



Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Winter 2018

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

Our office had many opportunities to promote organ/tissue donation last autumn. The observance of National Donor Sabbath took center stage for the donor program as staff attended numerous events throughout the state. National Donor Sabbath is observed annually two weeks before Thanksgiving and encourages clergy and worship leaders to speak to their congregation about the importance of organ and tissue donation. I visited three churches in Chicago on Nov. 12 to raise awareness about the organ/tissue program and reiterate that donation saves lives.

The state's donor registry will be impacted significantly this year because 16- and 17-year-olds are now eligible to participate in the program. As of Jan. 1, all 16- and 17-year-olds are asked if they wish to join the donor registry when they receive their driver's licenses or state IDs. This has the potential to add more than 350,000 additional names annually to the state's registry.

As always, I am grateful to the employees of every driver services facility in the state for asking customers to participate in the donor program hundreds of times each day. We can significantly increase the state's registry and provide more options for those on the wait list by asking each individual this important question. You are helping us make a difference.

Jesse White

Jesse White
Secretary of State

National Donor Sabbath events observed throughout Illinois

National Donor Sabbath was celebrated Nov. 10-12, 2017, throughout the state and country. This annual three-day observance encourages clergy and worship leaders to speak about organ and tissue donation to their congregations. Those who have received transplants, are currently waiting or are members of donor families come forward to share their stories with church members in an effort to raise awareness about the need for organ/tissue donors.

"The need for more donors in Illinois is critical," said Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White. "On National Donor Sabbath weekend, we encourage clergy to address their congregation about the need for donation or to host a donor informational table at their places of worship. Raising awareness in faith communities is crucial because people often explain that their religion is the reason they choose to not participate in the state's organ and tissue donor registry," he added.

Donor program coordinators traveled across the state distributing National Donor Sabbath flyers and bookmarks. They also coordinated with churches to provide donor informational tables and programs. A 30-second National Donor Sabbath Public Service Announcement, featuring Chicago kidney recipient Darvece Monson, was also played on 100 radio stations throughout the state.

In honor of National Donor Sabbath, Secretary White held a press conference on Nov. 9 at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. Secretary White was joined by clergy, members of the First Ladies Health Initiative of Chicago, transplant recipients, staff from The Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network, as well as other donor advocates. Secretary White highlighted the need for more donors in Illinois. Monson and Rachel Angela Moore, a heart recipient and

(cont. on pg. 2)



Secretary of State Jesse White, joined by clergy, organ and tissue donor advocates and transplant recipients, promotes the importance of donation at a National Donor Sabbath press conference Nov. 9 at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago.

National Donor Sabbath events observed throughout Illinois (cont. from pg. 1)

nurse, shared their personal transplant stories with those in attendance.

On Nov. 12, Secretary White visited three Chicago churches and addressed the congregations with a message expressing the need for more organ and tissue donors. At Apostolic Faith Church, Bishop Horace E. Smith, M.D., received a plaque from Secretary White in honor of his church's support of donation. Secretary White later spoke at Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church, presenting a plaque to Pastor Ernest Ledbetter for raising awareness about donation. Secretary White also participated in services at Blackwell-Israel Samuel AME Zion Church and thanked Pastor Todd Jarrett for his church's dedication to donor awareness. Kidney recipient Natasha Johnson shared her transplant story with the congregation during Secretary White's visit. Secretary White met individuals with donor stories at each church.

In Decatur on Nov. 9, HSHS St. Mary's Hospital and the Macon County Life Goes On Committee recognized donor families, recipients and those waiting for a donor with a special program in honor of National Donor Sabbath. The service featured the lighting of candles to represent donor families, those in need, recipients of organs and tissue, as well as health care providers. Father Nick Husain, chaplain at St. Mary's, offered the blessing of the candles and prayer. Also supporting and participating in the service were Joan Coffman, president and CEO of HSHS St. Mary's Hospital; Macon County Life Goes On Committee members;

and Michelle Reef, regional manager of hospital development for Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network. Thousands of National Donor Sabbath flyers and bookmarks were distributed throughout Champaign and Decatur to raise awareness about organ and tissue donation.

In Dixon, National Donor Sabbath was celebrated at St. Patrick's Catholic Church by Father Romke. A parishioner had recently lost her daughter who had made the selfless decision to act as a donor. A donor informa-

tional table was set up at the church. In East St. Louis, Superintendent Rodney Douglas Sr. and First Lady Anita Douglas of Greater New Covenant Church of God in Christ observed National Donor Sabbath with a donor presentation during their church's Thanksgiving dinner for the community on Nov. 19. Reverend Silas Johnson of Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Springfield observed Donor Sabbath by emphasizing the need for more organ donors in the African-American community.



