



Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Winter 2012

A newsletter for Secretary of State facility employees and other organ/tissue donation advocates

As we reflect on the past year, we remember all the people who waited for a transplant – happy for those who received their gift of life and very sad for those who didn't. Those who received a transplant are forever thankful for the gift that will make their new year much brighter. In Illinois, nearly 5,000 people still wait for a life-saving transplant.

With so many in need of lifesaving transplants, I am very pleased that we have 100 million people signed up as organ donors across the nation. This is a tremendous success as we enter the New Year and strive for 20 million in 2012. Twenty million additional donors would result in saving thousands more lives each year.

Donor staff and volunteers continue to register donors at community events and gatherings across the state so that more lives can be saved or enhanced through donation. We applaud our front-line facility employees for encouraging customers to be donors and hope that you have joined the registry as well. So many more lives can be saved if we all just made that choice of life.

Jesse White

Jesse White
Secretary of State

100 million donors across the nation



Donate Life America (DLA) has announced that a key goal set by the donor/transplant community in 2006 was achieved in October 2011. The United States can now boast that 100 million Americans – roughly 42 percent of the adult population – are registered as organ, eye and tissue donors in state donor registries.

In 2006, DLA launched the Donor Designation Collaborative (DDC) as a nationwide effort to improve donor rates. A main tactic for achieving the DDC's goals is ensuring that each state has an effective system for registering donors. Since the DDC's launch, there has been a 45 percent increase in the number of designated donors in the United States.

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"I am proud to witness meeting such a milestone in organ/tissue donor history," said Secretary of State Jesse White. "Our ultimate goal is to see that all Americans become registered donors."

More than 112,000 people are currently awaiting lifesaving organ transplants. Thousands more await tissue transplants to resume their normal lives. Last year, more than 28,000 people received organ transplants, more than 40,000 received corneal transplants and hundreds of thousands received tissue transplants, yet 6,590 died awaiting organ transplants. A surge in the number of donors is necessary to save more lives. Therefore, work has already begun to reach the new national goal of registering 20 million new donors by the end of 2012.

"At a time when we as a nation have difficulty finding common ground on many important issues, 100 million people have agreed on their desire to save lives by registering as donors. For that, we say thank you," said David Fleming, president and CEO of Donate Life America. "While this achievement speaks volumes about the generosity of human beings, more work needs to be done to motivate Americans to register and save the lives of those in need."



Secretary of State Jesse White stands next to the Christmas tree decorated by Springfield's Life Goes On Committee for Memorial Medical Center's Festival of Trees in Springfield. The tree was sponsored by Heartland Lions Eye Bank, Gift of Hope, Central Illinois Community Blood Center and Memorial Medical Center. It was purchased by Hanson Professional Services Inc.

Customer Appreciation Week at facilities

Customer Service Week is an internationally observed celebration of customers and the people who serve them. Although Secretary of State facility employees promote the benefits of organ/tissue donation to customers every day, they went all out during Customer Service Week, October 3-7.

Serving Secretary of State customers according to the slogan, "Working Together to Serve You Better," a number of facilities requested the support of Donor Program representatives and volunteers. Facilities in Elgin, Libertyville, Woodstock and Schaumburg all hosted a representative, and in some cases a recipient, who provided donor information to customers.



Volunteers Kimberly Morgan (left) and Sylvia Quintero-Nevarez register a customer as a donor at the Elgin facility.

100 million donors (continued from page 1)

On average, nearly 8 million people join a state donor registry each year, with roughly 97 percent joining through state DMVs. Therefore, DLA builds strong relationships with many DMV officials to encourage education and training of their staffs to help them better advocate for donation.

As of June 30, 2011, data reported by DLA state teams revealed that 42 percent of U.S. adults (age 18 and older) are registered as donors. States with the highest percentage included Alaska and Montana (78% each) and Washington (74%).

The public is encouraged to join the 100 million individuals already registered as organ, eye and tissue donors by visiting www.LifeGoesOn.com and registering today.

National KidneyMobile reaches milestone

Since 2005, the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois' KidneyMobile has traveled statewide, educating the public on the importance of kidney disease and screening individuals for risk factors, specifically high blood pressure and diabetes. The KidneyMobile partners with numerous health education and community awareness organizations, including health centers, hospitals, health departments and community groups to bring this important health message to Illinoisans.

"Most of those at risk have no idea they are at risk for developing kidney disease," said nurse practitioner Nancy Lepain, who travels with the KidneyMobile. "The two main causes of chronic kidney disease are uncontrolled diabetes and poorly controlled blood pressure."

The KidneyMobile has reached more than 26,000 individuals, a milestone for the organization's fight for the early detection of kidney disease. Screenings are free to the public. According to the Kidney Foundation, 74 percent of those screened tested abnormal in one or more result, and 29 percent needed an immediate referral for follow-up tests and/or care.

For more information on the KidneyMobile or to find out if a visit is scheduled in your community, contact the Kidney Foundation at 312-321-5000 or www.nkfi.org.



The KidneyMobile conducted kidney disease screenings at Rockford Nephrology Associates in October. Donor Program staff member Jan Eschen (center) is surrounded by people joining the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry.

Donor counter mats



The Organ/Tissue Donor Program presented donor counter mats to Driver Services facilities statewide in its newest effort to promote donor awareness to facility customers. The mats feature an image of a driver's license highlighting how to indicate if someone is a registered donor. This campaign is mirrored after the success of the Chicago Grant Project during September and October 2011.

Each facility received a display based on their primary demographic, either Caucasian, African-American or Hispanic. The counter mats focus on catching the attention of each customer as they approach the counter for a transaction.

