



# Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Fall 2014

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

I want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who helped promote organ/tissue donation over the summer and this fall. This summer, we reached out to countless Illinoisans with our donor message through donor registration tables at outdoor fairs, festivals and community events.

In August, we held the second "Wave Away the Waiting" event during National Minority Donor Awareness Month. "Wave Away the Waiting" calls attention to the need for more minority donors in Illinois and throughout the country as minorities continue to wait in very large numbers for transplants.

Our partnership with the many agencies that comprise Donate Life Illinois is vital to the success of the Donor Program. Read about Donate Life Illinois' member organizations in this issue, and learn what each group contributes to the collaboration.

In November, we continue to get the word out about the critical need for donation as we observe National Donor Sabbath, a national observance of reaching out to parishioners and faith community leaders about the importance of donation. If you know of someone with a donor story to tell, encourage them to share it with their clergy and fellow worshippers this weekend.

I look forward to continuing spreading our lifesaving donor message this fall and encourage you to get involved as well. I thank facility employees for your continued work in helping us with our mission. You make a difference.

*Jesse White*

Jesse White  
Secretary of State

## "Wave Away the Waiting"

### National Minority Donor Awareness event draws crowds

This year's "Wave Away the Waiting" for National Minority Donor Awareness Month (previously National Minority Donor Awareness Week) brought together hundreds of individuals from various communities to unite and support organ/tissue donation in multicultural communities. Secretary of State Jesse White kicked off the event, held August 5 at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago, with an impactful speech encouraging organ donation in multicultural communities.

"There is a long list of people waiting for transplants within multicultural communities," said Secretary White. "Kidneys are very much in need. Because genetic matches between people belonging to the same ethnic group are, many times, most successful, it is imperative that people of similar ethnicities become organ and tissue donors."

In addition to the inspirational speech from Secretary White, transplant recipient and Cook County Commissioner Robert Steele shared his heart-warming story of how donation affected his life. Transplant recipient Laura Barajas also shared her story of how one donor saved her life. Additional speakers included Gift of Hope CEO Kevin Cmunt and Jack Lynch, African-American Task Force, Gift of Hope.

The event also showcased performances by the Jesse White Tumbling Team, Spencer Technology Academy Dance for Life team, living kidney donor Aaron Hurns, Praise Dancers from Lebanon Baptist Church, soloist Bridgette Campbell and the Rebecca McCarthy School of Dance Irish dancers.

The Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program would like to thank Donate Life

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Secretary White, center in white shirt, stands surrounded by supporters of National Minority Donor Awareness Month at the second "Wave Away the Waiting" donor awareness event held August 5 at the Thompson Center in Chicago.

## Employee Connection



Francine Dzialo and her daughter Kimberlee Caccamo.

### Lung transplant saves Aurora Driver Services facility employee's mother

Aurora Driver Services facility employee Kimberlee Caccamo knows what it's like to see a loved one gasp for air, knowing that it's only going to get worse. For Kim, seeing her mother, Francine Dzialo, age 66, suffer from COPD and emphysema was very difficult. Francine had difficulty breathing for several years and was finally placed on the transplant list in January 2013. In and out of the hospital and on oxygen, Francine's life now depended on the generous gift of a donor.

After 15 months on the waiting list, Francine received her new lungs, a bilateral lung transplant, on April 4, 2014, at the University of Chicago. She had been down to 10 percent lung capacity prior to the transplant. She was released from the hospital after just a week.

"Each day she got stronger and stronger," said Kim. "The doctors were wonderful. I cannot express my gratitude," she added. Kim's dad, John, helped care for Francine during her illness and post-transplant. "She's on lots of medications, but she is very healthy and active now after the transplant," Kim added. Kim and Francine are both happy that Francine can continue to be a part of Kim's three children's lives—daughter, Gianna, 26; and two sons, Lenny, 25, and Dominic, 22.

## "Wave Away the Waiting" (continued from page 1)

Illinois, Sam's Club, Walmart and Walgreens for sponsoring the event and providing refreshments. Thanks to the many Donate Life Illinois partners for supporting the event and providing event participants with valuable information about donation. Each contribution made this year's "Wave Away the Waiting" one to remember.



