



# Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Summer 2019

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

In April, we marked National Donate Life Month by releasing a new campaign platform highlighting the organ/tissue donor program. On April 1, we held a press conference at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago featuring 11-year-old heart recipient Sofia Sanchez. Sofia was the inspiration of our campaign rollout. Shortly before she received her life-saving transplant, Sofia was visited at the hospital by Grammy Award-winning artist Drake. Their meeting was featured in our 2019 commercial promoting organ and tissue donation.

To continue the positive momentum of this important month, donor program coordinators organized speaking opportunities, school assemblies and registration drives throughout the state. They also spoke to high school driver's education students about registering as donors at age 16 and 17.

Driver Services facilities employees in Illinois celebrated Blue and Green Day on April 12 by decorating their workplaces in support of organ/tissue donation. Several facilities were presented with new countertop displays featuring donor and transplant stories of local residents.

Thank you to everyone who participated in National Donate Life Month events this year. The effort continues to drive our registry numbers up each month.

*Jesse White*

Jesse White  
Secretary of State

## Secretary White & Sofia Sanchez impact National Donate Life Month

### Registry numbers continue to climb



Heart recipient Sofia Sanchez, 11, speaks at a press conference with Secretary of State Jesse White to launch National Donate Life Month in Illinois. (Sofia's mother, Natalie Sanchez, right.)

National Donate Life Month made April an especially busy time for Secretary of State Jesse White as he attended special events throughout the state. Secretary White spoke to hundreds of people, many of whom decided to register as new donors. The Illinois Donor Registry now has 6.7 million registrants. More than 70,000 of the registrants are 16- and 17-year-olds who are now able to voice their decision about becoming a donor.

Secretary White kicked off April activities with a press conference on April 1 at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. Secretary White was joined by 11-year-old heart recipient Sofia Sanchez from Downers Grove. Sofia received her lifesaving heart transplant at Lurie in 2018. During her stay at the hospital, she received a special visit from Grammy Award-winning artist Drake. The Secretary of State's messaging campaign for National Donate Life Month

featured Sofia's heart transplant story and aired on television, radio and social media in English and Spanish throughout the state. More than 400 movie screens also played the commercial during April. The campaign launched new brochures featuring Sofia's transplant story.

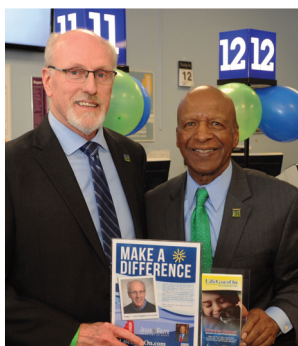
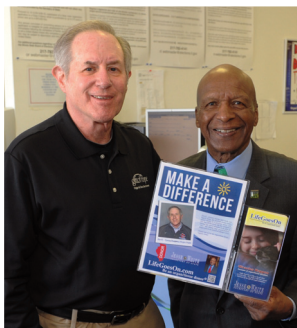
"For such a young girl, Sofia has shown tremendous strength and maturity during her organ donation journey and I am so proud of her," said Secretary White. "Drake's visit helped Sofia during a difficult time and raised awareness about the importance of organ donation. And a special thank you to Sofia's donor family for giving her the gift of life."



The 2019 Life Goes On brochure features Sofia's story.



# Secretary White visits several Chicago facilities to observe National Blue and Green Day



Each year Driver Services facilities observe National Blue and Green Day. This day gives facilities in our state the opportunity to promote and recognize the organ/tissue donor registry and how it impacts individuals in their community. On April 12, Secretary White visited four Chicago-area facilities and presented countertop displays featuring the stories of local residents' donor or transplant experiences. At the Des Plaines Driver Services facility, Cathy Lenzini of Park Ridge presented a countertop display story featuring her late husband, Chris Lenzini, who was a donor (photo on bottom left). At the Deerfield Driver Services facility, Secretary White met cornea recipient Don Rowley of Arlington Heights, who shared his cornea transplant story with facility staff and customers (photo on top left). Donor program coordinator Gavin Dillon of Libertyville presented his own countertop display and liver transplant story at the Lake Zurich Driver Services facility with Secretary White (photo on top right). In Schaumburg, liver recipient Andy Trosper met Secretary White and shared his countertop display and transplant story (photo on bottom right). National Blue and Green Day brought attention to real experiences of organ/tissue donation.

