



# Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Fall 2018  
A newsletter for Secretary of State facility employees and other organ/tissue donation advocates

The organ/tissue donor program hosted the annual Wave Away the Waiting event on Aug. 1 at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. Held in conjunction with National Minority Donor Awareness Week, the event highlighted the need for more minority donors in Illinois. Speakers included recipients and transplant doctors. In addition, more than 20 healthcare vendors provided information to the public about organ/tissue donation and other health-related topics.

Since the Jan. 1 implementation of the law that allows 16- and 17-year-olds to become part of the organ/tissue registry, I am proud to announce that we have registered more than 50,000 teens. Donor staff will continue to promote organ/tissue donation in high school driver's education classrooms throughout the state.

The program also marked a milestone as the Illinois Donor Registry reached 6.6 million registrants. The effort to promote the positive message about organ/tissue donation continues to increase participants in this lifesaving program.

I appreciate the effort by staff at Driver Services facilities to continue to promote the registry each day.

*Jesse White*

Jesse White  
Secretary of State

## “Wave Away the Waiting” draws hundreds to Chicago’s Thompson Center

### Event held in an effort to increase minority donors

On Aug. 1, the organ/tissue donor program hosted Wave Away the Waiting at the James R. Thompson Center. Hundreds gathered to hear Secretary of State Jesse White's message about the need for more minority organ/tissue donors. National Minority Donor Awareness Week is annually observed during the first week of August and aims to call attention to the critical need for more minority donors. Many minorities wait on the national waiting list for organ transplants, but not enough individuals are registered as donors.

“We need people of every ethnicity to consider registering as donors so there are organs available for those in need,” explained Secretary White. “The more diverse the donor pool, the better the odds

of a transplant match. Sometimes the best matches come from within one's own ethnic background.”

Other leaders in the donor community joined Secretary White at the press conference. Jack Lynch, Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network; Dr. Deepak Mital, kidney transplant program at Advocate Christ Hospital in Oak Lawn; and Dr. Dineen Simpson, transplant program at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago, were present to reiterate Secretary White's message of the need for more minority donors. Many in attendance were the recipients of organs. Joseph Hillenburg was accompanied by his 6-year-old son, Ben, a heart recipient; Derrick Noel was a living donor to his identical twin, Patrick; and double-lung recipient Dot Delarosa all spoke about how organ donation impacted their lives.

(cont. on pg. 2)



Secretary of State Jesse White addresses the crowd at the sixth annual Wave Away The Waiting for National Minority Donor Awareness Week on Aug. 1 at the James R. Thompson Plaza in Chicago. Joining Secretary White are (from left): Dot Delarosa, lung recipient; Enrico Benedetti, UI Health's kidney transplant program; Patrick Noel, living bowel donor; Derrick Noel, bowel recipient from his brother Patrick; Joseph Hillenburg and six-year-old son, Ben, a heart recipient; Dr. Dineen Simpson, transplant program at Northwestern Memorial Hospital; Dr. Deepak Mital, kidney transplant program at Advocate Christ Hospital in Oak Lawn; and Dr. Sreenivas Reddy, president of the Indian American Medical Association of Illinois.



Andrea Higgins, her sister Patty Higgins and their mother, also named Andrea Higgins.

## Employee Connection

**Sisters Andrea and Patty Higgins celebrate their mother's life with liver and kidney transplant**

For sisters Patty and Andrea Higgins, the extra time they spent with their mother, also named Andrea Higgins, after her transplants were incredible. Andrea, a Public Service Representative (PSR) at the Driver Services facility in Lombard, and Patty, a PSR in vehicles at the Driver Services facility at the James R. Thompson Center, celebrated their mother's gift of 10 years as an organ recipient. Although Andrea recently passed away, the additional years she had with her daughters was a miracle, according to Patty. Andrea, a former teacher in the Chicago Public Schools system, received her liver and kidney transplants from the same donor in October 2008. She had been on kidney dialysis and received her dual transplants at age 70. She passed away at age 79. Her daughters both remarked that their mother's transplants were nothing short of a miracle and "a total gift," according to Patty. Andrea's donor was a woman named Delphia, and the sisters have been in contact with Delphia's husband. Both Andrea and Patty promote the 16- and 17-year-old registry at the Driver Services facilities where they work, strongly urging people to consider donation.

## Wave Away the Waiting (cont. from pg. 1)

A health and wellness fair was set up inside the Thompson Center and featured representatives from many organizations including Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network, Eversight Illinois, Life Goes On, the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois, American Lung Association, University of Chicago College of Medicine, University of Illinois Health, Northwestern Transplant Village, Advocate Christ Hospital, Indian American Medical Association of Illinois and the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. They distributed literature and engaged the public about their health and wellness offerings. The event also featured more than 20 vendors.



The Jesse White Tumbling Team performs for the crowds at the Wave Away the Waiting event.

Entertainment was provided by After School Matters, a youth dance troop from Chicago; Dawn the Dancing Diva, a line dancing group; The Jesse White Tumbling Team; Joe L. Sandford, Jr., who performed an original song he wrote for the occasion called "Life Goes On"; and R&B artist Keith M.



The recently reorganized Champaign County Life Goes On Committee attended the National Minority Donor Awareness Week event at the Carle Foundation Hospital. Pictured with Secretary White are Frank Veach; Liz Hager; Tim Battershell; Amy Bandy; Lola Lewis; Donna Battershell; Jim McFarlin; and David Freeman.

In central Illinois, Secretary White was a guest of Champaign's Carle Foundation Hospital at its National Minority Donor Awareness Week celebration. Many local dignitaries, hospital personnel, Life Goes On committee members, donor families, recipients, and representatives from Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network attended the minority donor awareness event. Secretary White held a press conference and reiterated the need for more minority donors.



