

GIFT OF LIFE

NEWS



A publication of *Gift of Life Donor Program*, the region's organ and tissue transplant network, serving the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware.

Together WE SHINE

We have so much to celebrate thanks to our donor families, transplant recipients, hospital and community partners, staff, board and advocates.

Thank you to the thousands who made our 25th anniversary Donor Dash an exhilarating success as we reunited in person for a day of smiles, hugs and pure joy.

Our Team Philadelphia made a triumphant return to the Donate Life Transplant Games of America, where they ran, biked, swam and even danced their way to 58 medals, showcasing the power of donation.

The U.S. achieved its one millionth organ transplant. We are so proud that our community, which continues to lead our nation in donation, helped make this extraordinary milestone possible.

Thanks to your generosity and support, together we shine and save lives!



Some of our shining stars from the 2022 Transplant Games and 25th Anniversary Donor Dash.

WE WISH YOU Sparkling Holidays

and much peace, health and joy
throughout the New Year.

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
Paid
Philadelphia, PA
Permit No. 862

800-DONORS-1 • www.donors.org
THE REGION'S ORGAN & TISSUE TRANSPLANT NETWORK
DONOR PROGRAM
GIFT of LIFE



A Donate Life Organization

Sharing our LIFE-SAVING MISSION

Thank you for your role in raising awareness of the importance of organ and tissue donation and for helping to register more people to become donors this year! **HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS:**

GIFT OF LIFE STAFF

260+ Gift of Life professionals advocating 24/7 to save lives



COMMUNITY OUTREACH



52,000 people reached In-person & virtual programming including high schools, colleges, houses of worship, summer camp for kids with transplants, healthcare and community organizations

NATIONAL MINORITY DONOR AWARENESS MONTH



10+ events
5,000+ attendees
19+ million people reached via media & social media

HOSPITAL SERVICES

1,000+ hospital and clinical professionals participated in education programs

GIFT OF LIFE HOWIE'S HOUSE

10,600+ Transplant Family Guests
6,200+ Room Nights
21,200+ Meals
50+ support groups & educational programs
1,200+ patient/caregiver & transplant social worker participants



100+ Team Philadelphia Transplant recipients & living donors, donor families & advocates, ages 7-75
58 medals: 36 Gold, 16 Silver & 6 Bronze

VOLUNTEER AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

57 new ambassadors trained
256 in-person & virtual activities/events



TRANSPLANT PREGNANCY REGISTRY INTERNATIONAL

81 transplant recipients added, new total **3,037**
177 pregnancies added, new total **5,296**

Gift of Life Donor Care Center Maximizing Each Donor's Life-Saving Impact

Gift of Life Donor Program has opened the first intensive care unit in the Northeast U.S. exclusively for organ donors. The Gift of Life Donor Care Center at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia will focus on the timely evaluation, allocation and recovery of precious organs that will lead to countless lives saved through transplantation.



"The Gift of Life region has been the most generous in the nation for organ donation every year since 2008. The Gift of Life Donor Care Center honors that generosity by providing a space designed specifically to care for donor heroes and fulfill the powerful decision to save lives through organ donation," said Rick Hasz, Gift of Life president and CEO.

The Donor Care Center features six private rooms and three operating rooms and will be open 24/7 365 days a year for donors transferred from hospitals across Gift of Life's region, which spans the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware.

The center will ease the burden on critical space and resources in local hospitals with a dedicated team and state-of-the-art facility to care for organ donors. Major advantages include round-the-clock clinical expertise with timely interventions to increase the number of organs for transplant and an efficient, expedient donation process that supports a family's ability to proceed with arrangements to honor their loved one.

Gift of Life transplant coordinators, our nation's leading donation professionals, will work with a dedicated, highly skilled staff of nurses, nursing assistants and respiratory therapists led by a nurse manager all focused exclusively on donor care. They are supported by a multi-disciplinary ensemble of critical care specialists including physicians, advanced practice providers and pharmacists.



