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Eye Bank Association of America

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The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration's Director of Communications Recognized for Advancing Eye, Organ, and Tissue Registration Efforts

Maria Chelko earns Communication Optics Award for masterful storytelling and excellence in promoting the gift of sight and its impact.

Washington, DC—The [Eye Bank Association of America](#) (EBAA), the world's oldest transplantation association and nationally-recognized accrediting and standards setting body for eye banks, today announced Maria Chelko of [The Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration](#) as the recipient of 2025 [Communication Optics Award](#). The Communication Optics Award is an honor presented to an individual or team from an EBAA member eye bank who shows mastery of storytelling and creativity to advance EBAA's mission to restore sight worldwide.

"Since 2017, Maria has brought passion and creativity to educating the people of New York and across the country about corneal transplantation and the importance of registering as an eye, organ, and tissue donor," said EBAA President & CEO, Kevin Corcoran. "As Vice Chair of EBAA's Donor, Partner, and Community Relations committee and in her service to other national organizations for donation, she plays a vital role in spreading the word about the gift of sight and increasing the number of donor registrants in the U.S."

There are an estimated 12 million individuals around the world suffering from corneal blindness that could be corrected with a corneal transplant. There is no artificial cornea—the transplantation process depends on the priceless gift of donation from one human to another. Nearly anyone can be a cornea donor, as blood-type, eye color, vision quality, and age are not relevant to donation.

EBAA will present the 2025 Communications Optics Award to Maria Chelko at the [2025 EBAA Annual Meeting](#) in San Diego during an awards luncheon on Friday, June 27.

The Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA), established in 1961, is the oldest donation and transplantation association in the U.S. It sets medical standards, provides education, oversees professional certifications, and engages in advocacy to support eye donation, cornea transplantation, and research. Since EBAA's founding, member eye banks have provided tissue for nearly 2.5 million sight-restoring corneal transplants. To learn more, visit restoresight.org.