The Eye-Bank recently launched its 2018 multi-media advertising campaign urging New Yorkers to sign up as organ, eye and tissue donors in the New York State Donate Life Registry. The highlight of this year’s campaign is that for the very first time, New Yorkers can enroll in the Registry completely online by using their personal computer, laptop or smartphone. As a result, signing up to become a donor can be accomplished more quickly and easily than ever before.

The quick and easy process of enrolling is the focus of The Eye-Bank’s campaign. The ads, which have been created by ADZ Advertising, all emphasize the ease and simplicity of now being able to sign up in the Donate Life Registry just by using your smartphone. The Eye-Bank ads will run on broadcast television, radio and digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and media websites. Print ads will run in the Daily News and AM New York as well as in New York City subway cars.

Now to sign up: simply go to eyedonation.org and click on the “Donate Life” Registry button, complete the New York State Donate Life Registry form and submit. In a matter of two or three minutes you can be enrolled and may someday leave the gift of sight or save someone’s life as an organ, eye and tissue donor.

According to The Eye-Bank’s Executive Director Patricia Dahl, “We have been eagerly waiting for the New York State Donate Life Registry to become completely electronic so that New Yorkers can register entirely online. Since that has just recently been accomplished, going forward, we can expect the number of individuals enrolled in the state’s Registry to increase dramatically.”

And, as one of the taglines in The Eye-Bank’s ad campaign has duly noted, that if using one’s smartphone, “Now the power to give the beautiful gift of sight is literally…..in the palm of your hand.”

NYS Donate Life Registry is Celebrated

A celebration of the new online New York State Donate Life Registry was held at Facebook’s New York City headquarters on Tuesday, November 14, 2017. To mark the historic occasion, The Eye-Bank joined other members of Donate Life New York State (DLNYS), formerly New York Alliance for Donation, the statewide advocacy and educational organization that promotes organ, eye and tissue donation.

The milestone event was attended by staff from the state’s various organ recovery organizations including state-licensed eye and tissue banks, members of transplant support organizations as well as transplant recipients and donor family members.

Several organizations and elected officials including, DLNYS, Governor Andrew Cuomo, NYS Department of Health, NYS Department of Motor Vehicles and the Continued on page 2
Registry Event Celebrated at Facebook

Continued from page 1

state legislature collaborated to establish the new Registry. This collaboration inspires a culture of donation and seeks to increase donor Registry enrollment in New York State.

Also present at the celebration were longtime legislative champions for the cause of organ, eye and tissue donation, Senator Kemp Hannon (District 6, Nassau County) and Assemblyman Richard Gottfried (District 75, Manhattan). Both representatives expressed congratulation to DLNYS for their dedication and successful donation advocacy and remarked on the importance of the Registry in improving and saving lives of those New Yorkers awaiting transplants.

New York State Senator Kemp Hannon (Nassau County) talks with a young heart transplant recipient

Board Elects New Member

At The Eye-Bank’s December 2017 joint Board Meeting, Joan L. Larson, a portfolio manager with extensive experience in strategic financial planning was elected to the Board of Directors.

Ms. Larson is currently a Managing Director at Sandalwood Securities Inc., headquartered in Roseland, NJ, where she is responsible for hedge fund manager research. Prior to joining Sandalwood Securities Inc. in 2001, she was Vice President of the Private Portfolio Group at Citigroup/Solomon Smith Barney Inc. in New York City. Previously, she served as Corporate Director and Trustee of Nationwide Circuit Products Inc., and held account executive positions with a variety of investment firms.

Ms. Larson received her Master’s Degree in International Management from the American Graduate School of International Management in 1977 and holds a BA from Rutgers University.

According to Patricia Dahl, Executive Director and CEO of The Eye-Bank, “It is a pleasure to have Joan Larson join our Board as she brings fresh ideas and many years of experience in financial planning that will be an asset to our organization.”

The Eye-Bank thanks all our volunteers who made a special effort to attend this landmark event and participate in what was truly an inspiring occasion.

EyeDonation.Org Has a New Look

The new Registry which allows New Yorkers to complete the entire enrollment process online and can be accessed from The Eye-Bank’s website at www.eyedonation.org or from www.donatelife.ny.gov. Although enrollment forms are still available, the Registry boasts a simplicity and ease of use that promises to make the enrollment process a smooth one. New Yorkers will also be able to sign-up in the Registry using their smart phones.

DLNYS is hopeful that the Registry will bolster state enrollments and help increase the number of lives that can be saved through the miracle of transplantation.

The Eye-Bank’s Executive Director, Patricia Dahl, states “We have made many strides over the years in bringing greater awareness to the donation cause. This new Registry will allow New Yorkers to take the steps to enroll as a donor in the easiest way possible and record their wish as it pertains to donation. It is a great achievement and we look forward to an increase in Registry enrollments.”