Secretary White speaks to the crowd gathered at "Wave Away the Waiting" in honor of National Minority Donor Awareness Month. From left: Sonji Woods, kidney and pancreas recipient; Secretary White; Robert Steele, Cook County Commissioner and kidney recipient; and Connie Boatman, manager of the Secretary of State's Organ and Tissue Donor Program.



"Wave Away the Waiting" supporters include: Jack Lynch, African-American Task Force, Gift of Hope; Laura Barajas, kidney recipient; Secretary of State Jesse White; Sonji Woods, kidney and pancreas recipient; Robert Steele, Cook County Commissioner and kidney recipient; and Kevin Cmunt, CEO, Gift of Hope.



(Above left) Irish dancers from Rebecca McCarthy School of Dance surround Secretary of State Jesse White at the "Wave Away the Waiting" event August 5 for National Minority Donor Awareness Month.

(Above right) Praise dancers from the Lebanon Baptist Church perform at the "Wave Away the Waiting" event August 5 for National Minority Donor Awareness Month.



## Our Donate Life Illinois partners

### Collaboration strong in Illinois

The Office of Secretary of State partners with many organizations to help promote organ and tissue donation in Illinois. This collaboration, Donate Life Illinois (DLI), is a coalition of agencies involved with organ, tissue, eye, blood and marrow donation, as well as donor education and registration in Illinois. DLI is one of 45 regional coalitions and 50 national businesses or associations that make up Donate Life America, a not-for-profit alliance that serves as a national voice for advancing donation.

The mission of the Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program is to strengthen Illinois' Organ/Tissue Donor Registry through outreach and registration initiatives. The program's regional coordinators assist with community events and donor registration drives throughout the state. One of the Donor Program's primary responsibilities is to increase the number in the state's donor registry, a database of individuals in Illinois who have given their legal consent to donation. The donor registry now stands at 5.6 million people.

DLI member organizations promote community events such as the "Be A Hero!" Community College Campaign and "Wave Away the Waiting." In addition, DLI partners collaborate on annual national donation observances such as Donate Life Month and National Donor Sabbath.

The chairman of Donate Life Illinois is Donald A. Greene II, executive director of Biological Resource Center of Illinois, and the co-chairman is Josh Mueller, manager of communications for Gift of Hope Organ and Tissue Donor Network. Member groups include two organ procurement organizations (OPOs): Gift of Hope Organ and Tissue Donor Network in Itasca, Ill., and Mid-America Transplant Services in St. Louis, Mo. Donate Life Illinois member organizations include:

Gift of Hope Organ and Tissue Donor Network coordinates organ and tissue

donation and provides public education on donation in northern Illinois and northwestern Indiana. As one of 58 OPOs that make up the nation's donation system, it works with 180 hospitals and serves 12 million people in its donation service area. Since 1987, the network has saved the lives of more than 18,000 organ transplant recipients and has improved the lives of hundreds of thousands more through tissue transplants.

Mid-America Transplant Services (MTS) serves as the regional organ and tissue procurement organization for eastern Missouri, southern Illinois and northeastern Arkansas, serving 4.5 million people in 84 counties. MTS is dedicated to saving lives and enhancing the quality of all donated organs and tissues currently available for transplant. Located in Saint Louis, Mo., MTS is one of 58 federally designated OPOs of its kind in the country.

Biological Resource Center of Illinois (BRCIL) offers individuals alternative choices for the preservation of life. BRCIL acts as a "bridge" between those individuals who donate their bodies and the medical research and educational community.

Saving Sight preserves and restores sight and retrieves, processes and distributes the highest quality donor eye tissue to corneal surgeons in a three-state region including Missouri, Kansas and Illinois before it's offered to surgeons nationally and internationally.

The Illinois Eye-Bank preserves and restores sight through transportation, research, education and partnership. Founded in 1947 at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, Ill., the Illinois Eye-Bank was only the fourth organization of its kind in the country. It continues to strive to increase U.S. and international distribution of surgical cornea tissue.

American Liver Foundation of Illinois facilitates, advocates and promotes education, support and research for the prevention, treatment and cure of liver disease.

