

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Rochester Eye & Tissue Bank Announces Research Grant Recipients During National Eye Donor Month

Two research projects being conducted at the University of Rochester Medical Center in 2009 will receive \$20,000 each from The Rochester Eye & Tissue Bank (RETB), a nonprofit organ and tissue donation agency.

Principal investigators Geniece M. Lehmann, Ph.D. and Naxin Guo, M.D., Ph.D., Richard T. Libby, Ph.D., Department of Ophthalmology, University of Rochester Eye Institute, will receive funding for their research project, *Strategies to Combat Corneal Scarring*. Collaborating with Lehmann and Guo are Richard P. Phipps, Ph.D., Krystel R. Huxlin, Ph.D. and Scott M. MacRae, M.D..

Principal investigator Xinping Zhang, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Orthopaedics at the Center for Musculoskeletal Research also will receive funding for his project, *Transplanting Gli2 Activated Human MSCs for Bone Regeneration*. His research work is aimed at improving outcomes for bone allograft transplantation using human bone marrow.

Additionally, **March is recognized as National Eye Donor Month**. "Patients suffering from corneal blindness due to disease, injury or infection understand the significance of this month," says Linda K. Fraser, RETB executive director. In 2008, there were a total of 223 eye donors in RETB's service region. "Even so, too often we must import corneas from other Eye Bank Association of America's accredited eye banks for patients in our area," states Fraser. "Our goal in 2009 is that our local donations will make that a rare occurrence. We are encouraging individuals to consider becoming pledged donors," adding "You don't have to have perfect eye vision to donate and give the gift of sight to others."

Consider becoming a pledged donor. For more information or a donor pledge card call (585) 272-7890 or visit [www.retb.org](http://www.retb.org) to download a donor pledge form.

The Rochester Eye & Tissue Bank is a nonprofit donation agency serving Western, Finger Lakes, Central and Northern NY, as well as North Central PA. The agency recovers and distributes musculoskeletal, skin, cardiovascular and eye tissues for transplantation, education and research. RETB is an accredited member of the Eye Bank Association of America.

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