

# Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Fall 2022

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

In August, we had a phenomenal National Minority Donor Awareness Month with several community events showcasing the need for more minority donors. We collaborated with the Illinois State Library for distribution of minority donor awareness materials to all Illinois public libraries. Donor program coordinators scheduled donor registration tables at their local libraries. I enjoyed visits to the Champaign Public Library and the McKinley Park Branch Library in Chicago.

We continued to spread the word about the need for minority donors at two baseball games (Chicago White Sox on July 6 and the Windy City Thunderbolts on Aug. 26 in Crestwood). The Life Goes On website featured an informational campaign, encouraging those in multicultural communities to consider donation. While many times transplants are successful between ethnicities, sometimes the long-term success of a transplant can be better within a common genetic background. Generally, a more diverse donor pool may help shorten the waiting list for everyone.

Thanks for everyone's effort at Driver Services facilities statewide for helping spread the word about the importance of registering as a donor. Our registry is now 7.4 million strong. You are making a difference.

*Jesse White*

Jesse White  
Secretary of State

## National Minority Donor Awareness Month a success

The need for more minority donors was the theme for this year's National Minority Donor Awareness Month in August. Those in multicultural communities are critically needed as donors. Minorities are overrepresented on the national waiting list but underrepresented on donor registries throughout the country. In the U.S., minorities make up 36% of the population, but represent nearly 60% of those waiting for organ transplants. African Americans make up the largest minority group – nearly 30% – on the national waiting list. Hispanics represent 21% of the waiting list and Asians about 10%. The most needed organ is the kidney, which nearly 90% of those waiting need, including many minority candidates.

In August, the donor program partnered with the Illinois State Library to distribute materials to all public libraries in Illinois. The donor program created colorful bookmarks, as well as a virtual campaign on the Life Goes On website that included printable resources for librarians to share with patrons. The Illinois State Library staff

sent libraries bookmarks, the Life Goes On winning 2022 poster, donor brochures and a letter from Secretary White. Donor program coordinators also scheduled library donor registration drives at local libraries using the materials.

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Phillip Hanks, Secretary White and former Chicago White Sox player Harold Baines enjoy donor awareness day at the Chicago White Sox game on July 6. Secretary White threw out a pitch and Baines signed autographs for fans.



Secretary of State Jesse White presents a plaque to McKinley Park Branch Library (Chicago) Director Sheryll Adams (center) on Aug. 18 for her library's support of organ and tissue donation during National Minority Donor Awareness Month. Back row from left: Daru Smith, donor program coordinator; Phillip Hanks, donor program coordinator; Sheryll Adams; Secretary White; Connie Boatman-Tate, director, Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Program; and Cassandra Medrano, winner of the poster contest 6th-8th grade category. Front row: Marissa Estrada, winner of the poster contest 9th-12th grade category and Zeyneb Efe, overall poster contest winner.



(left) Winners of the 2022 Organ/Tissue Donor Program Poster Contest display their winning posters during an event with Secretary White at McKinley Park Branch Library in Chicago on Aug. 18. From left: Cassandra Medrano, Zeyneb Efe, Secretary White and Marissa Estrada.

(below) Secretary White presents a plaque to Brittany Millington, director of the Champaign Public Library on Aug. 19 in Champaign during National Minority Donor Awareness Month. From left: Connie Boatman-Tate, director, Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Program; Secretary White; Brittany Millington; Greg McCormick, director, Illinois State Library; and Phillip Hanks, donor program coordinator.