LifeSource provides blood products to the thousands of patients who need transfusions each year. Operating donor centers located throughout the Chicagoland area, Lifesource centers collect whole blood donations, in addition to platelet and plasma products.

The National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFI) improves the health and well-being of people at risk for or affected by kidney disease through prevention and education. NKFI, an affiliate of the National Kidney Foundation based in New York, N.Y., together fund more than one third of all medical research for kidney disease performed in the U.S. The Illinois affiliate is a leader in educating the public about the prevention of kidney disease through its KidneyMobile®, which offers free screenings for diabetes, high blood pressure and chronic kidney disease.

The National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP) provides bone marrow and umbilical cord blood transplants to patients in need. The NMDP operates the Be The Match Registry®, the world's largest listing of potential marrow donors and donated cord blood units. The program also raises funds to help provide transplants to all patients through the Be The Match Foundation®.

The Rock River Valley Blood Center (RRVBC) provides safe, high-value blood products and services to people in need. The RRVBC must collect more than 1,000 units of blood each week to meet the needs of its eight hospitals. The center relies on donors from Winnebago, Boone, McHenry, Ogle and Stephenson counties in Illinois and Rock County in Wisconsin.

**LIFE GOES ON. BE AN ORGAN/TISSUE DONOR.**

# Donate Life Champion Award winners

## Southern Illinois Miners and Casey Williams Foundation honored for donor efforts

The Southern Illinois Miners (baseball) organization has hosted Organ/Tissue Donor Night at Rent One Park in Marion, Ill., for eight years to raise awareness of the need for Illinoisans to register as organ/tissue donors. The Secretary of State's office has been fortunate to work with the Southern Illinois Miners in spreading this important message. This year, Secretary White presented the organization a *Donate Life Champion Award* at its donor night at Rent One Park on June 3. This award is a way of thanking the athletic community for their support of donation and transplantation. Team owners John and Jayne Simmons accepted the award on behalf of the Miners organization.

The Casey Williams Foundation, created in 2009 after tissue donor Casey Williams passed away, promotes organ/tissue donation. In their quest to keep Casey's memory alive, Casey's family and friends were

thrilled to receive a *Donate Life Champion Award* this year. Courtney Williams Hiler and Chebli Williams accepted the award on the foundation's behalf. The foundation hosts an annual volleyball tourna-

ment to raise funds for organ/tissue donation, scholarships to area schools and to assist with event expenses such as the Decatur Roller Derby.



Secretary of State Jesse White gathers with members of the Casey Williams Foundation at Organ/Tissue Donor Night at Rent One Park in Marion. Front row (left to right): Darsie Sanders, Kathy Jordan, Aden Sanders, Cheryl Swigert, Keegan Sanders, Secretary White, Chelbi Williams, Jordan Stoune, Courtney Williams-Hiler, Alicia Gullidge, Rachel Holthaus-Williams and Brittany Reatherford. Back row (left to right): Pat Williams, Eric Swigert, Keith Swigert and Brian Hiler.



(Above left) Secretary White throws out the first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals baseball game during Organ/Tissue Donor Day at Busch Stadium. (Above center) Mike Warren, president of Good Samaritan Regional Health Center in Mt. Vernon, accepts an award from Secretary White at a ceremony honoring the hospital's achievement in donation consent and conversion rates. (Above right) The 12th Annual "Nick's Race," in honor of donor Nick Volk, was held on Saturday, June 21 at Sam Parr State Park in Newton. The event creates awareness for organ/tissue donation and raises funds for donor education, scholarships and programs at Nick's former school. Pictured from left to right: Lee Volk, Nick's father; Jay Landers, Life Goes On/Gift of Hope volunteer and donor father; Pat Landers, Life Goes On/Gift Of Hope volunteer and donor mother; and Sue Volk, Nick's mother.



## National Donor Sabbath Observance is November 14-16, 2014

National Donor Sabbath, a national religious observation and celebration of the importance of donation will be observed on Friday, Nov. 14 through Sunday, Nov. 16. During this three-day weekend, faith leaders of different religions, donor families, transplant recipients, and donation and transplantation professionals participate in religious services and programs to promote the need for organ and tissue donation.