bright—for our eye bank and for all those whose lives we touch.

I can't conclude this update without expressing my deep gratitude for the generosity of many: donor families who allowed loved ones' tissues to be shared with recipients in need of visual rehabilitation, our surgeons who devote much time to this pursuit, and many in the community who donate their time and resources to bring the gift of sight to those living in darkness. I quote the Roman orator, Cicero: "Gratitude is not only the greatest of all virtues but the parent of all others."

Sadeer B. Hannush, MD
Medical Director

AltruVision Medical Advisory Board

At the heart of every life-changing procedure facilitated by AltruVision stands an exceptional team of cornea surgeons, who are esteemed members of the Eye Bank's Medical Advisory Board.



Sadeer B. Hannush
MD
Medical Director



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MD
Chair, Medical Advisory Board



Brandon Ayres
MD



Brenton Finklea
MD



Kristin Hammersmith
MD



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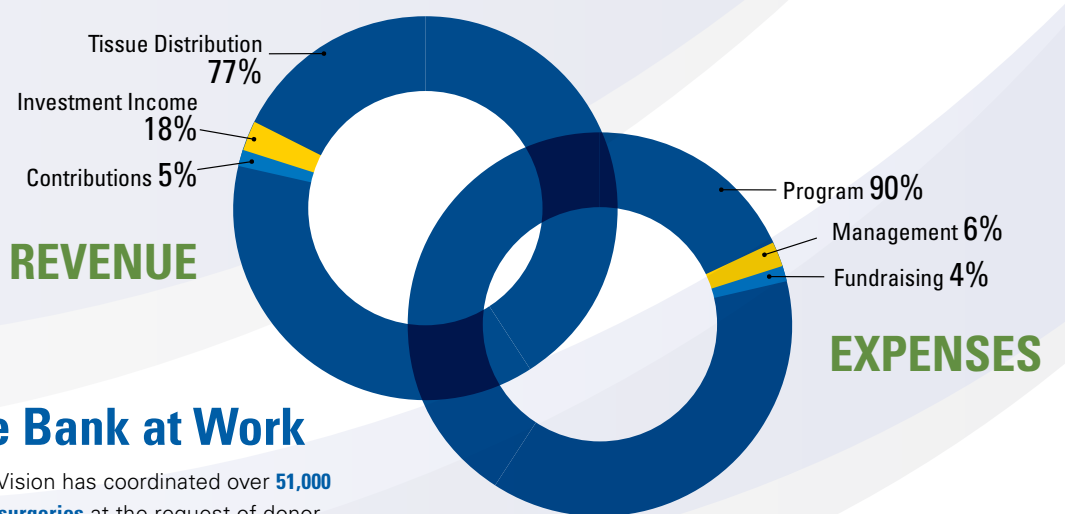


Heroes of Hope: 10 Years of Celebrating Cornea Donation

The 10th Annual Heroes of Hope celebration at Collingswood Grand Ballroom united over 200 cornea transplant recipients, donor families, professionals, and volunteers. Guests shared stories of hope, connecting over the gift of sight. Please save the date for our 11th Annual Heroes of Hope celebration on **Saturday, March 14, 2026.** 🐦

By the Numbers

Here's a look at AltruVision's financials for the fiscal year ending June 20, 2024.



Your Eye Bank at Work

Since 1957, AltruVision has coordinated over **51,000 cornea transplant surgeries** at the request of donor families and their loved ones.

1,126 Cornea Tissue Donors

1,216 Cornea Tissue Gifted for Transplant Surgery

1,036 Cornea Tissue Gifted for Education, Training, and Research



(L-R) Irie, Ben's sister; Steven, Ben's cornea recipient; Caitlin, Ben's mom; Brian, Ben's dad.

From Grief to Gratitude: The Power of Ben Miller's Donation

Our community lost a vibrant and promising young man, Benjamin D. Miller, when he passed away in January 2024 at just 18 years old. A senior at Fleetwood Area High School, Ben was known for his tenacity on the football field where he wore number 66 with pride, and for his kind, giving heart off the field. Ben's life, though tragically cut short, continues to impact others in profound ways.

Ben was the beloved son of Brian and Caitlin, and sister of Irie. His family, who runs The Hot Spot, a Greek Gourmet Stand at the Fairgrounds Square Farmers Market, Reading, PA, shared in his work ethic and dedication. Beyond football, Ben enjoyed spending time with his family and friends, rooting for his favorite sports teams—the Eagles, 76ers, and Phillies—and bringing joy to those around him. But it was Ben's untimely passing that led to a gift that would touch lives far beyond the reach anyone could have imagined, through his decision to become an eye, organ, and tissue donor.

Ben donated his corneas, giving the gift of sight to two individuals—a young girl in New Jersey and a man named Steven from Pennsylvania. Steven, who had struggled with keratoconus his whole life, a cornea condition causing blurry and distorted vision, needed his second cornea transplant. His first, performed decades ago at Wills Eye Hospital, Philadelphia, PA, by Dr. Peter Laibson, had restored his vision for 45 years. This second cornea transplant, performed by Dr. Christopher Rapuano at Wills, gave Steven not just clearer vision, but a renewed sense of hope for the future.

