

July 2011

Dear friends of the suture donation program:

An 18-year-old boy in Ethiopia had his sight restored with suture donated to Global Links – from one of you.

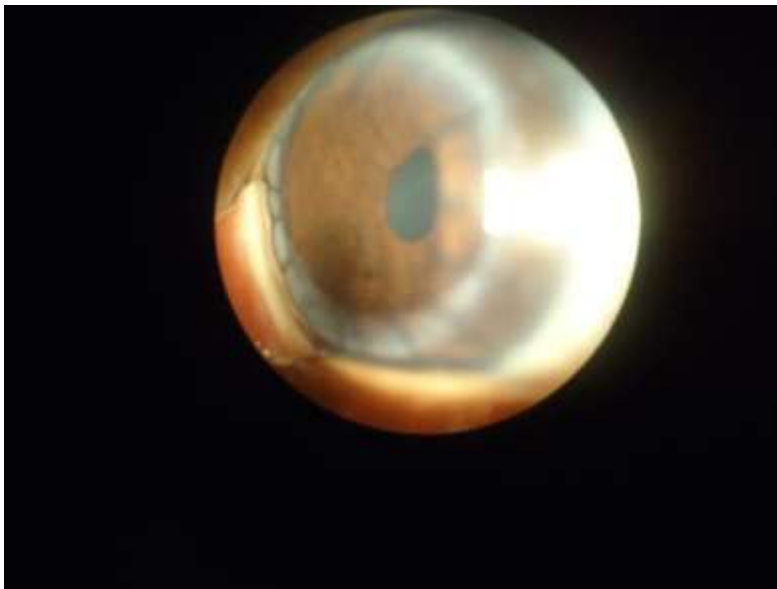


Photo courtesy of (and copyrighted by) Tonita Cervantes

This is a photo of the eye of Melese Dele Shanko, who received a corneal transplant with suture from Global Links, performed by Dr. Matt Oliva of cureblindness.org/Himalayan Cataract Project. You can see the sutures radiating out from the iris.

HCP was founded in 1995 with a mission to, according to their website, “eradicate preventable and curable blindness through high quality ophthalmic care, education and the establishment of a world-class eye care infrastructure.” Global Links has been donating very fine, expensive ophthalmic sutures to this organization since 1999.

One member of their adventurous team of ophthalmologists, Dr. Matt Oliva, took suture from Global Links to Ethiopia earlier in the year, and returned with some amazing stories and pictures. In three weeks, Matt and his fellow surgeons completed over 1500 cataract surgeries and 22 corneal transplants, a gift to the people of that region. Being blind in a developing country is often tantamount to a death sentence.



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Here is Melese Dele Shanko when his bandages were removed and he was able to see.

Global Links has a broad range of recipient hospitals in our program, with needs ranging from large absorbable sutures for obstetric emergencies, to sutures like those now in the eye of Melese Dele Shanko, so tiny they resemble a thin hair.

This story is another example of a life-changing surgery that can only be done with the appropriate sutures. "Thanks again for the donations," Matt wrote, "which are huge for us." Thanks to Matt, who made his time and his skill available to restore sight to so many.

And thanks to you – because it really does start with you.

I look forward to writing to you again, and sharing more stories.

Sincerely,
Ellen Wilson
Manager,
Suture Donation Program
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