(continued on page 4)

## Schools host donor awareness assemblies in April

Several schools hosted donor awareness events in April. Springfield High School hosted an assembly on April 11, which featured the 2019 donor program commercial, remarks by Secretary White and the attendance of two donor families — Jay and Pat Landers and Jim and Courtney Allman. Dallas Anderson, the daughter of a recipient, also spoke. Secretary White visited South Middle School in Arlington Heights on April 16 for "Green Out Day" in honor of donor Matt Petrillo, the brother of student Taylor Petrillo. Students wore green for the assembly, and Secretary White served as the featured speaker. The Jesse White Tumbling Team also performed in the gym. On April 23, Rockford's Jefferson High School hosted Secretary White for an assembly on organ/tissue donation organized by senior Capstone students. Champaign Central High School held an assembly on April 29 about organ/tissue donation that included speakers Mike and Robyn Deterding and donor mother Lauri Umbarger.



Secretary White addresses students at a "Green Day Out" assembly at South Middle School in Arlington Heights.



Secretary White visited South Middle School in Arlington Heights on April 16 for "Green Day Out" in honor of donor Matt Petrillo, South Middle School student Taylor Petrillo's brother. Pictured from left: Secretary White, Taylor Petrillo, principal Piper Boston and Tony Petrillo, donor father.



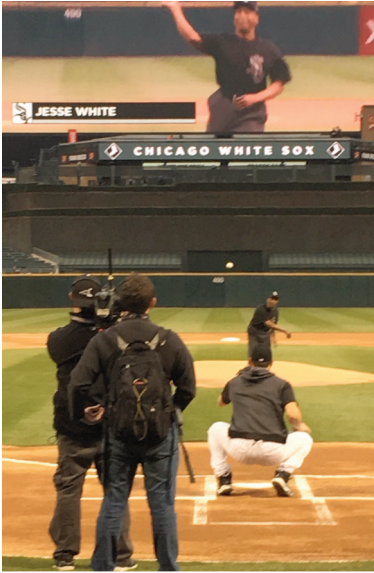
Secretary White, center, stands with a group of Springfield High School staff, speakers and volunteers after a school assembly and press conference on organ/tissue donation in Springfield.



Lauri Umbarger and Robyn Deterding, donor mothers, meet at Champaign Central High School's student assembly promoting donation in Champaign. Both are members of the Champaign Life Goes On Committee.



## Chicago White Sox support organ/tissue donation



Secretary White throws out the first pitch at a Chicago White Sox game at Guaranteed Rate Field in Chicago.

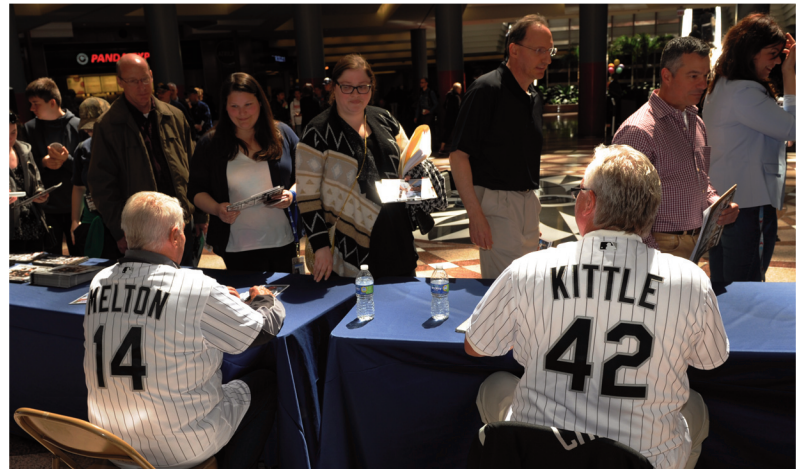


Heart transplant recipient Sofia Sanchez poses with Chicago White Sox mascot South Paw at the White Sox game.