Steven, a father of five, and founder of the nonprofit Rescue Task Force (RTF), has devoted his life to helping others through his work in providing clean water, medical clinics, and educational programs in regions like Central America, Southeast Asia, and Afghanistan. His deep sense of service to others resonated with Ben's family, and Steven's second chance at sight was a direct result of Ben's legacy of kindness.

In an unprecedented step, Caitlin reached out to Steven in the spring of 2024, to share about her son. Letters were exchanged, and both families expressed interest in meeting one another. This interaction marked a powerful moment in AltruVision's history, as it was the first time that a cornea transplant recipient and donor family met in person.

The meeting occurred in December 2024 at AltruVision's office, where Steven and Caitlin shared an emotional and moving exchange. For Caitlin, meeting Steven was a meaningful experience, offering a tangible connection to the impact of Ben's selfless decision to donate. For Steven, the meeting was a reminder of the incredible difference one person's generosity can make.

Ben's story is a testament to the power of giving and the enduring legacy that can be left behind, even in the most difficult times. His family, in choosing to honor his life through donation, has made an impact that will be felt for years to come. 🌟



Steven unloading supplies in Chiang Mai Thailand.

Steven and RTF bringing clean water to Cambodia.

A Vision of Hope: New Partnership to Restore Sight in Nairobi

AltruVision is proud to announce a new strategic partnership with Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital in Nairobi, Kenya. This collaboration aims to make a significant impact by addressing the more than 1,000 individuals currently on the waiting list for sight-restoring corneas in the region.



To date, AltruVision has sent **7 shipments, totaling 59** sight restoring corneas to Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital—an effort valued at **\$138,450 USD** in-kind services. These corneas have brought the gift of sight to many, offering hope and an improved quality of life for individuals in need.

“We are deeply grateful for your efforts in making this dream a reality. May the almighty bless you and give you the strength and courage to continue serving the underprivileged,” shared Rizwana Peerbhoy, General Manager of Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital. 🐦

This partnership is a testament to the power of collaboration, and AltruVision is proud to continue working alongside Lions SightFirst Eye Hospital to bring light and opportunity to those in need.

Save the Date: 5th Annual Cornhole for Corneas Tournament at the Mummies Museum

We're excited to announce the 5th Annual Cornhole for Corneas Tournament will be held on **Thursday, July 24, 2025**, at the iconic Mummies Museum in South Philly!

Sign up to play in the tournament or simply come to enjoy a night of music, mummies, drinks and fun, all while raising funds for our sight-saving mission. Join us for the annual live butterfly release honoring donors and their families, along with a variety of incredible items up for auction and raffle from amazing local businesses.

All proceeds from this event will benefit our Gratis Tissue Program, which provides sight-restoring corneas for those in need. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details. If you would like to learn more about the event and opportunities to get involved, email alex@altruvision.org. 🐦



Thank You to Our 2024 Sponsors!

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31st Annual Gift of Sight Charity Golf Classic

Swing For Our Cause!

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH

AltruVision – A Lions Eye Bank
Golf Fundraiser

Cost: \$169 / Golfer \$35 / Non-Golfer
10 a.m. Registration
11 a.m. Shotgun Start
Dinner & Program Following Golf



scan for more info

SPONSOR IN 2025!

Make a tax-deductible donation at www.AltruVision.org or call 215-563-1679 today.

- Dinner - \$4,000
- Giveaway - \$750
- Putting Contest - \$500
- Contest - \$250
- Tournament Sponsor - \$5,000
- Visionary - \$3,000
- Beverage Cart - \$500
- Hot Dog - \$400
- Mulligan Mamma - \$250
- Flag - \$1,000
- Breakfast - \$500
- Inside/Back Ad - \$350
- Hole - \$125
- Towel - \$1,000
- Hole In One - \$500
- Driving Range - \$300
- Golf Cart - \$50/cart

100% of proceeds benefit AltruVision's Gratis Tissue Program

NEW LOCATION!
Ron Jaworski's Valleybrook Country Club
200 Golfview Dr, Blackwood, NJ 08012

MANY THANKS TO OUR 2024 GOLF SPONSORS & CONTRIBUTORS

The following sponsors helped AltruVision raise more than \$39,000 for our Gratis Tissue Program. This allowed your Eye Bank to provide 13 local people, who would otherwise live in darkness, a second chance at sight! We appreciate your consideration patronizing these sustainers.

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Surgeon Spotlight

We are proud to announce that two of our esteemed partner cornea surgeons, Christopher Rapuano, MD, Chief of Cornea Service at Wills Eye Hospital, Philadelphia, PA, and Bennie Jeng, MD, Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Director of the Scheie Eye Institute at Penn Medicine, Philadelphia, PA, were recently honored at the Eye Bank Association of America's (EBAA) 2024 Cornea and Eye Banking Forum for their exceptional contributions to the field of ophthalmology.