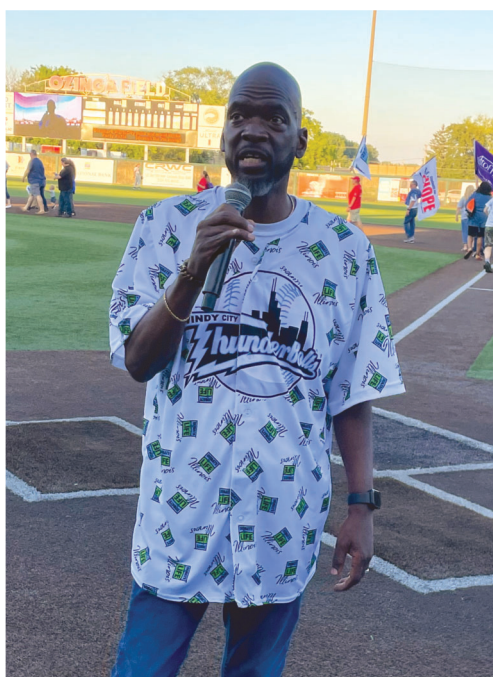
Secretary White held two press conferences at libraries in Champaign and Chicago in August. At the McKinley Park Branch Library in Chicago, Secretary White spoke about minority donor awareness. Joining him were Phillip Hanks, donor program coordinator; Daru Smith, donor program coordinator who received three transplants; and Sheryll Adams, library director. In addition, three of the 2022 Illinois Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program's Poster Contest winners participated in the event. Overall poster contest winner Zeyneb Efe (3rd-5th grade category), Cassandra Medrano (6th-8th grade category

winner) and Marissa Estrada (9th-12th grade category winner) were recognized for their creative and artistic contributions to organ/tissue donor awareness in Illinois. The overall winning poster was reprinted and distributed to schools, libraries and Driver Services facilities throughout the state.

At the Champaign Public Library, Secretary White spoke about the need for more individuals in minority communities to register as donors. Joining Secretary White were donor program coordinator Phillip Hanks, who received five organ transplants last year; Jim McFarlin, kidney recipient, who read a poem; Tim Battershell, liver recipient; and Brittany Millington, library director. Also in attendance was Greg McCormick, Illinois State Library director, who coordinated the library's

distribution of materials with the donor program.

Other summer activities included Secretary White throwing out the ceremonial first pitch at the Chicago White Sox baseball game on July 6. Secretary White donned a White Sox jersey as former Chicago White Sox player Harold Baines – a heart and kidney recipient and Hall of Fame inductee – caught White's pitch. The donor awareness day at Guaranteed Rate Field included Baines signing autographs and handing out specially designed donor t-shirts at the booth. Donor program coordinator Phillip Hanks exchanged ceremonial line-up cards at home plate. Donor program coordinators greeted individuals at the booth and distributed wristbands and brochures.



Phillip Hanks, sporting a Donate Life baseball jersey, speaks to the crowd before the Windy City Thunderbolts baseball game on Aug. 26 at Ozinga Field in Crestwood.

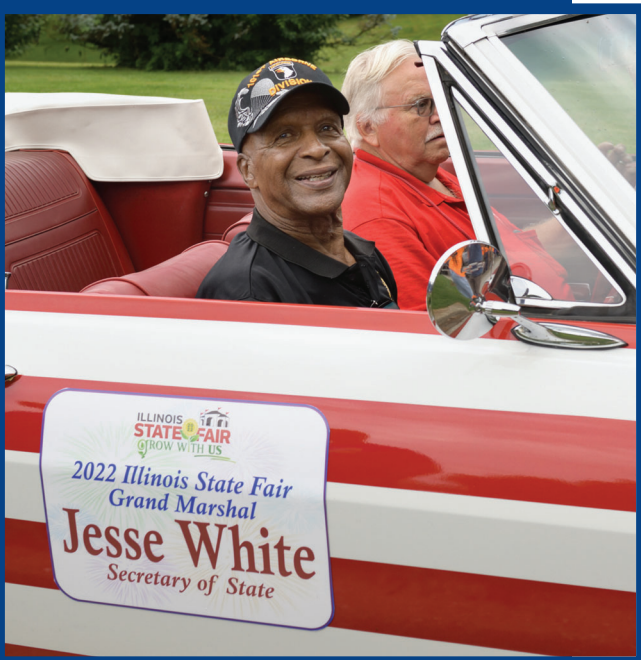


Donor advocates wave flags on the field before the game during donor night at the Windy City Thunderbolts baseball game on Aug. 26 at Ozinga Field in Crestwood.

On Aug. 26, another donor day at a ballpark was held at Ozinga Field in Crestwood, home of the Windy City Thunderbolts. The team, which sported specially designed Donate Life logo jerseys for the game, auctioned them off after the game. More than 170 donor advocates, recipients and donor family members came out to watch the Thunderbolts play the Joliet Slammers and participate in a flag-waving pre-game parade. Dr. Harry Wilkins, CEO of Gift of Hope, threw out the first pitch; Wilkins and donor program coordinator Phillip Hanks spoke to the crowd. Game attendees visited tables featuring donor t-shirts and informational materials including brochures, pens, Donate Life plastic tumblers and green wristbands.