"The Donor Care Center is the result of more than two years of planning and collaboration as Gift of Life, Penn Medicine and hospitals throughout our region continue to lead the way in innovation, best practices and clinical excellence on behalf of donor families and patients waiting for the gift of life," said Christine Radolovic, Gift of Life's chief clinical officer.



More than 5,000 children and adults need a life-saving transplant in Gift of Life's region.



"Organ and tissue donation not only benefits transplant patients. It can bring peace to a donor's family. My son, Sipho Themba, was an organ donor who saved six people," said Cynthia London of Philadelphia, a Gift of Life volunteer ambassador and former board member. "At the Gift of Life Donor Care Center, donation gives comfort to grieving families as donors give life to others."

Life and Legacy Tribute to Donor Heroes

"I can't say enough good things about Gift of Life. From the very beginning of our decision to the present day, you have been there for our family. We thank you for everything."

—Donor Family

Each ceremony featured inspiring speakers, a photo tribute and special music. Donor families received the Gift of Life Donor Medal, matching lapel pins and a handmade wrap as a symbol of comfort. "It was very heartwarming," said one participant. "It made me feel like I was part of something special."



We honored our heroic organ, tissue and cornea donors from last year at four Life & Legacy Celebrations this fall, including both in-person and virtual options for donor families to attend. Families have described these heartfelt annual ceremonies as "a beautiful way to share memories and hope" and "a wonderful tribute."

Our Gift of Life community remembers our donors and their generous families with honor and gratitude every day.

HAP DONATE LIFE PA Challenge

100+ Hospitals Support Donation Campaign

Gift of Life's hospital partners play a major role in highlighting the power of organ, tissue and cornea donation. The 2022 Donate Life Pennsylvania Hospital Challenge included 109 hospitals statewide working to increase donation awareness and donor designations.

The Hospital Association of PA (HAP) partnered with the PA Department of Health and the two organ procurement organizations serving Pennsylvania – *Gift of Life Donor Program* and the Center for Organ Recovery & Education (CORE) – to support the Challenge.

CONGRATULATIONS
to 13 health systems and 63 hospitals
in *Gift of Life's* region
for achieving honors in the Challenge!

The top health systems in *Gift of Life's* region are:

First Place Temple University Health System	Second Place Main Line Health	Third Place UPMC North Central PA
---	---	---

The top hospitals are:

First Place Temple University Hospital	Second Place Penn Presbyterian Medical Center	Third Place Paoli Hospital
--	---	--------------------------------------

“Our hospital partners, through their outstanding compassion and commitment to clinical best practices, have established a strong culture of donation as they care for our heroic donors, support donor families and bring hope to the more than 7,000 Pennsylvanians who need

a life-saving transplant. Together, we have made Pennsylvania a leader in organ donation and we will continue working so that no patient dies waiting for a second chance at life,” said Rick Hasz, president and CEO of *Gift of Life Donor Program*.

The results in *Gift of Life's* region are:

• Health Care Systems

Titanium Level – 13 health care systems	
Commonwealth Health	St. Luke's University Health Network
Crozer Medical Center	Temple Health System
Geisinger Health System	Tower Health
Jefferson Health	UPMC
Jefferson Health Northeast	UPMC North Central PA
Main Line Health	Wellspring Health
Penn Medicine	

Platinum Level – 2 health care systems

Lehigh Valley Health Network	Prime Healthcare
------------------------------	------------------

• Hospitals

Titanium Level

49 hospitals

Platinum Level

15 hospitals

Gold Level

1 hospital

THANK YOU to our hospital partners for your support and advocacy!

Watch for details about the 2023 Donate Life Hospital Challenge from HAP and your *Gift of Life* hospital services coordinator.



Jan Weinstock Honored as “Knight of the Blind”

Congratulations to *Gift of Life's* Jan L. Weinstock, Esq. for being honored by the Lions Eye Bank of Delaware Valley with the “Knight of the Blind” Award at their 65th anniversary gala on November 5 in Philadelphia.