LEFT: Secretary of State Jesse White presents a plaque to Pastor Todd Jarrett of Blackwell-Israel Samuel AME Zion Church in Chicago for his church's support of organ and tissue donation. Kidney recipient Natasha Johnson, center, shared her transplant story during Secretary White's visit. ABOVE LEFT: Bishop Horace E. Smith, M.D., of Apostolic Faith Church in Chicago, receives a plaque from Secretary of State Jesse White for his church's support of organ and tissue donation. Also pictured is Jack Lynch, director of community affairs, Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network. ABOVE: Secretary of State Jesse White presents a plaque to Mt. Pisgah Missionary Baptist Church Pastor Ernest Ledbetter and First Lady LaToya Ledbetter for the church's support of organ and tissue donation.



LEFT: Donor advocates attended the National Donor Sabbath service held Nov. 9 at HSHS St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur. RIGHT: Superintendent Rodney Douglas Sr. and First Lady Anita Douglas of Greater New Covenant Church of God in Christ observed National Donor Sabbath with an organ and tissue donation presentation during their annual church Thanksgiving dinner for the community on Nov. 19 in East St. Louis.

Concordia University welcomes Secretary White

Students presented with inspiring message of donation

Concordia University in River Forest welcomed Secretary of State Jesse White on Nov. 8 for an organ and tissue donor program. Many groups on campus participated in two donor drives prior to Secretary White's visit, registering more than 100 individuals. Secretary White visited a student donor registration table, as well as the mobile driver services unit on campus that day. Later he spoke to those gathered, including many university officials, about the impact the students were making by raising awareness about organ and tissue donation. He presented a plaque to President Rev. Dr. Daniel Lee Gard, thanking him for the university's support of donation. Marjean Hawkins, local resident and lung recipient, also shared her transplant story.



Baseball team members at Concordia University in River Forest welcome Secretary of State Jesse White to their campus.



LEFT: Secretary of State Jesse White presents a plaque to Concordia University President Rev. Dr. Daniel Lee Gard to recognize the university's support of organ and tissue donation at the campus in River Forest. RIGHT: Concordia University baseball team coach Mike Stawski presents Secretary of State Jesse White with a team baseball cap during Secretary White's visit to the campus.

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Donor John Lefferts was remembered on DLA's 2018 Rose Parade float

Donor John Lefferts was remembered in a beautiful floragraph that was placed on the 2018 Donate Life America float in the Rose Parade. Many donor advocates attended a floralgraph decorating event in Springfield in November to create the likeness of the donor in natural materials. It was placed on the float with many others, remembering donors and their generous decisions to give life to others.



Vivian Lefferts stands with a poster honoring her son, John, who was a donor, at a floragraph decorating event in Springfield in November. John Lefferts' floragraph was placed on Donate Life America's float in the 2018 Rose Parade.



The floragraph design honoring donor John Lefferts was placed on the Donate Life America float in the 2018 Rose Parade.

Employee Connection

Maria Mendoza lost brother who was a donor



Maria Mendoza and Gabriel Melendez

For Maria Mendoza, a Secretary of State Administrative Hearings officer in Chicago, the decision to donate her brother's tissues when he died in May 2015 was made much easier for her family when they learned he had already registered as a donor. Gabriel Melendez, 61, of Peoria, was an auto mechanic and became a tissue donor at OSF St. Francis Hospital in Peoria. Maria said the Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network staff was very patient with her family when explaining the donor process to them. She said they all learned a lot about donation during her brother's donor process. "Even though it was very sad to lose Gabriel, we were all surprised to learn he had already signed up to be a donor," Maria said. She said a sister remembered him registering at a Driver Services facility when she was with him on a visit. Gabriel donated his corneas, bones and soft tissues.



Secretary of State Jesse White threw out the first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals baseball game on Sept. 13 in St. Louis.



LEFT: Secretary of State Jesse White threw out the first pitch at the Chicago White Sox baseball game Sept. 5. Standing with Sec. White at the player autograph table are Sanford Hunt and Chandler Gilbert, White Sox coordinator of community affairs. RIGHT: Nyle Carey, a heart recipient from Bartonville, stopped by the Life Goes On informational table at the Union Retiree Health Fair in Peoria. His new heart has given him the chance to spend time with his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



LEFT: The Springfield Life Goes On Committee decorated a tree for this year's Memorial Medical Center's Festival of Trees. The trees are auctioned off to various Springfield-area businesses, and the proceeds are donated. CENTER: Fourteen-year-old Nathan Wells of Villa Grove stands next to a countertop display featuring his heart transplant story that was presented to the Tuscola Driver Services facility. RIGHT: Merric Meehan and Brian Merrifield played jeopardy at the Illinois Secretary of State's organ and tissue donor booth at the Lewis and Clark Community College Wellness Fair. After answering the questions correctly, they both decided to register as donors.



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