

Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Spring 2022
A newsletter for Secretary of State facility employees and other organ/tissue donation advocates

The spring brings new opportunities for promoting the positive message of organ/tissue donation. We are excited to celebrate National Donate Life Month in April – look for coverage of our April activities in the summer edition of Life Goes On.

We have reached yet another milestone of 7.3 million individuals who have signed up on the Illinois Donor Registry. Each registrant symbolizes hope for those on the transplant waiting list in Illinois. By saying 'yes' at the Driver Services facility, individuals are making their wishes known that they want to help save lives in the future.

In our April campaign brochure and public service announcement, we are honored to feature Phillip Hanks, a Joliet father of six, who received a five-organ transplant from a single donor. Phillip, a new regional coordinator with the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Program, is promoting donation in the community and sharing his transplant experience with the public. We hope you enjoy his amazing story in this issue of Life Goes On.

As always, thank you for all you do to promote donation within facilities. You are making a difference.

Jesse White
Jesse White
Secretary of State

April is National Donate Life Month

We celebrate National Donate Life Month as a way to promote organ/tissue donation and to encourage individuals to register their donor decisions at LifeGoesOn.com. To date, a record 7.3 million Illinoisans have said 'yes' to donation. More than 231,000 16- and 17-year-olds have joined the registry since 2018.

This year's April campaign featured the story of Phillip Hanks, a Joliet father of six, who received a five-organ transplant from a single donor in April 2021. Hanks recently joined the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Program as a regional coordinator and staffs tables at health fairs, community events and Driver Services facilities. He also shares his amazing transplant journey with driver's education students at high schools. The April campaign, entitled "Five and Alive," featured Hanks' unique five-organ-transplant story in the program brochure and the public service announcement. "My story goes on because a person I never met made a choice that saved my life," Hanks said. He is grateful for his transplant – all from a single donor – which allows him to enjoy life again. He cherishes time spent with his family that now includes a grandchild who he would not have met without his generous lifesaving gift from a stranger.

During April, donor program coordinators focused on Driver Services facility visits with Life Goes On flag-raising ceremonies and photo opportunities. These photos were added to our website and will be included in the summer issue of Life Goes On. Coordinators visited facilities throughout the

state, thanking facility staff members for their efforts to increase the registry and for their participation in many of the flag-raising events.

The donor program held its first in-person April press conference since 2019 with Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, donor staff and partners in donation. Due to the pandemic, in-person press conferences were not held for two years out of an abundance of caution. Secretary White gave a message that encouraged donor registration and emphasized the need for more individuals to register in order to shorten the transplant waiting list. Phillip Hanks spoke as well.

We also developed an educational virtual campaign on the Life Goes On website, featuring a video message from Secretary White and our April public service announcement featuring Phillip Hanks. The website included the "Five and Alive" brochure and a tribute to Secretary White. The virtual campaign also provided updated information on organ/tissue donation.

Organ/Tissue Donor Program Poster Contest winners



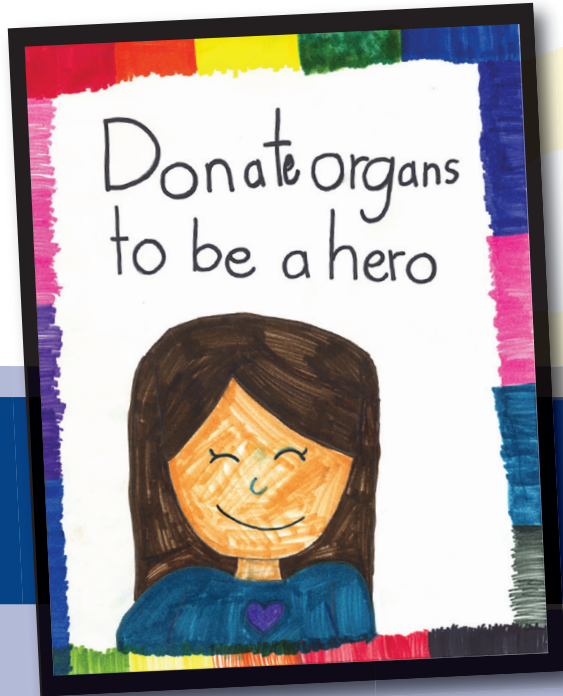
Secretary White presents a plaque to overall Poster Contest winner Zeyneb Efe in Springfield at the awards ceremony.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Illinois Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program Poster Contest. More than 300 posters were submitted for this year's contest. Representatives of organ procurement agencies and members of the Secretary of State's staff judged the posters.

In 1992, Joseph Kralicek, a kindergarten student from the Chicago area, submitted the first winning poster while his father was waiting for a liver transplant. The first contest was such a success that it became an annual event, until 2010 when it began being held biennially. Secretary of State Jesse White sends all schools in Illinois a letter and entry form, encouraging students to participate.

