



Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Summer 2022

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

In April, we launched National Donate Life Month with in-person events for the first time in two years. We also raised awareness about organ and tissue donation with a commercial and brochure featuring Phillip Hanks, a recipient of five organ transplants. Phillip shared his miraculous transplant journey at events throughout the state during April. I was able to visit several Illinois communities as well – many with Phillip – speaking to people about donation and letting them know how easy it is to join the donor registry. There are currently 7.3 million registrants in this lifesaving program. Once again, we raised the Life Goes On flag at Driver Services facilities and other venues to honor recipients, donor families and those who wait for the gift of a transplant.

I hope you enjoy the April activity photos in this issue of Life Goes On. Feedback about the new commercial and brochure has been very positive. At the events, flags were raised, speeches were made, tributes were given and donor stories were shared, but most importantly, the donor registry increased. Each time someone registers, several lives could potentially be saved. It is the best gift a person can give. It is easy to join the Organ/Tissue Donor Registry – click on www.LifeGoesOn.com, visit any Driver Services facility, call the Organ/Tissue Donor Program hotline at 800-210-2106 or mail the registration card on the brochure. Your support of this lifesaving program is important.

Jesse White

Jesse White
Secretary of State

National Donate Life Month celebrated in person in April

April was an exciting month for the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Program because it was the first time in two years that we were able to celebrate the month and educate the public in person. Due to the pandemic, many of the program's activities were scaled back, or pivoted to virtual events. While we were still able to promote organ and tissue donation, it was wonderful to be back in person.

Secretary of State Jesse White kicked off National Donate Life Month activities on April 5 with the first in-person press conference in two years at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. Dozens – including many Donate Life Illinois partners, transplant recipients and donor advocates – attended the press conference. Secretary White spoke about the need to

increase the donor registry so those waiting have a better chance at receiving a transplant. White unveiled the April 2022 commercial and brochure and introduced Phillip Hanks. Hanks' story was featured in the promotional material for National Donate Life Month. He received a liver, small and large intestines, kidney, pancreas and stomach from a single donor, called a multi-visceral transplant, in April 2021.

"Phillip's story shows how organ and tissue donation saves lives," said Secretary White. "Phillip was able to be there for the birth of his granddaughter, and he now works for my office with the organ/tissue donor program. He reminds us that by registering to become an organ donor that you, too, could help change someone's story."



Hanks spoke about how grateful he was to receive the transplants so that his life could continue. A father of six, Hanks has a large family and received tremendous support from them throughout his transplant journey– especially from his wife, Tiva. Hanks' surgery, performed in Indianapolis, was a risky procedure that few doctors were willing to attempt, but he was fortunate to find transplant surgeons willing to try to give him back his life.

"My story goes on because a person I never met made a choice that saved my life," Hanks said in the commercial. (cont. on pg. 2)

Secretary White discusses the importance of organ and tissue donation at the press conference in Chicago. (Pictured with Phillip and Tiva Hanks.)



(Above) Phillip Hanks, center, surrounded by his family, with Secretary of State Jesse White and Connie Boatman-Tate, director of the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Program, at the National Donate Life Month press conference April 5 at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. (Left) Hanks' lifesaving transplants made it possible for him to be there when his granddaughter was born.

Secretary White also talked about his family's past experience with donation.

"The Organ/Tissue Donor Program has been a priority in my administration, as well as a personal mission," he said. "My family experienced the miracle of donation when my sister received a kidney from a generous donor before I was Secretary of State. When I became Secretary of State in 1999, there were

approximately 4 million people registered with the Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Registry – now we have more than 7.3 million registered Illinoisans."

Other April activities included visits to Driver Services facilities throughout the state to raise Life Goes On flags with facility managers and staff. Each day, Secretary of State employees ask thousands of customers if they

wish to join the donor registry. Also in celebration of the month, the Illinois Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program Poster Contest winners were recognized at a reception in Secretary White's Springfield Capitol office on April 20. The overall winner's poster was printed and distributed to all Driver Services facilities and libraries throughout Illinois.

Springfield Memorial Hospital raises donation flag in April

Springfield Memorial Hospital hosted a flag-raising event on April 20 to promote donor awareness. The Springfield community partners included the hospital, Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network and the Springfield Life Goes On committee. Speakers included Secretary White; Dr. Harry Wilkins,

CEO of Gift of Hope; Chuck Callahan, president of Memorial Health Hospital Group; Ed Curtis, president and CEO of Memorial Health; Jim Langfelder, mayor of Springfield; transplant recipient Phillip Hanks; Polly Hohenberg, director of Adult Critical Care Services, HSHS St. John's Hospital in Springfield; Julie Jones,

chaplain of Memorial Health; and tissue recipient Tiffany Mathis. Speakers reinforced the importance of public education about donation during April and spoke about the success of life-changing transplants, such as the one Phillip Hanks received.