Jan is chief administrative officer and general counsel for *Gift of Life Donor Program* and its affiliates, *Gift of Life Howie's House* and *Transplant Foundation*. Her work with *Gift of Life* spans more than 30 years.

Jan's far-reaching impact features a key role in drafting and lobbying for Pennsylvania's Act 102, groundbreaking legislation that gave

individuals the opportunity to register as an organ and tissue donor when they obtain or renew their driver's license. Act 102 changed the face of donation and transplantation in the Commonwealth and became a national model when it was signed into law in 1994. The law requires every patient death in a hospital to be referred for evaluation by professionals for organ, tissue and cornea donation. As a result, the waiting list for a cornea transplant was eliminated.

“Time and again, we see families help others through donation once they understand they have that ability and are given the opportunity. We'll continue working to provide a pathway for this incredible generosity until every patient waiting for any transplant is able to receive their gift and live a rich, full life,” Jan said.

My SECOND Chance

On the worst day of someone's life, they made a decision that saved mine

by Rafiah Cheeks, liver recipient and donor family member

Most kids heal quickly, but not me. I broke my leg when I was two years old, and I didn't heal for months. I needed a tiny little walker just to toddle around.

That was just one blow in a short life filled with medical problems. I was born with a failing liver that affected every part of my body including bone formation. I can only imagine how difficult it was for my mom and dad, sitting by the phone as I waited for a liver transplant. They worried I would die before I turned four.

I did get a transplant. I only know two things about my extraordinary gift: my donor was my age, and my donor's parents, on the worst day of their lives, made a selfless decision that saved mine.

I thought of them, and my little walker, as I practiced for the Donate Life Transplant Games of America, where organ transplant recipients and living donors competed in Olympics-style events in

San Diego last summer. As part of *Gift of Life's* Team Philadelphia, I proudly helped represent our region and competed in basketball, track & field and bowling. My mom started taking me to the Games in 1996 as chance for me to make friends with other young recipients. Seeing everyone together on opening night, cheering, laughing, and crying, knowing we are here because of the generosity of another human being is truly magical.

My mom understood it was also important to spend time with another group: donor family members. Many of them travel with the team to cheer us on. It's a special way for them to see the impact of their loved one's generosity.

I am now a member of a donor family. I lost my mom in 2021 and we knew she would be proud to help others even after she was gone. Her tissue and corneas were used to heal and transform the lives of strangers.

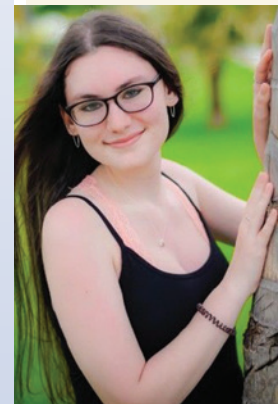


Every day, I am reminded of how lucky I am to be here.

I look at my little scar in the mirror, faded after 30 years. My new liver has never given me any problems. I have only been on one medication for it my entire life. When I saw my transplant doctor recently, he could not believe how healthy I looked.

My donor not only saved my life, they gave me a great life. And I am so grateful.

Rose Parade to Celebrate Leah's Legacy



A floral portrait of tissue donor Leah Wahl of Delaware will be featured on the Donate Life Float in the **Tournament of Roses Parade on January 2, 2023**. Leah was a tenth-grade honors student who played volleyball and volunteered at a local animal shelter prior to her passing

last year. Leah, remembered as kind and loving, embodies the float's theme “Lifting Each Other Up.” The float's centerpiece will be a spectacular Chinese street dragon, symbolizing strength, prosperity and abundance. Memorial floral portraits on the float will honor 44 heroes from across the U.S. who saved and healed lives through donation.



Congratulations to Donors Are Heroes!

Thank you to our dedicated supporters who helped make the 20th anniversary celebration of THE Party a success!!



Funds raised support organ and tissue donation community outreach and education to help save lives.

Renee D. Freeman and Don Freeman, Founders, Donors Are Heroes