



# Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Summer 2009

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



## New brochure "It's Up To YOU" debuts

During National Donate Life Month in April, it's always encouraging to look back over the year and see where we have reached out with our donor message. We have visited many Illinois communities, talking to people about donation and letting them know how easy it is to join the donor registry, which is now 4.5 million registrants strong. We have been to fairs and festivals, tree-planting ceremonies, donor dedication events and a variety of sporting events. At each event we have registered countless people as potential donors.

This April we debuted a new donor brochure along with an accompanying window decal to help us promote organ/tissue donation. Feedback from the new brochure has been very positive. Our new donor commercial also was released, which puts a personal touch on the critical need for donors.

Inside this issue is a photo account of where we visited this April to educate Illinoisans about the importance of donation. Speeches were made, tributes were given, donor stories were told, but the most important part of our efforts was the new donors who signed up on the registry. Each time someone agrees to be a donor another potential life is saved. It is the best gift a person can give.

*Jesse White*

Jesse White  
Secretary of State

A new Secretary of State organ/tissue donor brochure debuted in April for National Donate Life Month. The front features the slogan, "It's Up To YOU" along with pictures of two young donor recipients and the tagline, "Are YOU registered to be an organ/tissue donor?" Inside are pictures of three more donor recipients and one donor family member, some of whom also are featured in the Secretary of State's new donor commercial, which also debuted in April.

The new donor brochure has the same tear-off registration card as the old brochure as well as updated donor facts. The brochure is available at Driver Services facilities across the state and will be distributed at donor events across the state. An accompanying

window cling decal also is available, which is suitable for displaying in vehicles as well as on windows.

For additional brochures and window decals, please contact Lindsay Meyer at 217-782-6258 or [lmeyer@ilsos.net](mailto:lmeyer@ilsos.net).



**DONATE LIFE MONTH —** Secretary of State Jesse White visited Bloomington/Normal with 8-year-old liver recipient Annika Tiede (holding certificate) during National Donate Life Month in April. Annika was one of several donor recipients featured in the Secretary of State's donor awareness commercial this spring. She also spoke at the Bloomington Life Goes On event at OSF St. Joseph's Medical Center. More photos from Donate Life Month are on page 3.

### It's easy to join the Organ/Tissue Donor Registry:

- Visit [www.LifeGoesOn.com](http://www.LifeGoesOn.com) (it only takes 60 seconds to register online).
- Visit any Driver Services facility and say "yes" to the donor question.
- Call the Organ/Tissue Donor Program hotline at 800-210-2106.
- Complete and mail the registration card on the "It's Up To YOU" brochure.

## Secretary White dispels donor myths

Even though the majority of Americans — about 72 percent — say they believe donation is the right thing to do, only about 38 percent actually register their donor decision legally, according to a recent online survey conducted by Donate Life America.

The reasons people gave for not registering included:

- Not knowing if their organs would be suitable for transplantation.
- Thinking that doctors would not save them if they knew they were donors.
- Thinking that there is a black market for organs in this country.
- Believing that people who have been declared brain dead could, eventually, recover.

In an article in the *Springfield State Journal-Register* online edition in April, Secretary of State Jesse White dispelled some of the myths surrounding organ/tissue donation. He said:

- It is illegal to buy or sell organs in the U.S.
- Rich and famous people do not get transplants faster than other people.
- Organ and tissue donation is not in opposition to major religious beliefs.
- Doctors will not take organs before a person is declared dead.
- A person is not disfigured if they choose donation.

The number of people waiting in this country for lifesaving transplants stands at a staggering 102,000. Nearly 80,000 of those are waiting for a kidney transplant. The fact that a single donor can touch the lives of as many as 25 people makes donation one of the most important decisions an individual can make.



Joni Daugherty  
Public Inquiry Division

## Coworker Connection

For Secretary of State employee Joni Daugherty, registering donors comes naturally and she's not even part of the Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff. Joni registers donors while answering calls to the Secretary of State's main toll-free telephone number operated through the Public Inquiry Division in the Howlett Building in Springfield. She has registered more than 600 people in the last year and continues to add new donors daily.

