



# Life Goes On

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

I am pleased to present this first quarterly issue of *Life Goes On*. My office's Organ/Tissue Donor Program staff initiated this newsletter because a recent survey completed by facility employees indicated that more information is needed about the Organ/Tissue Donor Program.

As many of you may know, organ/tissue donation is a personal issue for me. My sister was fortunate enough to receive a life-saving kidney transplant several years ago. As Secretary of State, I want to do my best to ensure that everyone waiting for an organ/tissue transplant receives one.

Because "front-line" facility employees are key to the success of our program, this newsletter will allow the Organ/Donor Program staff to share with you personal organ/tissue donation stories from employees, special organ/tissue donor events and updated facility statistics. I hope you find the newsletter a helpful resource in learning more about donation and passing it on to potential donors in your facilities. If you have any suggestions for future stories or questions about the program, please call 217-782-6258.

*Jesse White*

Jesse White  
Illinois Secretary of State

## Sparta facility takes organ/tissue donation to higher level

The coveted "60%" decal has hit the window of the Sparta facility in southwestern Illinois. The Sparta facility achieved the distinct honor of being the first Secretary of State facility to receive the new "Organ/Tissue Donor 60%" window decal. This means that 60 percent or more of the people who apply for or renew their driver's licenses or ID cards at the Sparta facility register as potential donors.

"It is a special honor to receive this recognition," said Secretary of State Jesse White. "Our facility employees are critical to the success of the organ/tissue donor public awareness program."

Acting facility manager Margie Wagner agrees. "We all like to think that our facility is special, but here in Sparta we really try to put our 'hearts' into donation."



Larry Luebkekmann, a liver transplant recipient and farmer from nearby Red Bud helped place the decal on the facility window and thanked the employees for their efforts to promote organ/tissue donation. "I am so grateful to the generous donor family who gave me a second chance at life," he said. "I also want to say thanks to all the employees here at the Sparta facility."

To date, 50 facilities have reached the impressive 60 percent mark and will soon be receiving their decals at their own special ceremonies.



Sparta-area liver transplant recipient Larry Luebkekmann and Sparta acting facility manager Margie Wagner were among participants at the recognition of the facility for achieving 60 percent sign-up rate for the organ donor registry.

## Co-worker Connection

Jimmy Zerante from the Chicago Heights facility has battled adversity a number of times in his life. In 1973, at age 11, Jimmy was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. He was able to live with the diabetes for 20 years, but the disease slowly began taking its toll on his kidney and pancreas.

In April 1993, Jimmy received his first kidney/pancreas transplant. Unfortunately, there were complications that put him in recovery for four months. The transplant was not quite a match and the pancreas failed, resulting in a continued battle with diabetes.

Jimmy received his second kidney/pancreas transplant in June 1998. The organs were from a 16-year-old boy from Minnesota. The transplant was a success, and after only eight days of recovery, he was up and about painting his basement. His doctors soon declared him free of diabetes.

Jimmy feels lucky to be alive. He says he has felt better over the last four years than he has ever felt in his life. On May 21, 2002, Jimmy and his wife adopted a two-year-old little girl from Bulgaria, something they never could have imagined while Jimmy was ill.

One thing Jimmy wishes people would realize is that the need for an organ/tissue transplant could happen to anybody. He also thinks that many people don't understand that those who receive transplants are not chosen by race or financial status.

As for Jimmy Zerante, he is one believer in the "Life Goes On" Organ/Tissue Donor Program. He hopes everyone will consider being donors and talk with their families about their decisions.

If you have had a personal experience with donation and wish to share your story, please contact Lisa Kirk at 312-814-8921 or lkirk@ilsos.net.



## Organ/Tissue Donor Program adds regional coordinators

Due to the tremendous increase in public awareness activities, speaker requests, school presentations, "Life Goes On" activities and other special events, the Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program has added several regional coordinators to its staff.

Part of their job duties involve working closely with and assisting Driver Services facility staff. Regional coordinators will be on hand to answer questions about organ/tissue donation, contact organ donor recipients or donor family members in their areas and assist facility staff with materials. Facility employees also may contact their regional coordinators with information about special events in their areas or to refer requests for speakers about organ/tissue donation. Regional coordinators also will make presentations to those facilities that reach 50-60 percent in the donor registry.

Following are the names and contact information for the regional coordinators. If you are not sure who handles your area, please contact Liz Hager at 217-782-0578 or lhager@ilsos.net.