Dr. Jeng received the prestigious R. Townley Paton Award, which recognizes a cornea surgeon who has made significant contributions to the development of eye banking, and exemplifies the legacy of Dr. R. Townley Paton, the father of modern eye banking. As part of this honor, Dr. Jeng delivered the R. Townley Paton Award Lecture on "The Unsung Heroes of Eye Banking and Corneal Transplantation," highlighting the often-overlooked individuals who play a vital role in advancing corneal transplant outcomes.

Dr. Rapuano was honored with the 2023/2024 Claes Dohlman Award, which celebrates a lifetime of teaching excellence in the fields of cornea and external disease. This prestigious award, named after Dr. Claes Dohlman, who established the first formal corneal fellowship program in the United States of America, acknowledges Dr. Rapuano's immense contributions to educating the next generation of ophthalmologists. His commitment to teaching and advancing knowledge in cornea care has had a profound impact on the field.

Both Dr. Jeng and Dr. Rapuano's accomplishments demonstrate their dedication to advancing corneal surgery and education. We are grateful for their leadership and honored to have them as part of our team! 🌟



Dr. Christopher Rapuano



Dr. Bennie Jeng

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Letter from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

As Chair of the Board of Trustees, I am truly honored to continue serving AltruVision for a second year. Our eye bank is a beacon of hope, transforming lives through sight-restoring cornea transplants. With our collective dedication, I am confident we will continue to expand our impact and ensure this critical mission thrives.

One of my greatest aspirations is to reimagine the way we fundraise—because it is about so much more than just raising funds. It's about forging powerful connections and creating lasting change. Now, more than ever, we need to unite with local businesses, schools, organizations, and passionate individuals who believe in our mission.

Every partnership we form, every story we share, and every hand that reaches out strengthens our ability to make a real difference in the donation and transplantation community. I invite you to stand with us, to lend your voice, your time, or your resources, and to be part of something truly transformative. Together, we can expand our impact and bring hope to those living in darkness. Will you join us?

Helen Keller, a lifelong advocate for the blind, once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Her words ring true as we look toward the future of our eye bank. By coming together, we can make a lasting impact and provide the gift of sight to countless individuals.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we will continue to make a difference.

Yours in service,

Lion Mark Green
Chair of the Board of Trustees



Give the Gift of Sight Today

GRATIS TISSUE PROGRAM

Restoring Sight, Changing Lives

When a patient in need of a cornea transplant cannot afford the associated costs, AltruVision steps in. Through our Gratis Tissue Program, we waive processing fees for underinsured individuals, ensuring that financial hardship never stands in the way of restoring vision.

As requests for gratis cornea tissue continue to rise, your support is critical to sustaining this life-changing initiative. Together, we can give more people a second chance at sight—and at life.

Donate today and help us make vision accessible to all.



Born blind, Kacey from Laurel Springs, NJ is one of nearly 400 local recipients who have benefited from the Gratis Tissue Program



LEAVE A LEGACY — GIVE THE GIFT OF SIGHT

Planned Giving offers a powerful way to create a lasting impact. By including AltruVision in your estate plans, you ensure that future generations will have access to the gift of sight.

Ways to Give:

- ✓ Include AltruVision in your will
- ✓ Name us as a beneficiary (life insurance, retirement accounts, etc.)
- ✓ Establish a Charitable Trust
- ✓ Explore other planned giving options with your financial advisor & estate planning attorney

If you choose to include AltruVision in your legacy plans, please let us know—we would be honored to recognize your generosity and ensure your wishes are fulfilled.

Multiply Your Impact with a Matching Gift

Many companies offer matching gift programs to double or even triple employee donations! With a Matching Gift Program, your generosity can go even further. Check with your employer to see if your gift to AltruVision qualifies and if so, contact us to get started!

Donate Stock—A Smart Way to Give

Donating appreciated stock is a tax-savvy way to support AltruVision's mission while maximizing your charitable impact.

Potential benefits include:

- ✓ Avoiding capital gains tax
- ✓ Receiving a charitable deduction for the stock's market value at the time of donation

Consult your financial advisor to explore how stock donations can benefit both you and those in need.

Join Our Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Effort

Help AltruVision raise \$3,400 to cover critical tissue processing expenses for patients awaiting sight-restoring cornea transplants.

- ✓ Get involved today! Start a fundraiser and rally your friends, family, or community to give the gift of sight.

Contact us to learn how to launch your fundraiser today! ➔



DONATE ONLINE
www.AltruVision.org

Get Involved!

5th Annual Cornhole for Corneas
Thursday, July 24, 2025
Mummers Museum, Philadelphia, PA

31st Annual Gift of Sight Charity Golf Classic
Monday, September 29, 2025
Valleybrook Country Club, Blackwood, NJ

Remembrance Butterflies at The Clay Studio
The last Friday of every month

November is National Eye Donation Month
Follow us on social media to get involved

11th Annual Heroes of Hope Celebration
Saturday, March 14, 2026

Write a Letter to Your Donor Family or Loved One's Cornea Recipient.
Email info@altruvision.org, or call our office to learn how.

AltruVision Tours
Available all year long



Join the AltruVision community!

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AltruVision - A Lions Eye Bank

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215-563-1679

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