The Eye-Bank launched a compelling new ad campaign in January 2015 with some advance placement during the last week of 2014. The campaign, “Eye signed up!” is focused on reminding New Yorkers to sign up in the Donate Life Registry and features real New Yorkers who have already done so.

Another aspect of the campaign, “Eye can see again!” emphasizes the good that can come from donation and features local cornea transplant recipients who have had their sight restored. Versions of the advertising campaign can be seen in New York City subway cars, the New York Daily News and New York Post, the New York Daily News website as well as digital online versions for WCBS-AM radio. The ads are scheduled to run on broadcast television (WABC-TV; WCBS-TV and WLNY-TV) as well as cable (Time Warner/FIOS in New York City) through the month of January and on several local radio stations through the end of March.

Taping of the new campaign occurred in November at a film studio in Tribeca. The Eye-Bank is very grateful to all of the cornea transplant recipients as well as the individuals who have enrolled in the Registry who volunteered their time and effort that day to come and be part of supplying the footage needed to create the campaign. The ad campaign was created by adz (Advertising Design Zen).

The Eye-Bank Appoints New Medical Director

The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration is pleased to announce that Michelle K. Rhee, M.D., is the new Medical Director filling the position recently vacated by Mark Rosenblatt, M.D, who relocated to Chicago to assume the position of Chief of Ophthalmology at the University of Illinois-Chicago. The Eye-Bank thanks him for his valuable contribution and extends best wishes to him.

Dr. Rhee is no stranger to The Eye-Bank having been associated with the organization for a number of years, first as a member of the Medical Advisory Board since 2006 and in 2012, as Associate Medical Director responsible for supervising technical training. As Medical Director she will provide oversight to the corneal laboratory as it pertains to accepted medical standards and regulations.

Currently, Dr. Rhee serves as Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Ophthalmology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine and Surgical Clinical Preceptor for the Ophthalmology Residency Program.

She is Associate Clinical Director in the Department of Ophthalmology at Elmhurst Hospital Center and also serves as a Refractive Surgeon at New York Eye Specialists.

Dr. Rhee has recently been named as a participant in the Eye Bank of America Association 2015 Young Physician Leadership Program which encourages innovation and fosters collaboration between corneal surgeons and the eye banking community. The program identifies future leaders in eye banking and trains them to build necessary skills to be active in the eye banking community, while offering professional growth and leadership development.

A graduate of Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, Dr. Rhee completed her post doctoral training as a fellow at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary where she focused on Cornea, External Disease and Refractive Surgery. Previously, she was a resident at the Eye and Ear Institute of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and had interned at the Cabrini Medical Center, Department of Medicine, in New York.

Continued on page 7
Apply to Win $1,000

Attention high school seniors and college students under age 25! Apply now for The Eye-Bank’s Young Ambassador Scholarship in the amount of $1000.00. Established in memory of Christopher Nordquist who left the gift-of-sight as an eye donor, the scholarship seeks to engage young people in promoting the cause of eye, organ and tissue donation. Eligible applicants must complete a project that creates greater awareness about donation in their local community or via social media and provide a short written explanation of their endeavor. Previous winners have conducted tabling events at their school or civic organizations; initiated social media buzz which led to Registry sign-ups and even created a film. Use your special talent to highlight the importance of eye, organ and tissue donation and you could be our 2015 winner!

For an application form and detailed information about our Young Ambassador Scholarship, please visit http://www.eyedonation.org/scholarship.html. The Eye-Bank will provide promotional brochures to those interested in applying. Applications must be postmarked no later than June 1, 2015.

Save the Date to Advocate in Albany

Mark your calendars now and join us on Tuesday, May 12, 2015 for a day in the State’s Capital speaking with legislators about the importance of eye, organ and tissue donation. If you are a transplant recipient or a donor family member who would like to share your personal story with our state’s lawmakers, this is a great opportunity to have an impact on what our legislators know about how donation and transplantation affect the lives of so many New Yorkers.