The Chicago White Sox supported organ/tissue donation with Secretary of State Jesse White at an annual organ/tissue registration drive and autograph signing event on April 26 at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. The event featured Secretary White and White Sox legends Ron Kittle, Bill Melton, Carlos May and White Sox radio announcer Ed Farmer, a kidney recipient. They held a press conference prior to the event to promote organ/tissue donation. Also in attendance was Sofia Sanchez and her mother, Natalie. Secretary White also threw out the first pitch at the White Sox game on April 16 in honor of National Donate Life Month. Also in attendance was 11-year-old heart recipient Sofia Sanchez.



Secretary White speaks at a press conference before a Chicago White Sox autograph-signing event on April 26 at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago.



Former Chicago White Sox players sign autographs and promote organ/tissue donation with Secretary White.

## Annual Donor Family Dedication and Tree Planting ceremony

Naperville's Organ Transplant Support (OTS) group celebrated 29 years by honoring donor families with the annual Donor Family Dedication and Tree Planting ceremony on April 28 at Naper Settlement in Naperville. Speakers included Connie Boatman, director of the Illinois Secretary of State's organ/tissue donor program; Kevin Cmunt, CEO, Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network; heart recipient Sofia Sanchez; and Cindy Abitua, donor mother. OTS president Carol Olash coordinated the planting of a tree on the grounds at Naper Settlement as a tribute to all donor families following the ceremony.

Next year, OTS will celebrate 30 years of helping those on the transplant waiting list, those who have received transplants and the caregivers who navigate all aspects of the transplant process. Monthly OTS meeting speakers address a variety of topics of interest to the group, such as helping caregivers care for their loved ones, understanding the medication and insurance processes and providing tips for living a healthy lifestyle both before and after a transplant.

Pictured are Connie Boatman, director of the organ/tissue donor program; Sofia Sanchez, heart recipient; Kevin Cmunt, CEO, Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network; Carol Olash, president, OTS; and Cindy Abitua, donor mother.





## Driver Services facilities go all out for Blue and Green Day - cont. from page 2

Many Driver Services facilities in Illinois observed National Blue and Green Day on April 12, a day dedicated to increasing donor awareness to customers in facilities. Many employees wore blue and green, decorated facilities in festive colors, displayed balloons and donor literature, and encouraged customers to register as donors.



Monticello Driver Services facility staff celebrate National Blue and Green Day at their facility by decorating the facility in blue and green colors and hanging festive balloons.



Rockford Central Driver Services facility staff celebrated with cupcakes and decorations in blue and green for National Blue and Green Day.



The Benton Driver Services facility staff wear green to celebrate organ/tissue donation during National Blue and Green Day.



## Wave Away the Waiting to showcase minority donor need

### 7th annual event promises something for everyone

Secretary White's Wave Away the Waiting event for minority donor awareness will be held on Tuesday, Aug. 6, during National Minority Donor Awareness Week at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. The event, held in conjunction with Donate Life Illinois, will feature a health fair with 22 vendors, speakers, a donor registration drive and entertainment that includes musicians and a performance by the Jesse White Tumbling Team.

The event calls attention to the need for more minority donors in Illinois. Statistics show that individuals in minority communities are more likely to need a transplant, but are the least likely to register as potential donors. The largest problem in transplantation continues to be the shortage of organs according to the American Kidney Fund. More than 100,000 people are waiting for a kidney transplant nationwide—and approximately 68,000 are individuals of a racial and/or ethnic minority. Minority groups, including African Americans, often have increased rates of high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease and kidney failure, which puts them at risk for needing a transplant, according to the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFI). Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure for African Americans.

The event is free to the public. Wave Away The Waiting draws large crowds at the James R. Thompson Center plaza. Donor registration tables provide information to those who have questions regarding organ/tissue donation. Table giveaways, such as donor awareness wristbands, pens and other small items, will be available for event attendees. Individuals are encouraged to visit the health fair to have health questions answered and participate in valuable health screenings.

Health fair vendors include many Donate Life Illinois partners including Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network, the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois and Eversight Illinois. Other vendors include the Illinois Department of Public Health (offering health screenings), Vitalant (blood donation), the Illinois State Treasurer's office and many hospitals and health organizations.

**LIFE GOES ON**  
**BE AN ORGAN/TISSUE DONOR®**  
**REGISTER AT [LIFEGoesOn.com](http://LIFEGoesOn.com)**



Like us  
@JesseWhiteSOS



Follow us  
@ILSecofState



#LifeGoesOn