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National Eye Donor Month, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

• **A Proclamation**

One of the most magnificent presents that one human being can bestow upon another is the gift of sight. Incredible as it may seem, it is within the power of each of us to give this precious gift simply by making arrangements to donate our eyes after death.

Thanks to advances in eye research, donor eyes can be stored and the preserved corneal tissues transplanted into the eyes of people who would otherwise be unable to see the beautiful and exciting world in which we live.

Each year some 30,000 people lose vision because their corneas have been damaged by injury, disease, or an inherited condition. Where the cornea has become so clouded that vision is lost, sight usually can be restored through a replacement cornea provided by a cornea donor.

Tragically, some visually impaired people who could benefit from this operation cannot be helped because suitable corneal tissue is not always available when needed. Donor eyes are also needed for vision research so that we may learn more about how this organ functions and develop ways to prevent and treat the many disorders which threaten sight.

It is appropriate that we as a Nation encourage eye donations and increase public awareness of the need for such donations. By filling out a uniform donor card and carrying it, we may give the gift of sight to people who now suffer from corneal blindness and benefit others from eye research.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 15, has designated March 1983 as "National Eye Donor Month" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of that month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of March 1983 as "National Eye Donor Month." I urge all citizens, health care professionals, educators, the media, and public and private organizations concerned with vision and vision research to join me in supporting this humanitarian action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and seventh.

Ronald Reagan