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Midwest Eye-Banks Honors Social Worker with Special Service Award

ANN ARBOR – Each year, Midwest Eye-Banks' Board of Directors recognizes individuals who have made enormous efforts to further the mission of the Eye-Bank. Julie Ann Johnson, a social worker from Marquette, Michigan, has been honored this year with a Special Service Award for her outstanding work on behalf of the Eye-Bank. Johnson has been an integral part of the eye donation referral process at Lake Superior Hospice, personally speaking to families about donation and facilitating the consent process.

"She has done an unbelievable job," says Robert Chabie, manager of the Michigan Eye-Bank's Upper Peninsula satellite office. "She has put more heart and effort into offering the option of donation than anyone I have ever seen...Julie Ann has truly bridged the gap between donors and recipients." Johnson's efforts have resulted in 10 eye donors and nine surgical corneas, plus two training and two research corneas, since January, 2005. "Hospice patients sometimes feel that they are always taking from others, and this gives them a feeling of giving back," explains Johnson. "I just educate and help along the way."

Midwest Eye-Banks, based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is a 501(c)(3), independent, not-for profit organization dedicated to the restoration of sight. It recovers, evaluates, and distributes human eye tissue for transplantation. It also supports research into the causes and cures of blinding eye conditions, promotes donation awareness through public and professional education, and provides humanitarian aid to people in need of corneal transplantation throughout the world. For more information, visit Midwest Eye-Banks online at www.midwesteyebanks.org or call (800) 247-7250.