### Gail Grabczynski

Chicago metro/surrounding area (schools)  
312-607-1385 or 312-814-8921  
thedifference@mindspring.com

### Irma Goliday

Metro East/surrounding area  
618-271-6761 or 618-791-3572  
IRMA1024@aol.com

### Mary Diab

Chicago metro/surrounding area (special events and displays)  
708-209-1524  
lionsmilk@juno.com

### Pam Ingram

McLeansboro facility;  
Southeastern Illinois  
618-757-2381

### Kim Funk

Rushville; Central/West Central Illinois  
217-322-3065  
dkf@frontiernet.net

### Elizabeth (Liz) Handley

Central/East Central Illinois  
217-275-1427  
hands5@insightbb.com

### Stephanie Dial

McLeansboro facility;  
Southeastern Illinois (east of I57 and Southern Illinois)  
618-643-3768  
sdial@ilsos.net

### Karen Long

Ellis Grove; Southwestern Illinois (west of I-57)  
618-859-3308  
karen@dezel.com

### Margaret Shannon

Sycamore; Northern Illinois  
815-895-9340 or 815-761-7395  
margshannon@msn.com

**LIFE GOES ON. BE AN**

# Facility Focus

At the request of the Driver Facility Committee of Secretary White's Organ Donor Advisory Panel, facility employees were asked to complete an anonymous survey about the Organ/Tissue Donor Program. The Advisory Panel and other organizations involved with organ/tissue donation were delighted and impressed by the cooperation of the staff and the quality of the responses.

A special thanks goes out to facility employees who participated in the survey, which helped the Advisory Panel gain better insight into the program from the perspective of those on the "front line." Following are the questions and the results:

1. Do you feel that additional resources are needed to assist you with the Organ/Tissue Donor Public Awareness Program, i.e., materials, training, etc? If "yes," what is the most important to you?  
Yes - 100      No - 461

#### 74 people added comments:

- 14 needed more training.
- 9 would like a new videotape and materials.
- 8 said families mistakenly believed there was a cost to donating.
- 7 needed more information about senior citizens.
- 5 said the program needs to dispel the myth about allowing people to die.
- 4 had miscellaneous comments about the program.

2. Do you feel that an employee recognition program for field employees would help to increase registry numbers?  
Yes - 119      No - 436

3. Have you had any personal experience with organ/tissue donation?  
Yes - 77      No - 479

4. If you answered "yes" to question #3, would you be willing to share your story with other employees?  
Yes - 23      No - 68      N/A - 462

5. Do you personally support organ/tissue donation?  
Yes - 460      No - 81

#### 30 added comments:

- 7 were undecided.
- 5 said it should be a personal choice and not involve employees, facilities, etc.
- 1 did not support the program because of religious reasons.
- 3 were opposed because of unfavorable press.
- 5 made very favorable comments about supporting the program.

6. Do you have suggestions that would help improve the Organ/Tissue Donor Program?  
Yes - 81      No - 478

# Q & A

The recent facility survey raised many questions about the Organ/Tissue Donor Program.

**Q** Many customers don't sign up to be on the registry because they think they are too old. What is the age limit for organ/tissue donation?

**A** There is no age limit. Several years ago a 78-year-old Illinois woman was able to donate a kidney to a young father, and he is doing well. At the time of death, an individual will be evaluated to see if specific organs/tissue are appropriate for donation. If customers wish to be donors — no matter how old — please encourage them to join the registry.

Note: Registration renewal forms mailed to motorists include an organ donation brochure. If the applicant is age 65 or over, a special brochure for seniors is included. Please call 217-524-8483 if you need these brochures for your office.

**Q** Many people ask if they can be donors if they have cancer, diabetes or other medical conditions. What do I tell them?

**A** The Secretary of State's office's is charged with maintaining a registry of people who want to be donors. We are not medical personnel and are not trained to know which illnesses will prevent donation. At the time of death, the hospital will get a complete medical history of a donor and doctors will determine whether donation is possible. If customers wish to be donors, please encourage them to join the registry.

If you have questions you would like addressed in a future issue, please call 217-782-6258.

# ORGAN/TISSUE DONOR.

# KIDZ

# SPACE

Eeek! Bam! Fizz! Dweep!...Did you ever imagine you would hear these noises on a government Web site? Thanks to Secretary of State Jesse White's new Organ/Tissue Donor Program's KIDZ SPACE you can! Check out the flashy production, cool interactive puzzles, downloadable activity sheets and previous winners of the annual Organ/Tissue Donor Poster Contest.

"We know the key to saving lives is through our young people," said Secretary of State White, "and we know that young people are more likely to learn about donation if we have a site that appeals to them."

Check out KIDZ SPACE today in the Organ/Tissue Donor section at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com).

## FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

- ✓ The Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Registry has grown from 156,641 names in 1994 to its current total of 5.5 million.
- ✓ One donor can save seven lives and improve the lives of more than 50 people!
- ✓ The selection process is strictly mandated under the National Transplant Act, allowing full and equal access to donated organs for all potential recipients. Criteria for selection as a transplant recipient depends on factors such as tissue and blood type, body size and the degree of illness.
- ✓ The donor's family is never charged for the removal of organs, nor do they receive any compensation.
- ✓ Families may make any funeral or burial arrangements, including an open-casket funeral or cremation.
- ✓ Donation is not considered until all efforts to save a person have failed. The transplant team has no involvement in the patient's care prior to death and is notified only after death has occurred.

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

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