Local students join the After School Matters youth dance troop at the Wave Away the Waiting event.



Secretary White was a guest of Carle Foundation Hospital at its National Minority Donor Awareness Week celebration held at Carle in Champaign in August. Pictured with Secretary White are David Freeman, who is waiting for a kidney, and Jim McFarlin, a kidney recipient.



Joe L. Stanford, Jr. performs an original song entitled "Life Goes On."



After School Matters, a Chicago youth dance troop, performs a routine at the Wave Away the Waiting event.

## Transplant Games a success for Team Illinois

Illinois athletes earn 39 medals

More than 8,000 people from the United States and around the world traveled to Salt Lake City, Utah, on Aug. 2-7, 2018, for the Transplant Games – an Olympic-style athletic competition for people living with transplants. There were 5,511 registered athletes. Illinois was represented by 33 athletes and 45 supporters. Team Illinois athletes received 39 overall medals: 14 gold, 12 silver and 13 bronze. Illinois' youngest athlete (age 15) and oldest athlete both won medals, as did many returning athletes and new competitors. In addition, a new Guinness World Record was set for the most solid organ transplant recipients in one location – 540 individuals. Congratulations to all the athletes and their supporters.



Team Illinois athletes and supporters gather at the 2018 Transplant Games.

## State fairs offer donor registry opportunities

The Illinois State Fair in Springfield kicked off on Aug. 9 with the 2018 Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade. Secretary White joined the Springfield Life Goes On Committee and its decorated float as part of the parade. He also participated in many fair festivities during the fair's 10-day run. Donor staff also hosted a donor registration table at the DuQuoin State Fair.



Secretary White with the Springfield Life Goes On Committee at the 2018 Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade.



Amber Carriker, Springfield Life Goes On member, and her daughter, Alyssa, meet Secretary White at the Springfield Life Goes On Committee's organ/tissue donor float at the Illinois State Fair on Aug. 9 in Springfield.



The Springfield Life Goes On Committee's organ/tissue donor float at the 2018 Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade.

The organ/tissue donor table at the DuQuoin State Fair in DuQuoin. The mobile Driver Services unit offered fairgoers many driver and vehicle services.



## Illinois state representative becomes living donor for ex-husband

Deb Conroy, 46th District, gives the gift of life

Deb Conroy has served as a state representative for the 46th District since 2012. Over the summer, she donated a kidney to her ex-husband, Tim. Tim knew he was going to require a kidney transplant many years ago. In 2015, his organs failed and he was placed on dialysis. Rep. Conroy was tested to see if she was a match for him. When it was confirmed that she was a match, she made the decision to be a living donor. Tim received his transplanted kidney in June. Both Rep. Conroy and Tim are recovering well.

### 2018 Donor Program Staff list

#### PROGRAM DIRECTOR (CHICAGO)

Connie Boatman  
wboatman@ilsos.net

#### ASSISTANT PROGRAM DIRECTOR (SPRINGFIELD)

Samantha Brill  
sbrill@ilsos.net

#### REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Damarius Blanks (St. Louis metro southern Illinois)  
dblanks@ilsos.net

Brian Bush (southern Illinois)  
bbush@ilsos.net

Gavin Dillon (Chicago, north suburban)  
gdillon@ilsos.net

Jan Eschen (northern Illinois)  
jeschen@ilsos.net

Elizabeth Hager (central Illinois)  
lhager@ilsos.net

Karen Kohnke (central Illinois)  
kkohnke@ilsos.net

Dan Lietz (Chicago)  
dlietz@ilsos.net

Margaret Pearson (suburban Chicago)  
mpearson@ilsos.net

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# Illinois donor registry reaches 6.6 million people

Thousands of 16- and 17-year-olds joined the registry.

The Illinois Donor Registry reached the 6.6 million mark this year. This number includes the more than 50,000 16- and 17-year-olds who have joined since Jan. 2018. The message of organ/tissue donation is resonating with teens as donor staff explains the donor program in high school driver education classrooms throughout the state. The classroom message to students is to learn about donation because they will be asked to join the donor registry when they receive their driver's licenses. The comprehensive program is aimed at educating students about donation and refuting myths and misconceptions so they are educated about their decision. Students are also encouraged to take the information home and talk to their families about the registry. Donor staff will continue these classroom events during the current school year.



The University of Illinois Health (UIC) Transplant Program's 50th anniversary was celebrated with a picnic for patients, living donors and families. The program performed the first kidney transplant in Illinois in 1968 and since then has completed nearly 3,500 kidney transplants. Pictured from left: Dr. Enrico Benedetti, transplant surgeon, UIC Hospital; Kimberly Gosell; Secretary White; and Connie Boatman, director of the Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program.

The Rock River Valley Blood Center high school blood drive staff accept a plaque from the Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program recognizing their efforts toward registering high school students on the Illinois Organ Donor Registry.



Dale Nelson, El Paso, was a donor at age 16 when a drunk driver tragically ended his life while on a bicycle. A memorial rock and inscription was installed at Jefferson Elementary School in El Paso where Dale had attended.



Relisa Hamilton and her son, Kalani, stopped by the organ/tissue donor registration table at Cultural Fest in Bloomington on Aug. 18 to show their support for donation.



Champaign liver recipient Tim Battershell and his wife, Donna, registered as donors at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Quad Day organ/tissue donor registration table event in August.



University of Chicago Medical Center's Adult and Pediatric Donor Center celebrated the unveiling of their new donor memorial with Secretary White on Aug. 3 in Chicago.

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