## Secretary White named Twilight Parade grand marshal

Secretary White was named grand marshal of Springfield's Twilight Parade at the Illinois State Fair on Aug. 11. Secretary White and Governor JB Pritzker cut the ribbon to kick off the fair. The Springfield Life Goes On committee helped to decorate an organ donor float with donor advocates. Those walking in the parade with the float sported bright Donate Life Illinois t-shirts. Donor program coordinators staffed a donor informational booth inside the Secretary of State's tent from Aug. 12-21. Visitors were given brochures, had donor questions answered and registered their donor decision.



Secretary of State Jesse White, Grand Marshal of the Illinois State Fair Parade, rides along the parade route on Aug. 11 in Springfield.

## Milestones in transplantation history

Transplantation has come a long way from the first successful kidney transplant in the U.S. (Boston, Massachusetts) between twin boys in **1954**.

Here are a few more firsts worth noting:

- 1958** The first transplant recipient gave birth.
- 1961** The discovery and use of anti-rejection medicine for transplant recipients greatly improves long-term outcomes.
- 1962** The first successful kidney transplant from a deceased donor was performed.
- 1966** The first successful pancreas transplant was performed in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- 1967** The first successful liver transplant was performed in Denver, Colorado.
- 1968** The first successful heart transplant was performed in Stanford, California.
- 1977** The United Network for Organ Sharing, a computer-based, organ-matching system, was created.
- 1986** The first successful double-lung transplant was performed in Toronto, Canada.
- 1988** The first successful split-liver transplant was performed, where one liver was divided into two sections and each section was given to a different individual.
- 1989** The first successful living-related liver transplant was performed at University of Chicago Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois.
- 1990** The first successful living-related lung transplant was performed in Stanford, California.



Secretary of State Jesse White, center, gathers with members of the Springfield Life Goes On Committee and donor advocates in front of the Donate Life float before the Twilight Parade at the Illinois State Fair on Aug. 11 in Springfield.



Golfers gather before a golf outing on Aug. 24 at Ridge Country Club in Chicago. The event – which benefits Mother McAuley High School in Chicago – pays tribute to a former student golfer, Caroline Griffin, who received a heart transplant.

## 2022 Donor Program Staff List

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## Chatham resident grateful for lung transplant

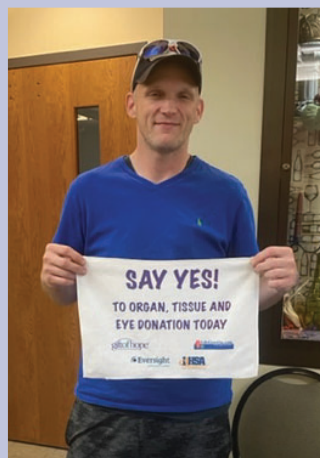


Randy Cooke

Randy Cooke, of Chatham, has been given two chances at life because of organ donation. In August 2011, Randy received a lung from a generous 53-year-old donor. "Before I needed a transplant, I knew nothing about organ and tissue donation," said Cooke.

Sadly, 10 years later, Randy's body began rejecting the lung transplant. He was placed on the transplant waiting list for a second lung transplant. On March 5, 2022, Randy received his second gift of a lung transplant. "I don't know anything about my second donor, but I was out of the hospital in 12 days," he said.

Cooke, now retired, is a father of two and grandfather of three. He is grateful he will experience his grandchildren growing up and can resume an active life thanks to his second donor. An avid hunter and a fisher, Randy is enjoying life and has resumed participating in outdoor sports. "If I could talk to my donor family, I would just say thank you," Cooke said. "What else can you say about such an unselfish act that not once, but twice, gave me my life back?"



(left) Jason Baker, whose niece was a donor, stopped by the donor table at the Charleston Public Library on Aug. 15 during National Minority Donor Awareness Month.

(below) Daru Smith and Phillip Hanks, donor program coordinators, distribute National Minority Donor Awareness Month materials on Aug. 29 at the Pullman Library in Chicago.

