



Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Summer 2003
A newsletter for Secretary of State facility employees and other organ/tissue donation advocates

Congratulations to the Organ Donor Program staff for a phenomenal National Donate Life Month! So much was accomplished throughout the state during April to bring organ and tissue donation into the spotlight in Illinois. From high school essay contests and basketball contests to tree-planting ceremonies, and donor awareness booths to news conferences announcing our new Life Goes On commercial, Illinois had it all!

While success was achieved in April, we look forward to taking organ donation in Illinois to the next level in the coming months. We continue to have nearly 5,000 people awaiting transplants in Illinois – that’s 5,000 too many. Increasing the number of potential donors in the registry, which now stands at a record-breaking 5.6 million people, is our top priority. We currently stand within reach of declaring a 50 percent statewide participation average in our donor registry – a goal we can achieve with everyone’s help. I hope you will join me in making this a reality in Illinois. Working together, we can reduce the waiting list one person at a time.

Jesse White
Jesse White
Illinois Secretary of State

Donate Life events around the state

April was a busy month for the Organ Donor Program staff, which planned numerous activities and events around the state to help increase awareness of the need for more organ/tissue donors. Life Goes On committees throughout Illinois and Organ Donor Program staff worked tirelessly to plan, organize and hold special events during the month-long campaign. Many events received media coverage, further propelling the “Gift of Life” message to Illinoisans.

“I am very proud of all the hard work and ingenuity shown by the Organ Donor staff and community committees in April,” said Secretary of State Jesse White. “Thanks to all of you who helped make April such a resounding success.”

The April campaign kicked off with Secretary of State Jesse White, joined by representatives from the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, the Illinois Coalition on Donation and the Chicago Fire Major League Soccer team, announcing Donate Life Month and unveiling the Organ Donor Program’s new commercial. Donor families were featured in the commercial, which ran on Illinois radio and television stations throughout the month. The commercial featured a Joe Cocker rendition of the Beatle’s tune, “Little Help from My Friends.”

Event highlights included the second annual Lisa Corsini Memorial 5K Run/Walk in Champaign, a donor dedication ceremony and tree-planting event in Naperville, an essay contest in Peoria and a “Hoops For Hope” basketball exhibition in Carbondale. The Illinois Valley Life Goes On Committee honored six area hospitals for their support of organ donation, and a health fair was held in Springfield featuring informational booths.

In Rockford, the city council helped launch a series of community recognition events, and Organ Donor Program staff sponsored a “Putt For Life” event during a trade show at the Rockford MetroCentre. Program staff also participated in health fairs and public events throughout the state, and hundreds of Illinois businesses displayed organ donor posters, flyers, banners and special exhibits from the office. Volunteers at Driver Services facilities also set up organ donor informational tables and signed up people for the Organ Donor Registry.

“Hoops for Hope”

Life Goes On In Southern Illinois Committee member and kidney donor Virginia Holt takes a break from “Hoops for Hope” activities in Carterville for a photo with Secretary of State Jesse White and her two granddaughters.

Co-worker Connection

The Gift of Sight

Leslie Guennewig of the Driver Services Department's Driver Responsibility Section understands how precious sight is and, even more important, how organ donation can save the life or improve the quality of life for many like herself.



At age 5, Leslie contracted the common childhood disease, chicken pox. Most children experience the disease without lasting effects. In Leslie's case, the disease infected her right eye, causing permanent blindness.

In 1985, Leslie received a corneal transplant. The surgery, performed at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, was a success. Today, Leslie is the mother of a teenage daughter and considers herself very fortunate to have her sight and health restored. "A transplant gives you a whole new world and a second chance at life," said Leslie.

Leslie admits to being extra careful when her own daughter contracted chicken pox as a child and was relieved when she experienced no lasting effects from the disease. Leslie is an advocate of the chicken pox vaccine available for children today.

If you have questions about corneal transplants, please contact the Illinois Eye Bank at 800-548-4703, or the Heartland Lions Eye Bank at 217-757-6050.

If you or a family member has had a personal experience with organ or tissue donation and wish to share your story, please contact Liz Hager at 217-782-0578.

Life Goes On in Peoria sponsors essay contest

The Life Goes On Committee in Peoria sponsored an essay contest for high school students as part of its Donate Life Month events in April.

Essay contest winners include: first place — **Brittany Nixon, Peoria High School**; second place — **Tomoko Murakami, Richwoods High School**; and third place — **Christina Contreras, Valley Central High School**. The winning students received savings bonds, a certificate from Secretary of State Jesse White, a personalized *Illinois Blue Book* and a Life Goes On T-shirt.



Kim Funk, right, Organ/Tissue Donor Program regional coordinator for western Illinois, presents an award to Tomoko Murakami, who won second place in the Peoria Organ/Tissue Donor Essay Contest.

