

For Immediate Release
Monday, March 23, 2009

Contact:
National Eye Institute
(301) 496-5248
neinews@nei.nih.gov

NEI MEDIA AVAILABILITY

A Tongue for an Eye *Event Features BrainPort Device and Blind Adventure Athlete*

- What:** 40th Anniversary Kickoff Event for the National Eye Institute (NEI), National Institutes of Health (NIH). Program includes:
- Remarks and book signing by Erik Weihenmayer, the only blind person ever to summit Mount Everest.
 - Screening of “Blindsight,” an award-winning documentary film chronicling Weihenmayer’s journey up the north face of Mount Everest with six blind Tibetan teenagers.
 - Debut of third-generation BrainPort device by NEI-supported researchers. BrainPort stimulates the tongue with electrical impulses to create a sense of “vision” in the brain. The device allows visually impaired people to identify objects and move around unassisted.
- Who:** Featured speakers: Paul A. Sieving, M.D., Ph.D., NEI director; Michael D. Oberdorfer, Ph.D., NEI extramural program; Robert A. Beckman, president and CEO of NEI-supported Wicab, Inc.; Erik Weihenmayer, blind adventure athlete.
- When:** Friday, April 3, 2009 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
- Where:** NIH Clinical Center, Lipsett Amphitheater
10 Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892
http://www.cc.nih.gov/ccc/visitor/maps/south_lipsett_amphitheater.pdf
- Contact:** To schedule an interview with an NEI scientist or Erik Weihenmayer, please contact the NEI News Office at 301-496-5248 or neinews@nei.nih.gov.
###

The National Eye Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, leads the federal government’s research on the visual system and eye diseases. NEI supports basic and

clinical science programs that result in the development of sight-saving treatments. For more information, visit www.nei.nih.gov.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) — The Nation's Medical Research Agency — includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.