This year, one of the important agenda items to emphasize with the members of our State Senate and Assembly is to consider legislation that would allow young adults under the age of 18 to enroll in the New York State Registry. Young New Yorkers believe that registering as a donor is an important community responsibility, and have expressed a desire to register in the NYS Donate Life Registry. Many young New Yorkers believe that registering as a donor is an important community responsibility, and have expressed a desire to register in the NYS Donate Life Registry. However, NYS only allows individuals 18 years and older to consent to donate their organs and tissues, and to register their consent in the NYS Donate Life Registry. Currently, forty-four states have either no restriction on the minimum age for an organ donor enrollment or allow for registration at an age younger than 18.

The New York Alliance for Donation (NYAD) agenda proposes that NYS should join the majority of other states in allowing persons aged sixteen and older to express their consent to donate and enroll in the NYS Donate Life Registry. However, in the event that a young person is considered for organ, eye or tissue donation, the parents of that individual have the final authority to give permission for the donation to take place until age 18.

For more information about Legislative Day and signing up to accompany us to Albany, please contact moliver@ebsr.org or (212) 742-9000. An early response will help us to schedule an appointment with your local and state representatives.
Young Family Man is Grateful to See Again, Thanks to a Cornea Transplant

M. Kim Oliver

The world of young family man and construction worker, 26 year-old Elvis Morales, was almost bulldozed by a severe eye infection that threatened to rob him of his eyesight and he was told by his doctor that he would go blind if he did not have a cornea transplant immediately. It was just a few days before this pronouncement that he was the happy husband of Eileen and father to their five-year old son.

Elvis recalls awaking on the morning of Saturday, June 28 with his left eye swollen and tearing. He thought little of it and went to the pharmacy to get eye drops. However, his eye condition quickly became worse, to the point where he could see nothing out of his left eye. He began to experience excessive swelling, tearing and excruciating pain. On Sunday, he went to the emergency room and after being given eye drops was advised to visit the hospital’s eye clinic.

On Monday, the eye clinic’s optometrist diagnosed Elvis’ condition as a bacterial corneal ulcer resulting from misuse of contact lenses. However, a prescription of antibiotics and eye drops did not alleviate his symptoms and Elvis was referred to ophthalmologist and corneal surgeon, Himani Goyal, M.D.

Upon examining Elvis the next day, late Tuesday evening, Dr. Goyal confirmed the earlier diagnosis of a severely ulcerated cornea; however, by this time the ulcer had spanned and perforated the entire central cornea.

She recommended an emergency cornea transplant and scheduled the surgery for the following morning. The situation for Elvis was dire because of the extensive corneal damage, and the possibility that the infection had spread deeper into the eye, also of concern, was the possibility that donor corneal tissue might not be available immediately. Dr. Goyal could not be certain that a cornea transplant would restore Elvis’ eyesight, but she informed him that without the transplant, he would most likely lose his eye to the infection and go blind in his left eye.

Elvis was in shock. Within four days, he had gone from what he had believed to be a slight eye irritation to a problem that required him to have transplant surgery to save his eyesight!

Elvis knew nothing about cornea transplants but researched the topic on the Internet. He saw what had to be done and also realized it was the only procedure that gave him a chance at restored eyesight. Elvis says his wife was nervous because she was very concerned he might lose his eyesight. Their five-year old son who could not possibly understand the severity of his father’s condition said, “Daddy has a booboo in his eye.” Elvis was quite worried about not being able to support his young family if he lost his eyesight. Originally from Guatemala, his extended family was informed about the situation and they all rallied around him.

Luckily, on Wednesday, July 2, The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration was able to provide the necessary donor corneal tissue and Dr. Goyal performed a corneal transplant at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Bay Ridge. Elvis calls the procedure “amazing!” According to Dr. Goyal, just prior to the transplant, Elvis only had “hand motion vision” meaning, he could see a hand waving but could not count how many fingers were held up in front of his left eye, it was a blur. However, when his bandages were removed the day after the surgery, Elvis was able to count the number of fingers in front of his left eye, and a week later he could see the big “E” on the eye chart which he could not see prior to the cornea transplant.