When asked about the best part of her job, Joni replied, "I love helping people. I hope that I can make a difference and I'm proud to be able to assist people."

Joni receives about 100 phone inquiries daily on a variety of Secretary of State programs and services, with the majority being vehicle related. A little over a year ago she and her fellow employees were directed to ask the donor question during the course of their contact with callers. While some of the operators ask the question, "Would you like to sign up to be an organ/tissue donor?" at the beginning of the phone call, Joni asks the question at the end.

"I decided to try asking the question after the customer had their question answered and was somewhat satisfied with the results of their call," said Joni. "I thought it was better to get their main question answered, which is why they called in the first place, before being asked to be a donor."

Obviously, her strategy has worked. Joni is the leader in her division in the number of callers who agree to be donors. She is an inspiration for other operators as well as her supervisors and other Secretary of State employees.

"Some of the operators may feel a little uncomfortable asking the question, but I've had no problem at all." Joni's upbeat and compassionate manner may give her an edge when dealing with callers.

Joni has been with the Secretary of State's office for about eight years, commuting from Morrisonville, which is 35 miles south of Springfield, where she lives with her husband. They have two grown sons and a 9-month-old grandson.



Eduardo Lopez

## Donor family member interns at SOS

Donor family member Eduardo Lopez, whose 10-year-old sister was a donor, is interning in the Secretary of State's Chicago office this summer. Eduardo appeared in the Secretary of State's donor commercial this April and is featured in the new donor brochure. A high school student, Eduardo is bilingual in Spanish and English. He will assist the office in community outreach and event planning and participation.

# Donate Life Month across Illinois – April 2009

1) **Springfield** – The Donate Life Illinois flag was flown in front of the Howlett Building in the Capitol Complex in Springfield during April.

2) **Peoria** – Former Peoria Police Chief John Stenson (left), Driver Services regional manager Billy Halstead and Peoria Carver Center Executive Board President Felix Lobdell attended a tree-planting ceremony in honor of Percy Baker, Jr., a heart recipient who passed away recently. Baker was former director of the Peoria Carver Center.

3) **Danville** – Secretary White visited with employees at Danville's Blue Cross Blue Shield office. All 10 Blue Cross Blue Shield offices in Illinois held employee donor drives in April and several company employees who had experiences with transplantation shared their stories. More than 200 new people were registered during the month-long registration drives.

4) **DeKalb** – At an event at Northern Illinois University, Secretary White was made an honorary member of the NIU Huskies athletics teams by (left to right) Director of Athletics and Associate Vice-President Jeff Compher, head football coach Jerry Kim, head women's basketball coach Carol Owens and head men's basketball coach Ricardo Patton.

5) **Chicago** – Hubbard High School hosted a donor awareness school assembly featuring Secretary White and kidney/pancreas recipient Oliver Rosario (left), who received a transplant from Illinois Eye-Bank employee Mary Schlereth's boyfriend Craig (far right).

6) **Joliet** – Secretary White addressed 200 Andrew Wireless Solutions employees during an employee donor awareness day. Andrew employee Linda McDowell (back row), whose mother received a transplant, shared her family's story with Secretary White and fellow employees.

7) **Bloomington** – Secretary White visited Bloomington/Normal to promote donation with 8-year-old liver recipient Annika Tiede.

8) **Wheaton** – Wheaton Driver Services manager and transplant recipient Sandy Kerrutt was presented a countertop display featuring her donor recipient story by Secretary White and Driver Services zone manager Frank Francis.



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# Team Illinois at Kane County Cougar's game

Members of Team Illinois, a large contingent of donor recipients who represent the state at the national Transplant Games, turned out for the Kane County Cougar's baseball game in Geneva. The group joined the Jesse White Tumblers in entertaining the crowd after the game with their amazing tumbling act.

The Transplant Games is an Olympic-style athletic competition for transplant recipients who compete for gold, silver and bronze medals in 12 different sports, including track and field, swimming, tennis, basketball, cycling and golf. The event is held every two years with the last one held last summer in Pittsburgh, drawing more than 7,000 people. The Transplant Games is sponsored by the National Kidney Foundation.



## 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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