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For More Information Contact:
Beth Kaufman

**Jesse White Encourages Organ/Tissue Donation During
National Minority Donor Awareness Week**

Secretary of State Jesse White joined dozens of volunteers to mark National Minority Donor Awareness Week, August 1-7. The “Wave Away the Waiting” event, which was held on the plaza of the James R. Thompson Center, served to encourage organ and tissue donation in multicultural communities.

“It is time we work together and end the wait for those in need of organs,” said White. “Minorities are in great need for organ transplants, yet they donate at a lower rate. I encourage everyone to register to become an organ/tissue donor and help give the gift of life to someone in need.”

Nationally, minorities comprise 57 percent of the waiting list for organ transplants; however, they accounted for only 36 percent of those who donated organs, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

According to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), in Illinois last year:

- There were 1,187 African-Americans on the waiting list, but only 138 African-Americans became donors.
- There were 913 Hispanic-Americans on the waiting list, but only 97 Hispanic-Americans became donors.
- There were 245 Asian-Americans on the waiting list, but only 11 Asian-Americans became organ donors.

In Illinois, 6 million people are registered as organ/tissue donors, yet there are approximately 5,000 people waiting for transplants. Minorities are disproportionately affected by illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes, which can lead to the need for dialysis or a kidney transplant, increasing the number of patients on the organ transplant waiting list, according to UNOS.

A registration table was available at the “Wave Away the Waiting” event for people to join the Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Registry. In addition, the Jesse White Tumbling Team performed.

Illinoisans can register with the Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Registry online at LifeGoesOn.com, by calling 1-800-210-2106 or by visiting their local Driver Services facility.