The Eye-Bank thanks all our volunteers who made a special effort to attend this landmark event and participate in what was truly an inspiring occasion.

NYS Assemblyman Richard Gottfried (Manhattan)

New York State Senator Kemp Hannon (Nassau County) talks with a young heart transplant recipient

The Eye-Bank’s website has undergone a makeover this year and has a newly designed interface that is completely mobile-friendly. Facebook is integrated with our website and allows the poignant stories and videos from our recipients and donor families to be easily shared with family and friends, helping to increase awareness about eye donation and The Eye-Bank’s mission to restore sight. Our most recently produced video features Jessica Abanilla, a donor sister who shares the moving story of her sister’s gift. Thanks to the new Registry, New Yorkers are now able to sign up directly through our website, eyedonation.org, to become organ, eye and tissue donors.
Future is Brighter for Young New Yorker Thanks to a Cornea Transplant

By Marilyn Kim Oliver

New York resident, Jose Perez, was enjoying life as a twenty-three year old working in the restaurant business preparing food and also thinking about his future with regard to academic studies when suddenly his eyesight was compromised.

One morning in March 2016, Jose awoke with what he describes as a bubble on his right eye which caused some pain and distorted his vision. After visiting his optometrist, he was referred to an ophthalmologist. He was eventually seen by corneal specialist, David Ritterband, M.D., who diagnosed his condition as keratoconus, an eye disease in which the cornea, the clear outer covering of the eye becomes cone shaped eventually resulting in blindness. Hard contact lenses which are typically prescribed to treat this condition were not effective in Jose’s case because his cornea was too misshapen.

Jose also had astigmatism in his left eye and with the complication of his diseased right eye found it difficult to perform his job effectively, such as using the color-coded computer system at the restaurant. He says he was only able to work because he was very familiar with the physical set-up of the restaurant and knew where everything was located.

Unfortunately for Jose, the progression of the disease caused scar tissue to form on his right eye and as a result, Dr. Ritterband recommended a corneal transplant. According to Jose, he knew nothing about cornea transplants and appreciated the thorough way in which Dr. Ritterband explained the procedure, even drawing diagrams so that both Jose and his mother, who was there to support him, were made to feel very comfortable with the idea. Jose said his mother had been nervous and very concerned, but the explanation allayed her fears and he, himself, felt excited and relieved to know that there was a way to restore his eyesight.

Dr. Ritterband performed the corneal transplant surgery in July 2016 at Mount Sinai, Beth Israel Hospital with donor cornea tissue provided by The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration and although Jose had some discomfort after the surgery he has since made a complete and successful recovery.

Jose is lighthearted as he says, “It feels as if I never had surgery! My eyesight is so much better that it ever was, even before the disease.” When comparing his eyesight before and after the surgery, Jose talks about entering his room and looking at photos and posters and being in awe of how clearly he now sees them. Before his transplant, the lettering on his posters appeared blurry but now they are crisp. Jose now sees 20/20 with eyeglasses.

When asked about his donor, Jose expresses complete admiration and respect for the person who donated their cornea and is amazed that it has restored his own eyesight. He says it is a selfless act for which he will ever be grateful. He is glad that he can keep his job and is now contemplating a future that includes returning to school.

The Eye-Bank encourages New Yorkers to sign-up to be a donor in the new and easy to use New York State Donate Life Registry at www.eyedonation.org. It only takes a couple minutes to enroll and can offer much good for a lifetime. Sign-up today and See What Your Eyes Can do for Others™.

Eye-Bank Medical Director Earns Honor

The Eye-Bank’s Medical Director, Michelle Rhee, M.D. (Front row, 3rd from left) was recognized in a ceremony for graduates of the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s (AAO) Leadership Development Program, Class of 2017 at the Academy’s meeting in New Orleans in November. Dr. Rhee, represented the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) in the year-long program for physicians which included leadership meetings held at AAO’s headquarters in San Francisco (January); visiting members of Congress in Washington, DC (April) and concluded with sessions on global collaboration in New Orleans (November).
In November, The Eye-Bank was pleased to acknowledge our eye donors, their families, generous contributors, surgeons and supporters and express our gratitude with our annual Thanksgiving card and offer our sincere appreciation to those who are essential in helping us accomplish our mission of sight restoration.

The artwork for the 2017 card was created by Eye-Bank Young Ambassador, ten-year-old Ethan Fowler, who was diagnosed with bi-lateral Peters Anomaly as an infant and had his sight restored with two corneal transplants—one when he was only three months old and another at six months. Ethan’s family is grateful to his donors who said “yes” to donation because they made it possible for him to have restored eyesight and live a greatly enhanced life.