Elvis says he is so grateful to his donor and the family for the precious gift of sight he has received. Because he has regained the vision in his left eye, he is able to continue with his job and provide for his family. Elvis’s eyesight is now 20/70 without eye glasses and Dr. Goyal expects his eyesight to improve over time to 20/40 or better with prescription eye glasses.

We, at The Eye-Bank, are encouraged by Elvis’s story and hope that New Yorkers will understand the great gift they may give by signing up in the Donate Life Registry. To sign up to become a donor, please visit our website at www.eyedonation.org and click on the Donate Life logo and See what your eyes can do for others.”

Because Elvis Morales has regained the vision in his left eye, he is able to continue with his job and provide for his family.

To minimize the risk of eye infection, Dr. Goyal, corneal surgeon and ophthalmologist, advises contact lens wearers to have a proper contact lens fitting and observe good hygiene such as removing contacts before sleeping, cleaning them, replacing cases and following the manufacturer’s care instructions. Dr. Goyal advises contact lens wearers to see an ophthalmologist if they have symptoms of a foreign body sensation or pain in the eye with tearing and sensitivity to light since this might be an indication of a serious condition.

Himani Goyal, M.D.

Elvis Morales pictured here with his young family who are all grateful that his sight was restored.
Eye-Bank Volunteers Make an Impact with the Community

Over the past several months, The Eye-Bank has been working in conjunction with various New York City organizations to conduct tabling events and our volunteers have been busy giving of their time and sharing their personal stories with students, church parishioners, hospital personnel and business professionals.

In 2014, community outreach efforts included visits to: New Rochelle High School and Hunter College; the Church of St. Joseph, Brooklyn Diocese; hospitals in Queens including Flushing, Jamaica and Elmhurst, and Woodhull in Brooklyn; the 109th Precinct Community Day and the Federal Agency of Taxation and Finance.

These outreach efforts have proven to be successful as New Yorkers demonstrate their commitment to the donation cause by completing Registry forms on the spot, while others take forms with them to read at their leisure or share the information with a significant other. We are pleased to be getting the word out about the good donation can accomplish and the need for New Yorkers to enroll in the Donate Life Registry.

We say a big "Thank You" to all our volunteers who have played a significant role in helping us create greater awareness about donation. Cornea transplant recipients have shared their stories of an improved life after transplant and donor family members have expressed contentment in knowing that another person has been helped by their loved one’s gift.

You would like to volunteer with The Eye-Bank and are a cornea transplant recipient or donor family member, we invite you to attend a training workshop in the spring. Please contact moliver@ebsr.org or call (212) 742-9000 ext.115 to sign up for the workshop or to receive additional information about volunteering.

Stories Come Alive on Facebook

The Eye-Bank has been steadily taking advantage of social media marketing opportunities and this past fall captured and posted videos of cornea transplant recipients and donor family members who shared in their own words what the donation experience has meant to them. Recorded and edited by Eye-Bank staff, the videos have proven to be quite popular with our Facebook fans, receiving hundreds of hits and numerous shares!

In the videos, cornea transplant recipients offer messages of thanks to their donor families and share with listeners how their transplant not only restored their eyesight, but gave them a new lease on life. In some cases, recipients tell of being able to return to work and successfully perform their duties while others speak about the thrill of accomplishing everyday tasks that many of us take for granted, such as recognizing a UPS mail truck in the distance.

One of our videos features a donor mother who speaks of the satisfaction she derives from volunteering with The Eye-Bank.

You can view these videos at Facebook.com/EyeBankforSightRestoration and share them with family and friends to create awareness about the importance of eye, organ and tissue donation and the need for New Yorkers to sign-up in the Donate Life Registry.

