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For More Information Contact:
Elizabeth Kaufman
Dave Druker

Jesse White Unveils New Organ/Tissue Donation Campaign

Highlights 11-year-old heart recipient Sofia Sanchez's transplant story - including her visit from Grammy Awards-winner Drake

Secretary of State Jesse White unveiled a new ad campaign today featuring Sofia Sanchez - the 11-year-old who received a hospital visit from Grammy Awards-winner Drake shortly before she received her lifesaving heart. The campaign marks the beginning of National Donate Life Month in April.

“For such a young girl, Sofia has shown tremendous strength and maturity during her organ donation journey and I am so proud of her,” White said. “Drake’s visit helped Sofia during a difficult time and raised awareness regarding organ donation. And a special thank you to Sofia’s donor family for giving her the gift of life.”

In the public service announcement (PSA), Sofia says “I’m so thankful for my new heart but there are so many other people waiting.”

Currently, there are more than 6.7 million people registered to become organ/tissue donors in Illinois and approximately 4,700 people are on the waiting list. About 300 die each year waiting for an organ transplant.

The PSA, which was unveiled today at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago, encourages people to enroll in the Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Registry. The television, radio, digital display and social media ads will run in English and Spanish statewide throughout the month. The commercial will also be played on more than 400 movie screens throughout the state.

White will be attending events statewide this month to encourage donation. Organizations will be working together to promote donor awareness. During this month, high schools will be distributing organ/tissue donor materials and hosting donor drives. Colleges, libraries and hospitals will also be hosting donor drives and featuring displays.

“We encourage all Illinoisans to join the organ and tissue donor registry,” said White. “One person can improve the quality of life for up to 25 people.”

Illinoisans can register with the Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Registry at LifeGoesOn.com, 800-210-2106 or by visiting their local Driver Services facility.

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