Now in elementary school, Ethan is a basketball enthusiast and football fan and enjoys telling jokes to make his friends and family laugh.

We encourage you to support eye, organ and tissue donation by signing up in the Donate Life Registry at eyedonation.org and clicking on the Donate Life logo. It only takes a minute to enroll! Sign-up today and See What Your Eyes Can Do for Others™.

The Eye-Bank Participates in EBAA Networking Grant

From December 6-8, The Eye-Bank hosted Southern Eye Bank, located in New Orleans, as part of a networking grant awarded by the Eye Bank Association of America.

The grant allows staff from one eye bank to visit another to learn best practices in eye banking. Southern Eye Bank met with The Eye-Bank’s laboratory staff as well as the communications, quality assurance, and development departments.

Honor/Memorial Gifts from May 1, 2017 - December 1, 2017

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
Veronica Barta
Valerie Basil
Michael T. Bretjemann
Aida de Acosta Breckinridge

C
Astrid Grites Castro
Mary C. Connolly

D
Celestino DeLaurentis

F
Adam Fox
J
Julia Jager
Horace L. Jones
Marcia Jones

K
Maureen Kalberer
Sondra Kasindorf
Pauline B. Kirk
Steve J. Kolk

L
Vivian Leonard
Jan A. Lewis

M
William A. Matthews
Jack Metcalfe

N
Tara Nafday
Christopher Nordquist

O
Mary Jane O’Neill

P
Dan and Nancy Plackenmeyer

R
Denise Rabinovitch
Gene Richards
Eugene Richter
Randi L. Rose
Leslie M. Rowe

S
Robert Sarokin
Selma Shapiro
William L. Shaughnessy

T
Richard C. Troutman, M.D.
Cousin Tess

V
Joanna Vidal

W
Karen M. Kovacs Wickers
Renee Woolf

Y
Dominick Yacono

In Honor of...

B
Karen A. Bardavid
Janine Blasen

D
Bess Diener

F
Lynn Farscht
George J. Florakis, M.D.

G
Michael T. Goldstein, M.D.

J
Lynn A. Jaeger

K
Steve J. Kolk
Jimmy Kriz

L
Faith Leonard

M
Roy Marshak

R
Michael Renna

S
John A. Seedor, M.D.
Michael B. Starr, M.D.
Gayle Stein

T
The Eye Bank Staff
On October 3, more than 200 guests joined in raising a glass at The Eye-Bank’s Fall Benefit, *A Wine, Whiskey, and Sweets Tasting* at the Bohemian Benevolent & Literary Association in Manhattan. Attendees enjoyed a variety of fine wines and flights of exceptional whiskies along with a small plates buffet of seasonal pairings and an assortment of gourmet sweets and chocolates.

An additional highlight of the evening was the silent auction, with selections featuring two premier house seats to Lin-Manuel Miranda’s award-winning *Hamilton, An American Musical*; an in-home wine tasting with one of the country’s master sommeliers; dinner for two at several exclusive restaurants in New York; tickets to major league sporting events; a pair of VIP tickets to CBS’s *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*; and luxurious spa packages. The entire evening was a resounding success with appreciative patrons lending their support in raising funds for The Eye-Bank’s public and professional education programs.

The Eye-Bank extends a sincere “thank you” to the Fall Benefit Co-chairs James D. Auran, M.D., and Joseph D’Ambrosio as well as the entire Benefit Committee for their time and effort in making the evening so successful. Special appreciation goes to the evening’s wine, whiskey, and sweets sponsors: Broadbent Wines, Brooklyn Winery, CRUSH Wines, Robert Sinskey Vineyards, Gramercy Wine and Spirits, Aberlour Whisky, Glendronach Whisky, Phoenix Beverages, Blommer Chocolate and Mah Ze Dar Bakery for their generous support of the event. Visit eyedonation.org for future Eye-Bank special events.
The Eye-Bank Delivers Information to the Community

The Eye-Bank continues to work towards raising awareness about the good that eye, organ, and tissue donation can do through various outreach efforts in our community.

In conjunction with Donate Life New York State and the New York League of Women Voters, The Eye-Bank participated in National Voter Registration Day on September 26, helping students at New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) register to vote and enroll in the Donate Life Registry. New York State is the only state that offers voters the opportunity to enroll in the Registry when they register to vote. The voter registration campaign, now in its third year, has provided The Eye-Bank with an additional avenue to reach New Yorkers with the donation message and a way to target college students in particular. In addition to FIT, voter/donor registration events were also held at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, the College of New Rochelle and Iona College.

On October 4, The Eye-Bank joined with other organ, eye and tissue recovery organizations throughout the Greater New York Metropolitan Area and statewide for the third annual Organ Donor Enrollment Day. This year, 3,800 more New Yorkers signed up in the Donate Life Registry.