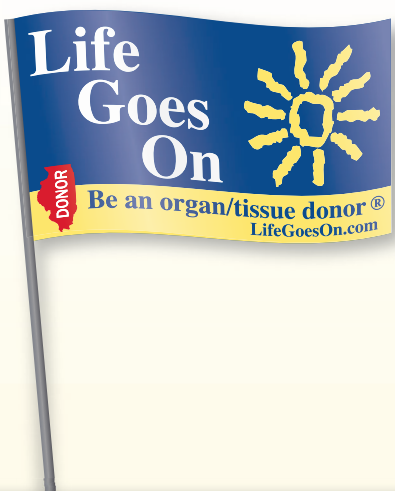


Secretary of State Jesse White speaks at Springfield Memorial Hospital's National Donate Life Month community collaborative event on April 20 in Springfield.



Secretary of State Jesse White and speakers at Springfield Memorial Hospital's National Donate Life Month community collaborative event on April 20 in Springfield.

Driver Services facilities raise the Life Goes On flag to support donation in April



Lombard



Centralia

Tilton



Plano

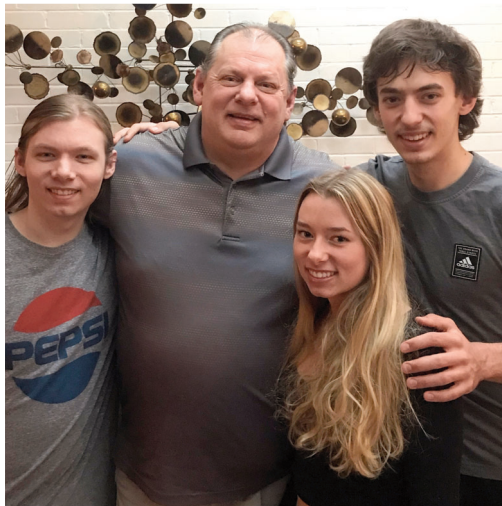


Aurora



Orland Park

Employee Connection



David Richert and his family.

For Lombard Driver Services facility public service representative David Richert, 56, being on the receiving end of a heart transplant was not in his life plans. But after heart attacks at ages 31 and 51, and the installation of a pacemaker and defibrillator, he knew the need for a heart transplant was on the horizon. In August 2018, Richert – then a Cicero police officer – was told by doctors at Loyola Medical Center in Chicago that his heart was rapidly failing. He needed a balloon pump to help it beat. He was put on the heart transplant list in March 2019. Richert was in and out of the hospital several times after that, dying twice and being revived. In August 2019, he was admitted to Loyola where he

stayed until his successful heart transplant on Sept. 1, 2019.

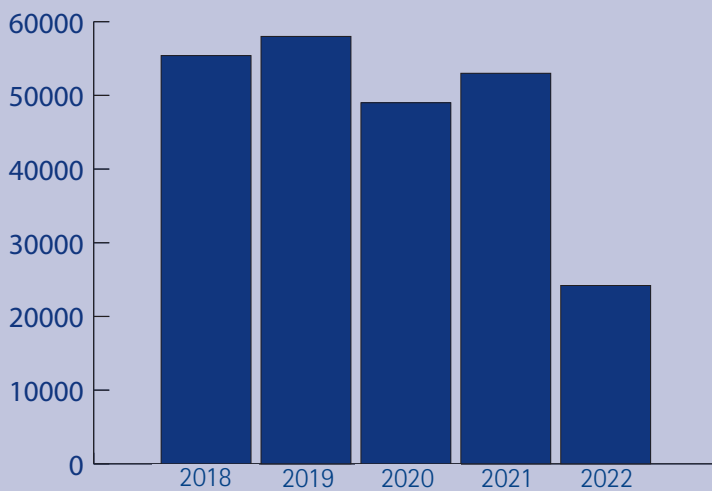
After his recovery, he knew he would not be able to return to his strenuous job as a police officer, a job he had held for nearly 20 years. He joined the Secretary of State's office in October 2020. Now living in Downers Grove, Richert's three children helped him through his recovery. "I am so grateful and I'm here for my kids now fulltime," Richert said. As a transplant recipient, he hears the myths about donation on television, in the media and in conversations. "I just want everyone to know they are all false. I'd like to see everyone become a donor," he added.

"Teen registry" increases

The number of 16- and 17-year-olds signing up with the Illinois Donor Registry continues to increase. 242,000 16- and 17-year-olds have registered since the program began in 2018.

- 2018 – 55,400
- 2019 – 58,000
- 2020 – 49,000
- 2021 – 53,000
- 2022 – 24,200 (as of June 1, 2022)

TOTAL – 242,000



Phillip Hanks, center, shares his transplant story with Fox Valley Career Center nursing students and instructor Jill Chiapetta May 5 in Maple Park.



Organ Transplant Support (OTS) members and advocates plant a tree to honor donor families on April 16 at Naper Settlement in Naperville. Pictured are: Cyndi Grobmeier, donor mother; Renata Krzyston, Gift of Hope; Sam Grobmeier; Frank Grobmeier, donor father; Beatriz Albelo, Gift of Hope; Dr. Harry Wilkins, CEO, Gift of Hope; Dave Bosch, Gift of Hope; Carol Olash, OTS past president; Dan Ahern, president, OTS; Ben Brown, Gift of Hope.



Like us
@JesseWhiteSOS
@ildonorprogram



Follow us
@ILSecofState



@ilsecofstate
@ildonorprogram