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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Secretary White Premier's New Organ Donor Commercial In Conjunction with National Donor Sabbath

SPRINGFIELD - Secretary of State Jesse White previewed a new Organ & Tissue Donor television commercial at St John's Hospital in Springfield today in conjunction with National Donor Sabbath weekend.

National Donor Sabbath is being recognized November 10 - 12, 2000. The observance was established to encourage all religious organizations to educate their members about the benefits of being organ and tissue donors.

"We hope religious leaders and people of all faiths take this opportunity to discuss organ and tissue donation. One person can save the life or improve the quality of life for 50 people," said White.

The commercial, entitled "Brienne's Song," features the story of Brienne Bacon whose family from Lincoln, Illinois chose to donate her organs when she succumbed to brain cancer at age ten. Her organs were able to save four lives.

In the commercial, Brienne's family and two of the recipient families gather together with Secretary of State Jesse White in support of Organ and Tissue Donation. Elton John granted permission for his song, Someone Saved My Life Tonight, to be used in the commercial. Stacy Bacon, Brienne's mother, said "knowing Brienne saved four lives keeps me going."

"I want to thank the families who through this commercial have helped us spread the life saving message of organ and tissue donation," said White. "Their story of compassion and love should inspire us all to want to help others."

According to White, the commercial will be aired on Central Illinois television stations for the two weeks following Donor Sabbath. The commercial will be aired again statewide in April, which is Organ Donor Month. White said the Secretary of State's Organ Donor Advisory Panel recommended reserving a portion of the annual budget this year to publicize the organ donor program around Donor Sabbath.

The commercial can be viewed on the Secretary of State website at </programs/special/brianne/brianne.html> In addition to the video, the site features details about Brianne's story and pictures. Potential donors may join the organ donor registry or order the new organ donor license plate that honors Walter Payton through the site as well.

Activities have been planned in communities throughout the state observing the Donor Sabbath. In Springfield, an Organ Donor Sabbath Remembrance Service will be held at the Prairie Heart Institute at St. John's Hospital November 12. The service will begin with a candlelight walk at 4:00 p.m.