Eye-Bank staff and volunteers conducted tabling events at Sarah Lawrence College in Westchester and NYU Langone Hospital in Brooklyn as well as at Walgreens pharmacies in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Additionally, The Eye-Bank staffed enrollment tables at health fairs and community events, including the fourth annual Family Fun Day, held at Francis Lewis Park in College Point and Retiree Appreciation Day for Veterans, held at the United States Army Garrison at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn.

Special thanks to Eye-Bank volunteers who helped make our 2017 outreach efforts such a success. To get involved in community outreach opportunities with The Eye-Bank, please call 212-742-9000 ext. 115 or visit www.eyedonation.org/volunteer.
The Eye-Bank congratulates Kathleen Fuschetti on her recent promotion to Quality Assurance Supervisor. Kathleen joined The Eye-Bank in October 2013 as a Quality Assurance Coordinator. Previously, she was a manager of Good Manufacturing Procedures training and GMP compliance at Bristol-Myers Squibb. Kathleen earned an MS degree in Industrial Relations from Rutgers University in 1991 and has a BS in Biology from Boston College.

In April, Eye-Bank transplant coordinator Hortense Kendall was promoted to the position of Lab Manager. Hortense joined The Eye-Bank in October 2004 and earned her EBAA certification as an eye bank technician (CEBT) soon thereafter. She is a graduate of Lincoln University in Southern Pennsylvania, and holds a BS degree in Biology. Congratulations, Hortense.

The Eye-Bank is pleased to welcome Chadwick Shank as Communications Coordinator. Chad graduated from Columbia University with an MS in Journalism in 2015 and has a BA in Government from the College of William and Mary. Prior to joining The Eye-Bank, Chad was employed by a political consulting boutique firm in New York. He is a native of Virginia and now enjoys residing in the Inwood section of Manhattan.

The Eye-Bank Board member Michael Zambrelli and his wife, Sharon, are happy, first-time grandparents pictured here with granddaughter, Charlotte Carter Lipman. Born on September 7, Charlotte’s proud parents are Sara and John Lipman. Congratulations and best wishes to the family!

Congratulations to Eye-Bank transplant coordinators Annam Hussaini and Brian McArdle, both of whom have recently been promoted to the position of Technical Trainer for the Ocular Laboratory.

Annam joined The Eye-Bank in August 2012 and is a graduate of the College of Staten Island with a BS in Biology. Brian joined The Eye-Bank in January 2013 and graduated with a BA in Biological Sciences from Fordham University. Both Annam and Brian are Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) Certified Eye Bank Technicians (CEBT).

The Eye-Bank supports National Donor Sabbath

This year marks the 20th anniversary of National Donor Sabbath, an interfaith designation, celebrated each year during the month of November when faith leaders are encouraged to raise awareness about donation and congregations are educated and offered information about eye, organ and tissue donation.

Today, all major religions are supportive of anatomical donation, viewing it as an act of compassion and generosity. Many individuals turn to their faith leaders for guidance when dealing with end of life decisions and National Donor Sabbath provides a focus for this type of discussion. Information on different religious views about donation can be found at www.organdonor.gov hosted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This year’s National Donor Sabbath celebration included tabling events and speaking opportunities during which The Eye-Bank’s staff delivered donation information while volunteers shared their personal transplant stories with congregants. Places of worship visited by The Eye-Bank include the interdenominational Riverside Church on the upper west side of Manhattan, The Village Temple, a synagogue located in downtown Manhattan and St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church in Brooklyn, NY.

The importance of signing up in the New York State Donate Life Registry was also emphasized and many congregants did so on site, while others took the information with them to enroll at a later date. We offer our sincere thanks to the religious communities that embraced the donation message and facilitated our outreach efforts during this year’s Donor Sabbath.

…”of Interest

Top: Village Temple cantor, Nancy Bach; corneal transplant recipient, Terese Winston and Eye-Bank Family Support Coordinator and Temple member, Stefanie Rosenfeld
Bottom: Eye-Bank Communications staff member, Marilyn K. Oliver, with Monsignor Kieran Harrington at St. Joseph RC Church
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 65,000 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

Marilyn Kim Oliver
Associate Editor

Chadwick Shank
Contributor

Eye-Bankers Celebrate the Holidays!

On December 5, 2017, The Eye-Bank held its annual holiday party at the trendy Tuck Room located in nearby South Street Seaport. Staff enjoyed a reception, luncheon and grab bag gift exchange. Family support coordinators and other staff members got in the spirit with fun holiday sweaters!

Join us on Facebook 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.

Follow us on Twitter @EyedonationNY and stay current with Eye-Bank happenings.

Sign-up to be a donor at eyedonation.org

When you connect with us on social media and share our information with your contacts, you help to create greater awareness about donation and the good it can do. Link up with us today!