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MICHIGAN EYE-BANK ASKS CITIZENS TO SIGN REGISTRY DURING NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH

ANN ARBOR, MI – During the month of April, the Michigan Eye-Bank celebrates the gifts given by eye, organ and tissue donors. It also makes a special effort to remind Michigan residents to consider donation, discuss it with their families and sign the Michigan Donor Registry, available online at www.giftoflifemichigan.org or at any Secretary of State Branch Office.

“Signing the Donor Registry is one of the simplest things one person can do to save lives and restore health,” says Kevin Ross, Midwest Eye-Banks’ President and CEO. “Eye, organ and tissue donation is a natural part of the life cycle. It’s truly a heroic act when donors and their families say ‘yes’ to donation.” Michigan residents now receive a special heart sticker for their driver’s license or state ID when they become registered donors.

Ross will join Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land at events across Michigan during April to speak with residents about donation and the Donor Registry. Their first stop will be at the Hotel St. Regis in Detroit on April 1.

“Secretary Land is dedicated to increasing the number of registered eye, organ and tissue donors in Michigan,” Ross continues. “We’re fortunate to have her as a partner in our mission.” Ross and his staff also work directly with the Secretary of State’s Office to organize a statewide effort known as Buddy Day. “Buddies” are volunteers – often donor family members or transplant recipients – who spend the day at a Secretary of State Branch Office, sharing their stories and helping people learn about the Donor Registry. This year’s Buddy Day is April 2, when Ross will join Secretary Land at a branch office in Grand Rapids to kick off the event.

“We have more than 300 volunteers staffing nearly all of the Secretary of State offices in Michigan,” Ross reports. “Many of those are members of Lions Clubs that actively support the Eye-Bank. Their participation means a lot to us, and to the people we can help together.” The Secretary of State will sponsor other events in the Flint area on Tuesday, April 8 and in Kalamazoo on Thursday, April 17, and the Eye-Bank will be represented as well.

Congress initiated the official recognition of eye, organ and tissue donation in 1983 with a special awareness week taking place each April. Then, in 2003, the awareness effort was expanded to the entire month of April, making it National Donate Life Month.

The Michigan Eye-Bank is a division of Midwest Eye-Banks and 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 the Michigan Eye-Bank online at www.michiganeyebank.org or call (800) 247-7250.