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

Secretary of State Jesse White joined with dozens of volunteers to mark National Minority Donor Awareness Week, August 1-7, and “Wave Away the Waiting” for those waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant. Today’s event, on the plaza of the James R. Thompson Center, served to encourage organ donation in multicultural communities.

“There is a long list of people waiting for transplants within multicultural communities,” said White. “Kidneys are very much in need. Because genetic matches between people belonging to the same ethnic group are most successful, it is imperative that people of similar ethnicities become organ and tissue donors.”

Nationally, minorities comprise more than 56 percent of the national waiting list for organ transplants; however, they accounted for only 34 percent of actual organ donors, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). Last year, in Illinois:

- There were 2,244 African-Americans on the waiting list while only 86 became donors, according to UNOS.
- There were 977 Hispanics on the waiting list while only 34 became donors.
- There were 250 Asian-Americans on the waiting list while only six became organ donors.

In Illinois, 5.5 million people are registered as organ/tissue donors, yet there are 5,000 people waiting for transplants. People of color 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 national organ transplant waiting list.

Booths were available at the “Wave Away the Waiting” event for people to join the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry, donate blood and receive kidney screenings, among other services. In addition, the Jesse White Tumbling Team performed.

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

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