This year's overall-winning poster was submitted by third grade student Zeyneb Efe (3-5 grade category) from Horizon Science Academy-McKinley Park in Chicago. Other winners included first grade student Anna Worman from St. Boniface School in Edwardsville (K-2 grade category); eighth grade student Cassandra Medrano from Horizon Science Academy-McKinley Park in Chicago (6-8 grade category); and 11th grade student Marissa Estrada from Horizon Science Academy-McKinley Park in Chicago (9-12 grade category). The winners were invited to a ceremony at the Capitol in Springfield with Secretary White on April 21. They received plaques, Illinois Blue Books and gift certificates to Barnes & Noble.

The overall-winning poster is being printed and will be distributed to schools, libraries and Driver Services facilities throughout Illinois.



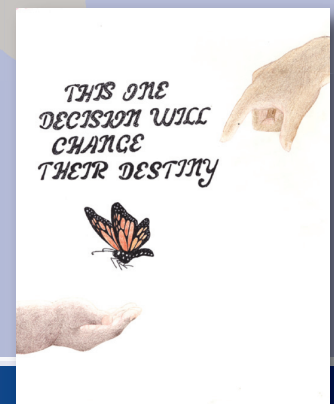
Overall Winner
3rd - 5th Grade Winner
Zeyneb Efe
Grade 3
Horizon Science Academy
McKinley Park



K - 2nd Grade Winner
Anna Worman
Grade 1
St. Boniface
Edwardsville

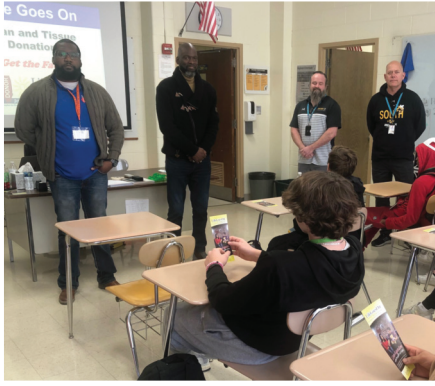


6th - 8th Grade Winner
Cassandra Medrano
Grade 8
Horizon Science Academy
McKinley Park



9th - 12th Grade Winner
Marissa Estrada
Grade 11
Horizon Science Academy
McKinley Park

Donor program coordinators return to high schools



Students at Hinsdale South High School listen to Daru Smith and Phillip Hanks share their multi-transplant stories on March 11 in Darien. From left: Daru Smith, Phillip Hanks, and driver's education teachers Jarrod Amolsch and Dean Norman.

With schools open for in-person learning this semester, many donor program coordinators have been presenting the donor classroom program in dozens of high school driver's education classes since January. Coordinators present a program to students about what it means to be an organ/tissue donor, and encourage them to take brochures home and talk to their families about the topic. Staff members inform students that when they receive their driver's licenses, they will be asked the donor question at the Driver Services facility. It is important for students to be familiar with the subject before they are asked.

Many students at this age are not accurately informed about organ/tissue donation, so they may still believe myths and misconceptions that circulate on social media, in movies and on TV shows that often distort the facts about donation. This could give students the idea that becoming part of the registry is not something they would say "yes" to when they obtain their driver's licenses. Donor staff members dispel myths and explain that donation is a positive decision which helps save lives. They encourage young people to ask questions during the program and to speak to their families about how they feel about donation. Transplant recipients are also invited to attend the classes to share their personal stories, which is a powerful message to the students.

To date, more than 231,000 16- and 17-year-olds have registered as donors with the Illinois Donor Registry. Due to a law that took effect in 2018, 16- and 17-year-olds are allowed to register as donors; however, they are still considered minors until they are 18 and would ultimately need family permission to become a donor. That is why it is so important for 16- and 17-year-olds to discuss donation with their families before they obtain their driver's licenses.



Plainfield Central High School driver's education students enjoy Daru Smith's and Phillip Hanks' multi-transplant stories on Feb 25 in Plainfield. Back row center: Phillip Hanks, driver's education teacher Mike Opsol and Daru Smith.

Phillip Hanks, five-organ-transplant recipient, joins donor staff



Phillip Hanks

Fifteen years ago, Phillip Hanks had some health issues that required a liver transplant. He was a husband, a devoted father of six and a former information technology (IT) professional. He recovered from the transplant surgery and led a completely normal life raising his family and working in IT. Then in 2019, during a pickup basketball game with his son, Phillip felt a pain go up his arm to his shoulder. When the pain would not go away, he went to the doctor. The test results were not encouraging, and the doctor delivered the news that Phillip's liver and kidneys were failing. He would need a transplant for each organ.