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Donor awareness across the state



ABOVE LEFT: Olney resident Patricia Snyder registered as a donor at a health fair at Olney Central College in October. ABOVE RIGHT: Liz Hager, Donor Program regional coordinator, was a guest speaker at the East Central Illinois Bengali Association's Tagore Festival in Champaign. Pictured with Liz is Dr. Kalika Sarma (left) of Carle Clinic and Dr. Rajmohan Gandhi, a professor at the University of Illinois.



ABOVE: Donor Program regional coordinators Margaret Pearson and Liz Hager presented a breakout session, "The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make," at the Township Officials Convention in Springfield in November. Pictured left to right are Jay and Pat Landers, donor parents, Susie Corp, kidney recipient, and Susie's husband, Jeromy.



ABOVE LEFT: Donor parent Pat Landers shared her personal story of donation at the Township Officials Conference. Her son, Ryan J. Landers (on screen), saved and enhanced the lives of more than 60 individuals through organ/tissue donation upon his death at the young age of 19. ABOVE RIGHT: Donor Program regional coordinator Jan Eschen stands with Miss Illinois Hannah Smith at the Red Ribbon Wellness Fair in Rockford in October.

Employee Connection



Melody Warden

Melody Warden has been with the Secretary of State's office since November 2000. She currently works as a public service representative at Springfield's Dirksen facility. Melody is the mother of two children, Christian, age 13, and William, who would have turned 26 this year.

In April 1999, Melody received a driver's license renewal notice in the mail, which included the Secretary of State's donor brochure. Her son, William, inquired about donation and as she explained he responded, "Mom, if anything ever happens to me... this is what I want to do. I won't need my organs and I might as well help someone else live."

A month later on May 6, 1999, William was in an accident and passed away a week later on May 14. After just discussing organ donation with her son, there was no hesitation for William to become a donor. William donated his heart, liver and kidneys.

Since William's passing, Melody has been active in attending several donor memorials at the Prairie State Wildlife Park in Peoria as well as tree-planting memorials. She also has had the extraordinary opportunity to meet her son's heart recipient, Barbara, in Wisconsin and has corresponded with his liver recipient, Connie, as well.

"Through his wishes to donate, it helps my healing," said Warden. "Being a donor mom has given me strength knowing that William does live on."

It's easy to join the Organ/Tissue Donor Registry:

- Visit www.LifeGoesOn.com (it only takes 60 seconds to register online).
- Visit any Driver Services facility and say "yes" to the donor question.
- Call the Organ/Tissue Donor Program hotline at 800-210-2106.
- Complete and mail the registration card on the "It's Up To YOU" brochure.

AN ORGAN/TISSUE DONOR.

Donor Sabbath observed in November

Each November, the Secretary of State's office joins clergy and health-care professionals across the country in celebrating the National Donor Sabbath, an annual donor awareness observance in the faith community. With more than 108,000 men, women and children across the country waiting for the gift of life — and thousands more awaiting life-enhancing tissue or cornea transplants — we extend our thanks to those houses of worship that joined us in spreading the message that, by giving of ourselves through organ and tissue donation, we give the gift of life.



Secretary White speaks to congregants at Hope Community Church in Chicago about the importance of organ/tissue donation during the National Donor Sabbath.

Remember Me...

The Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network is a procurement organization that coordinates with donor families and recipients in central and northern Illinois. One of the things they do for donor families is present them a memory box after a loved one has become a donor. In the box are several items such as donor family lapel pins, green donor wristbands, a donor medallion for their loved one's gravestone, donor literature and the following poem by Robert N. Test:

To Remember Me

Give my sight to the man who has never seen a sunrise,
a baby's face, or love in the eyes of a woman.

Give my heart to a person whose own heart has
caused nothing but endless days of pain.

Give my blood to the teenager who was pulled
from the wreckage of his car, so that he
might live to see his grandchildren play.

Give my kidneys to one who depends
on a machine to exist from week to week.

Take my bones, every muscle, every fiber and nerve in my body
and find a way to make a crippled child walk.

If you must bury something, let it be my faults,
my weaknesses and all prejudice against my fellow man.

Give my sins to the devil.

Give my soul to God.

If, by chance, you wish to remember me, do it with
a kind deed or word to someone who needs you.

If you do all I have asked, I will live forever.

Organ/Tissue Donor Program Staff

Please contact a donor staff member for story ideas or to volunteer for events in your community.

Springfield — 451 Howlett, Springfield 62756

Nadine O'Leary, Program Director
217-557-7215.....noleary@ilsos.net

Sitha Hun, Outreach Coordinator
217-558-1322.....shun@ilsos.net

Karen Kohnke, Office Manager
217-782-6258.....kkohnke@ilsos.net

Chicago — James R. Thompson Building

100 W. Randolph, Ste. 5-400, Chicago 60601

Victoria Tulcus, Chicago Metro Area
312-814-8921.....vtulcus@ilsos.net

Regional Coordinators

Gail Grabczynski, Chicago Area
312-607-1385thedifference@mindspring.com

Margaret Pearson, West Suburban Chicago Area
630-579-8711mpearson2@gmail.com

Jan Eschen, Northern Illinois Area
815-624-1004jano320@aol.com

Margaret Shannon, Northern Illinois Area
815-761-7395margshannon@msn.com

Moreena Tiede, Central Illinois Area
309-451-4097.....moreena@gmail.com

Liz Hager, Central Illinois Area
217-827-5945ehager@newwavecomm.net

Damarius Blanks, Metro East Area
618-698-1480damarius_blanks@yahoo.com

Brian Bush, Southern Illinois Area
618-439-5030.....bbush@ilsos.net