To enroll in the Registry, visit www.eyedonation.org and click on the Donate Life logo.
Golfers Enjoy Fifth Annual Swing for Sight

The Eye-Bank hosted the 5th successful Swing for Sight golf outing on September 15, 2014 at the Tuxedo Club. Golfers once again enjoyed a picture perfect day on this Robert Trent Jones-designed course. At the end of a challenging 18 holes, two foursomes prevailed to take home first place Gross and Net honors. The mantel of honor belonged to lowest gross scoring team Edith Greenwood, Dan Swift, Donald Nadjek and John O’Connell while first place net was captured by Joseph D’Ambrosio, Adrian Zuckerman, James Finkel and Scott Hendry.

Second place gross went to Ed Fabian Jr., Dan Fabian, Billie Phillips Jr. and Joe Fabian with second place lowest net score being won by Cono Grasso, Donald Kasten, Leonard Masone and Bill Newsome.

In addition to team prizes, golfers also competed in several hole-in-one competitions, which included vying for the top prize of $25,000.

Congratulations to David Rhee and Anne Petrocelli for winning Closest to the Pin and Patricia Dahl and Robert Rothstein for Longest Drive.

Competing in an exciting chip-off contest on the 18th hole were Mike Sniffen and John Griffiths after they both hit the floating island during the Chipping competition. Griffiths emerged as the winner.

We would also like to congratulate the event’s raffle winners including, Richard Najac who won a $100 Gift Certificate to Veselka Restaurant and winners J. O’Connell, Billie Phillips Jr. and Curtis Stewart who all won a day of golf for foursomes at Glen Arbor, Trump National and Hollowbrook, respectively.

Congratulations to Chris Brosi who placed the winning bid for a pair of basketball tickets for the on court battle between the New York Nets and the New York Knicks. We are grateful to Benefit Committee and Medical Advisory Board Member, Douglas Lazzaro, M.D., who secured the tickets for auction and we extend thanks to Board Member, Paul Kayaian, who generously played auctioneer.

Co-chairing this year’s golf outing were Jim Fabian and David Haight, M.D. whose leadership helped raise $30,000 to support our sight-restoring mission. The golf outing would not have been possible without the generosity of some of our key supporters and on behalf of our Co-chairs and Benefit Committee, we would like to thank: Jeanne McCooey and our friends at the Metropolitan Golf Association; Our $25,000 Hole-in-One sponsor, Ibis Management; MinuteMen; Leonard Opticians; Trump National Golf Clubs (Westchester); Hollow Brook Country Club and Glen Arbor Country Club.

Executive Director Patricia Dahl, still proud of winning longest drive in the women’s category, conveys a big “thank you” to the Committee Co-chairs, the members and all who supported the event to make it a resounding success.

1. 1st Place Team Gross: Dan Swift, Edith Greenwood and Donald Nadjek (missing from photo is John O’Connell)
2. 1st Place Team Net: Joe D’Ambrosio, Scott Hendry, Jim Finkel and Adrian Zuckerman
3. 2nd Place Team Gross: Dan Fabian, Ed Fabian, Jr., Billie Phillips Jr. and Joe Fabian
4. 2nd Place Team Net: Cono Grasso, Donald Kasten and Len Masone
5. Co-chairs David Haight, M.D. and Jim Fabian, Esq. with Eye-Bank Executive Director, Patricia Dahl
The Eye-Bank acknowledges Montefiore Medical Center—Moses Division for advocating the cause of eye, organ and tissue donation. The hospital’s Donor Council chaired by H. Michael Ushay, M.D. has been particularly instrumental in facilitating the donation and recovery process. The Council comprises representatives from the hospital’s various departments as well as staff from organ and tissues procurement organizations including The Eye-Bank.