After visiting several doctors at transplant centers in Chicago, he learned that his pulmonary vein, which supplies blood to the vital organs, was also severely damaged and that the transplants could not be completed. Luckily for Phillip, the doctors at Indiana University Health in Indianapolis proposed a lifesaving solution to Phillip's health issues – a five-organ transplant, which included a second liver, kidney, pancreas, large and small intestines, and a new stomach, as well as a portion of the donor's pulmonary vein. All organs had to be transplanted at the same time from a single donor. Phillip received the call that a potential match was located, and on April 26, 2021, he received four of his transplants in a successful 7 1/2-hour surgery. The kidney transplant followed the next day in a 4 1/2-hour surgery.

Within 24 hours of the surgery, Phillip was able to stand and walk around the hospital floor. Within three months, he took his wife, Tiva, on a dream vacation to celebrate his miracle transplant.

Continuing to recover from the surgery, Phillip wanted to advocate for organ/tissue donation. He recorded the public service announcement for the organ/tissue donor program's National Donor Sabbath radio commercial in November 2021. After that, he joined the Illinois Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program as a regional coordinator. Phillip staffs donor registration tables at community events and Driver Services facilities and shares his story with driver's education students at area high schools. By spreading his lifesaving story, he encourages people to join the donor registry.



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Donate Life Illinois partnership with IHSA in full swing

The Organ/Tissue Donor Program, in partnership with Donate Life Illinois, is holding donor drives and events at Illinois High School Association's state finals in 10 sports this year. Sports include: cheerleading, boys individual wrestling, boys basketball, drama, girls track and field, girls soccer, softball, cross country, girls swimming and girls volleyball. Life Goes On is teaming up with donor partners at informational tables. They are distributing donor information, small giveaways including rally towels, and encouraging those who are not registered donors to do so. Donate Life Illinois partners have set up tables at most of the sporting events this spring with more planned. Hundreds of spectators, students and their families attend these events, which are held in central Illinois and Chicago.



Dacia Grimm is pictured with her son, Dresden Grimm, of Auburn. Dresden, who had just won third place at state in his weight class for wrestling at the IHSA tournament on Feb. 19 in Champaign. Dresden registered as a donor after he learned about the subject in driver's education class.



Rebecca Eaton and Sarah Rieke, of Highland, stop at the donor table at the IHSA boy's basketball game in Champaign on March 10. Sarah's cousin (and Rebecca's niece) was a donor.



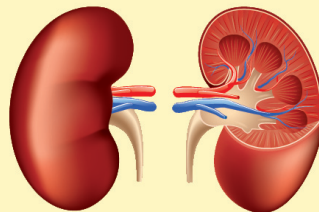
Abby Finch, of New Berlin, stops by the Donate Life Illinois table at the IHSA cheerleading finals on Feb. 4 in Bloomington. Abby's sister, Maddie, was a tissue donor who helped more than 100 individuals. Both girls were New Berlin High School cheerleaders.

World Kidney Day

Kidney health is an important health issue as more and more people find themselves facing kidney disease without experiencing symptoms. World Kidney Day, held March 10, is a global health observance and awareness campaign highlighting the importance of kidney health, as well as providing information about prevention of common kidney diseases. Health providers and advocates celebrate World Kidney Day annually around the world to encourage people to advocate for their own kidney health. Health providers offer materials, screenings for kidney disease, and discussions about kidney health and symptoms to millions of people on this day. The event also encourages people to be screened for kidney disease because it is a silent killer — people can lose up to 90% of their kidney function before experiencing any symptoms.

The kidneys are amazing organs that have many functions, including producing urine

by eliminating waste from the body, controlling blood pressure, making red blood cells and keeping bones healthy. Kidneys, each about the size of a fist, are located inside the abdomen under the rib cage.



High blood pressure and diabetes are the most common causes of kidney disease, according to the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois. High blood pressure causes about 25% of kidney disease, while diabetes causes closer to 35% of kidney disease. The risk of kidney disease is even greater if a person has both. Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD), an inherited disease, also causes kidney disease in families.

Symptoms of advanced kidney disease include ankle swelling, difficulty concentrating or focusing, fatigue, and blood and/or foam in the urine. If you experience these symptoms, make an appointment with your doctor right away.

Additionally, the kidney is the most commonly needed organ transplant. On the national waiting list for organs, nearly 90% of individuals are in need of a kidney. Thousands of those waiting will be placed on dialysis, a machine that does the work of their kidneys, while they wait for a transplant. A living kidney transplant (a kidney donated to someone in need from a living donor) is the most common living donation. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), last year in Illinois there were 800 deceased kidney donors and 300 living kidney donors.