The Life Goes On Committee in Peoria includes transplant recipients, donor family members, representatives from the business, labor and medical communities, local government representatives, including the Peoria police department, representatives from the American Red Cross Heart of America Region, the Gift of Hope Organ and Tissue Donor Network, the Illinois Eye Bank, the regional superintendent of schools and Organ Donor Program staff.

Because of the committee's many activities in the area over the past several years, Organ Donor Registry numbers at Peoria area Driver Services facilities have increased dramatically, from 41 percent participation in 1998 to more than 50 percent by April 2003.



Three-year-old miracle Annika Tiede of Normal steals the show at a Life Goes On in McLean County event. Annika was born with a liver disease that threatened her life, but because of a generous donor family, she is alive and well today.

LIFE GOES ON. BE AN

O'Leary named Organ/Tissue Donor Program manager

Secretary of State Jesse White recently named Nadine O'Leary of Springfield manager of the Organ/Tissue Donor Program.

"I am pleased that Nadine will lead the Organ Donor Program staff in its efforts to increase public awareness of this important program," said Secretary White. "Nadine brings a fresh perspective and innovative ideas that will continue to expand the program and take it to a new level in Illinois."

Expansion of the program in the coming months will include many new activities, facility visits, a presence at summer events throughout the state and striving to reach a 50 percent statewide participation goal.

"Increasing the public's awareness of organ and tissue donation is my top priority as we head into summer activities around the state. I look forward to working with all of you in the near future to maintain our strong donor program in Illinois," said O'Leary.

Gorecki helps others make the donor decision

June Gorecki, communications secretary for Naperville's Organ Transplant Support, Inc. and a lung transplant recipient, worked the crowds at the Aurora Driver Services facility during Donate Life Month in April. Thanks to June's efforts and those of other recipient volunteers and the Aurora facility staff, 412 driver's license applicants were added to the Organ Donor Registry.

"Everything I do is a thank you to my donor," said June. "I think I can speak for many recipients when I say that increasing awareness of the importance of organ donation is our way of giving back...and to say thank you for our lives."



Kidney recipient Connie Metz (left) of South Elgin, facility manager Patrick Divine and lung recipient June Gorecki of Aurora show their support for organ donation at the Aurora Driver Services facility.

June celebrated her fourth transplant anniversary on her birthday, June 17. Her wait on the list was a little over a year, but she feels extremely lucky to have received her transplant when she did. As a result, June enjoys life with her family, including 11 grandchildren. She knows that life would not be the same without her life-saving transplant, and thanks God every day for her renewed chance at life.



Q If I sign the back of my driver's license to become a donor, can I change my mind later?

A Yes. You may add or remove your name from the Organ Donor Registry at any time by calling 800-210-2106, visiting any Driver Services facility or going online at www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

Q Will the fact that my loved one is an organ donor affect the level of medical care he or she receives?

A Absolutely not. Donation is never considered until all efforts to save your loved one's life have failed, and death has been declared. It is illegal for a medical team attending to an individual to be involved in any way in the transplantation process or with any transplant medical team.

Q How is donation viewed by my religion?

A All major western religions support donation as a final, charitable act of giving.

Secretary White shoots the 5,000th basket at the "Hoops For Hope" event at John A. Logan College in Carbondale on April 26. Each basket shot represented one of the nearly 5,000 people in Illinois awaiting organ or tissue donations. The Life Goes On In Southern Illinois Committee hopes to make "Hoops for Hope" an annual event.



ORGAN/TISSUE DONOR.

Taylorville facility awarded 60% decal

The Taylorville Driver Services facility recently was awarded a 60% decal for their efforts to encourage customers to join the Organ Donor Registry. Downstate Driver Service's Director Mike Mayer (back, second from right) presented the award, and Debbie Stivers (front, second from right), a Taylorville heart transplant recipient, and Allan Spain (front, second from left), a Secretary of State employee and kidney recipient, placed the decal on the facility's window. Joining them were facility employees Patty McKinney, Linda Westbrook, Nelson Goodman and Herman Collier and regional manager, Jerry Purcell. Congratulations Taylorville for a job well done!



FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- ✓ There is no age restriction for being an organ/tissue donor. Certain medical conditions, such as being HIV-positive, rule out donation; however, having other diseases or medical conditions does not necessarily prevent you from being a donor.
- ✓ Last year, Illinois and northern Indiana had 947 families consent to tissue donation, enabling tens of thousands of patients to receive transplants of heart valves and other tissue.
- ✓ During the 2002-2003 school year, more than 35,000 students heard an organ donation presentation.
- ✓ The Organ Donor License Plate is the eighth-highest selling license plate in Illinois.
- ✓ In 2002, 338 people in Illinois died while waiting for an organ/tissue transplant.

Jesse White, Secretary of State
Produced by the Secretary of State Communications Department.
Printed by authority of the State of Illinois, July 2003 — GA 972 — DSD A 172.2 — 5M

Jesse White
Secretary of State
Organ/Tissue Donor Program
2701 S. Dirksen Parkway
Springfield, IL 62723

Life goes on

Presorted
Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #93
Springfield, IL