The Donor Council’s main agenda is to promote awareness of eye, organ and tissue donation and cultivate a smooth referral and recovery process. Meeting quarterly, the Donor Council addresses statistical issues that may arise with regard to referral timeliness and donation numbers. The Council, co-chaired by Leo Trevino, who is also the manager of organ and tissue donation, implements remedial education for hospital staff to address areas that need revisiting.

Various hospital unit heads and their staffs have also contributed to the donation process helping to maximize the numbers of potential donors. As such, The Eye-Bank wishes to recognize the entire staff of the following departments: David Allan, administrative nurse manager of the Adult Emergency Department; Diahann Barthelemy, nurse manager, SICU; Doris Brown, nurse manager, NW7 Palliative Care; Melba Garcia, administrative nurse manager, MICU and Elodia Mercier, director of the Klaau Medical Surgical Units.

The Eye-Bank is grateful to all at Montefiore, Moses Division who champion the cause of donation and transplantation.

Young Ambassador Makes News on Channel 12

Each year, as part of our Young Ambassador Program, The Eye-Bank offers an opportunity to a young cornea transplant recipient to create artwork for our Thanksgiving card which is sent to our many supporters and friends. Artwork for the 2014 card was created by 12-year-old cornea transplant recipient, Willington Almonte, who also submitted a poem in which he refers to himself as “a lucky boy” and “thankful guy.”

Willington, who moved to the United States two years ago from the Dominican Republic, was diagnosed with keratoconus, a progressive eye disease which would eventually have left him blind without the benefit of two sight-restoring cornea transplants. Since receiving the surgeries which have restored his eyesight, he can once again engage in activities he loves such as writing and playing soccer and video games with his friends.

Willington’s story caught the interest of Channel 12 News reporter, Grace Noone, when The Eye-Bank sent a press release about his story to the media. On December 22, 2014, Channel 12 broadcast a news segment that featured Willington and also included his doctor and school teacher. The news outlet also stressed the importance of donation and directed viewers to The Eye-Bank’s website at www.eyedonation.org. The story can be found at: http://westchester.news12.com/news/yonkers-boy-gets-gift-of-sight-1.9740103.

The Eye-Bank is very pleased to have had this opportunity to reach a wider audience and hopes that Willington’s story has resonated with many New Yorkers and caused them to sign-up in the Donate Life Registry at www.eyedonation.org.


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Let the Good Times Roll at April 27 Spring Benefit

The Eye-Bank’s Spring Benefit offers supporters a new way to celebrate the end of winter by hosting our very first Casino Night on Monday, April 27, 2015 at The Bohemian Benevolent Literary Association (321 East 73rd Street, Manhattan) from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The 2015 Spring Benefit is being chaired by Eye-Bank Board member Paul Kayaian and former Medical Advisory Board member Douglas Lazarro, M.D.

Everyone will be lucky who attends the fun evening of Black Jack, Roulette and Craps, all played to benefit The Eye-Bank’s public and professional education programs. Winners will redeem gaming chips for raffle tickets and chances to win any of the many wonderful prizes ranging from a day of golf at a prestigious club or dining certificates at popular New York City restaurants to cases of fine wine or a weekend stay at a popular resort.

Tickets for The Eye-Bank’s Casino Night are $120 per person and include $200 in play money, light dinner and specialty cocktails. To reserve, or for more information, contact Catherine Sui at (212) 742-9000, ext. 130 or csui@ebsr.org.

New Ad Campaign
Continued from page 1

A number of The Eye-Bank’s cornea recipients, many of whom have been featured in this newsletter or on our Facebook page, participated in the taping including Zulfiquer Ali, Willington Almonte, Angelica Barrios, Elizabeth Duker and Tanesha Dukan. We also thank the individuals participating who have already signed up in the Registry and who agreed to serve as role models for other New Yorkers to follow: Kerry Goodnight, Kalliope Koutelos and Randy Wilkins.

Many of The Eye-Bank’s cornea transplant recipients attended the shoot for this year’s ad campaign.

