



Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Spring 2009

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

Year round, Donor Program staff works with other donor agencies, transplant recipients, donor families, schools and civic organizations to bring donor education to communities throughout Illinois. During National Donate Life Month in April we expand our reach and intensify our message about the lifesaving benefits of donation. Donor drives at health fairs, schools and offices, as well as donor family recognitions and transplant recipient celebrations are on the calendar for April. Our goal is to further increase donor registry numbers and ultimately save more lives.

We see the miracles of donation every day in Illinois; people whose lives have been saved by donation sharing their stories with others and inspiring them to take up the crusade. Our facilities now feature local donor stories on flyers, bringing the donor message closer to home and our hearts. This issue features a few of those donor stories on page 3.

I thank facility employees for your continued assistance in helping us reach our registry goals. With the registry now at more than 4 million people, countless more lives *will* be saved.

Jesse White

Jesse White
Secretary of State

April is National Donate Life Month

Celebrations and events are being planned throughout Illinois as donor advocates join forces to bring a positive donor message to people in Illinois during National Donate Life Month in April. To find out about special events in your community, call 800-210-2106 or visit LifeGoesOn.com. While at the Web site, check out the new donor activity photo section — a snapshot of where we've been and what we've been doing to promote donor awareness around the state.

If you have not registered as an organ/tissue donor, April is a great month to register! Remember, if you registered before January 2006, you must re-register to ensure your wishes to be a donor are honored.

It's easy to join the registry:

- Visit www.LifeGoesOn.com.
- Visit any Driver Services facility.
- Call 800-210-2106.
- Complete and mail a registration card.

Donor drive staffing reminder

When staffing donor registration drives during April and throughout the year, please note that an Illinois driver's license or state ID number **is now required on all registration forms.**

The Secretary of State's office will no longer follow up to get this information. Please do not accept any registry cards that do not contain a legible driver's license or ID number.

When inputting information, make sure that all the required fields are filled in before accepting the form.

If a person does not have access to the required information, suggest that he or she take the form home to complete and send back in or register online.



Secretary White gets "star" on Rose Parade float

The "Stars of Life" theme for the Donate Life float at the New Year's Day Rose Parade in California reflected the many transplant recipients on the float and donor advocates recognized for their commitment to donation. Secretary of State Jesse White was one of 14 donor advocates honored with a special star-shaped florigraph on the float.

Lung transplant recipient Steve Ferkau of Chicago was among the transplant recipients riding the float. Steve takes part in the "Hustle Up The Hancock" event every year, where he runs up the stairs of the John Hancock Building to demonstrate that with his new lungs he is healthy and grateful for his gift of life. Steve received his new lungs from a 17-year-old donor.

FOUR Biggest Myths About Donation

1 If I am in an accident and taken to an emergency room, the ER doctors will not try to save my life if I am a donor because they would want my organs for other people.

Nothing could be further from the truth! Doctors save lives and do not let people die. They do everything they can to save lives in an emergency.

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2 Only the rich and famous get transplants. Average people don't get the same chance and die waiting.

The distribution of organs in the United States is done in a very fair and equitable manner through the United Network for Organ Sharing. The criteria for determining who gets a transplant includes medical urgency, blood and tissue type, body size, and where the donor is located because transplants have to be done quickly.

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3 My religion prevents me from being a donor.

All major Eastern and Western religions leave donation up to the individual. If you want to be a donor, you may choose to do so.

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4 If I am a donor I will be disfigured and will not be able to be viewed at my funeral.

Donation is a respectful surgery in which the organs are carefully removed and the body carefully restored afterward. Many donors successfully choose an open casket.

18-year-olds encouraged to register as donors

In cooperation with Donate Life Illinois, Secretary of State Jesse White launched a pilot program last April to send letters to all Illinois drivers who are turning 18, reminding them to register as organ/tissue donors. The new registry implemented in January 2006 does not allow drivers under 18 to join because it is a legally binding contract. The letter resulted in more than 18,000 new donor registrations in the last year!

Brian Bush liaison for Donate Life America

Brian Bush, southern Illinois community outreach coordinator for the Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program, is serving on Donate Life America's Donor Designation Collaborative faculty. The collaborative effort launched in 2006 helps large donor hospitals, transplant centers and organ procurement organization partners, such as Gift of Hope, achieve higher donor consent rates.

Donate Life Illinois is the state's affiliation of the national organization and collaborates on many projects and directives designed to increase donor registrations in Illinois. One of the national organization's goals is to attain a 50 percent donor designation rate among licensed drivers in every state. Illinois is now very near that statistic on average.

"Great and exciting things are happening throughout the United States with the Donor Designation Collaborative, and we are excited that the Illinois Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Program has taken a leading role in helping to mentor other states to achieve great results with their organ/tissue donor registries," said David Fleming, president of Donate Life America.

Brian also serves as the state team leader for Donate Life Illinois and Donate Life America's Team Illinois.



Illinois

www.DonateLifeIllinois.org



College of DuPage students rally for donation

The College of DuPage's Students for Organ Donation won Donate Life Illinois' Campus Challenge last fall. The group registered 559 organ/tissue donors on the Elmhurst campus during the six-week competition, taking top honors over 17 other participating Illinois colleges and universities. Colette Jordan, a liver recipient and leader of the student donor organization, and the rest of the group held donor drives, e-mailed donor information, and used Facebook to promote donor awareness throughout the campus. Colette (second from left) was recently recognized for her efforts by (left to right) Michael McKinnon, chair of the college's Board of Trustees; Jocelyn Harney, vice president of Student Affairs; Dr. Rita Bobrowski, Students for Organ Donation Club advisor; Vikki Tulcus, Secretary of State's office; and Dr. Robert L. Breuder, president of the college.

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— Secretary of State Jesse White

Facility personnel featured on Eye-Bank calendar

Each March in honor of National Eye Donor Month, the Illinois Eye-Bank creates a poster promoting lifesaving donation. This year, the poster features 31 special stories — one for each day of the month — of people who chose to make a difference by joining the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry. Visit www.illinoiseyebank.org to view the calendar and check out a few familiar faces: Sandy Kerrut, manager of the Wheaton Express facility, and Victory Bell from the Rockford facility.

FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

100,700 people are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant in this country.

4,825 people are awaiting a transplant in Illinois. Of those, 3,762, or about 70 percent, are waiting for a kidney transplant.

The majority of those waiting for a kidney in Illinois are African-American (1,722), followed by Caucasian (1,333) and then Hispanic (533).

In Illinois, more men than women are in need of a kidney or liver transplant; more women than men are in need of a pancreas or lung transplant.

Six infants under age 1 had transplants in Illinois in 2008.

Organ/Tissue Donor Program Staff

Please use the following updated list when contacting donor staff for story ideas or volunteering for events in your community.

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