Dr. Rhee is Medical Director
Continued from page 1

Prior to a career in medicine, Dr. Rhee studied music and received highest honors from Princeton University for her Bachelor’s program in Music Composition. She also studied piano, cello and music composition at New York’s prestigious Juilliard School.

Certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology, Dr. Rhee is the recipient of several honors and awards including the Patricia S. Levinson Fellowship for Innovative Opportunities in Medical Education and The Eye-Bank’s Wing Chu Professional Education Award in 2010. The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration welcomes Dr. Rhee and we look forward to a long and favorable collaboration as we benefit from her expertise.

Honor/Memorial Gifts from July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014

Memorial and honor gifts are given to recognize loved ones or to mark a special occasion. To make a gift in honor or memory of someone, please use the enclosed envelope, visit www.eyedonation.org/give or contact The Eye-Bank’s Development Department at (212) 742-9000.

In Memory of...

B Michael T. Beijermann
C Wing Chu, M.D.
D Nils J. Dahl
Bea D’Angelo
Sonia Donskis
F Norma Foerder
G David Garland
H Brian M. Jackel
J Jamila Koller
Ollie MacKovar
K Rose Marie Mattern
David E. Moore
L Henry Oppenheim
M Peter Rabine
David S. Reiss
N Hector Reyes
Antonio Eugenio Robinson
O Marjorie A. Rommen
P Anita Saltzman
Gloria Scofield
Gary Smith
S Steven Sutton
T Mathew Tedesco
Charles A. Titone
U Michael Wasserman
V EYE CAN SEE AGAIN.
W Joan D. Daly
Carol Kassman
Kalliope Koutelos
Randy Wilkins
X Kerry Goodnight
Kalliope Koutelos
Randy Wilkins
Y Howard Safar
Z Danutis Silber’s Retirement
Sidney Silverman
Louis Squitieri’s Special Birthday

In Honor of...

A Linda Arcara
Kichihieh Asama, M.D.
B Sandra C. Belmont, M.D.
Kirk Rousseau’s 16th Birthday
C Eugene and Joan Daly
Dee Diemer’s 86th Birthday
D Joel Feinberg’s donor family
E Louis A. Ficano
F Ilana Barta and Akiva Fund’s Marriage
G Edith Korszowsky
H David C. Ritterband, M.D.
I Edith Korszowsky
J Mlk Marie Mangiafridda
K Roy Marshall’s 70th Birthday
L Carol Mankoff
M David E. Moore
N Michael Renna
O Marjorie Wimber
P Gerald Zaidman
Q Tenda Zakroff’s Special Birthday
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The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration
120 Wall Street
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www.eyedonation.org

eye to eye is published by The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration, Inc., a non-profit organization located at 120 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005-3902.

The Eye-Bank was founded in 1944 for the purpose of collecting and distributing corneal tissue for transplants, research and medical education. More than 60,000 people in the greater Metropolitan area have had their sight restored through the work of The Eye-Bank.

Patricia Dahl
Executive Director/CEO
Noël Mick
Editor
M. Kim Oliver
Associate Editor

The Eye-Bank is pleased to announce the appointment of Mudassir Razvi and Daniel Carney to new positions in the cornea laboratory.

Mudassir Razvi has been with The Eye-Bank for over 10 years and as the Tissue Processing Manager will oversee the evaluation and processing of donor tissue as well as its special preparation. Prior to this appointment, Mudassir served as Laboratory Supervisor.

Daniel Carney joined The Eye-Bank four years ago as a laboratory technician and is now the Laboratory Manager. In this position he will oversee the Ocular Laboratory staff responsible for donor tissue recovery, determining donor suitability and distribution procedures. Congratulations to both Daniel and Mudassir!

...of Interest

Join us on Facebook. Visit us at www.facebook.com/EyeBankforSightRestoration and click LIKE.
Let others know about eye donation and how to enroll in the Donate Life Registry when you SHARE our page with your Facebook friends. It all helps toward giving the gift of sight to someone who is blind.