

LIFE LINKS

www.donatelifect.org

1st Annual 'Toast to Life'

This June, Donate Life Connecticut held the organization's First Annual 'Toast to Life' event. The sold-out fundraiser was held at the beautiful Gouveia Vineyards in Wallingford, Connecticut. The evening offered the ticket holders a (5) wine tasting, delicious foods from Café Ra in Wallingford and smooth sounds from acoustic guitarist, John Moniello. Attendees perused the silent auction tables offering deals at B&B's, MLB tickets and themed picnic baskets. The drawing offered chances for a trip to Las Vegas and round trip plane tickets from Southwest. This year's Recognition Award went to the founders of Donate Life Connecticut: Jenny Kitsen, Phyllis Medvedow, Maggie Coolican and Bonnie Goldberg. Over 20 years ago, this small group of people had the foresight and dedication to begin an organization with the goal of educating the public about organ and tissue donation. Thank you to our founders! Thank you to everyone who attended this successful and fun evening. Stay tuned for details about next year's 'Toast to Life' event.

Special thanks to member, J. Shak, for the creative fundraiser name. Special thanks to 'Toast to Life' Committee Members and other helpers: B. Ballard, D. Daley, J. Rotatori, M. Sadler, L. Scarfo, P. Scarfo and D. Yish who made this event a huge success!

Working with

ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition was recently in Suffield, Connecticut at the home of the Hill Family. The Hills are a family of 13 who posses excellent family values (the family of 7 took in 6 cousins),

provide strong community leadership and have been touched by donation/transplantation. Cousin Shamia suffers from underdeveloped kidneys. In 2001, she received a transplant from her uncle, but unfortunately it didn't last. Thinking nothing but to save her cousin's life, Sonia Hill donated a kidney to Shamia this past April. Both young women are doing very well.

(continued page 3)



Connecticut

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By the Numbers

- 103,321: Americans on the National Transplant Waiting List
- 1,046: Connecticut residents waiting for a life saving organ transplant
- 1: American added to the waiting list every 11 minutes
- 18: Number of Americans that die every day waiting for a transplant
- 1: Connecticut resident dies every week while waiting for a transplant

Inside this issue:

(Online Registry	2
1) Racial Disparities	2
1) Extreme cont	3
(Get Involved	3
1) Debunking Myths	3

www.DonateLifeNewEngland.org

In the past, Connecticut residents could join the organ and tissue donor registry when renewing their driver's license/state issued ID or by filling out mail-in registration forms at DMV branches. **Now, CT residents can say 'Yes to Life' online! By visiting www.DonateLifeNewEngland.org**, donors can securely and confidentially register as an organ and tissue donor and join the over 80 million Americans who have already made the decision to Donate Life!

WHO??? Any person 18 years or older with legal residence in any of the six New England states can join the Donate Life New England registry. The online registry is a secure and confidential database that includes both ID verification and an electronic signature. After registering, an email will be sent to confirm your donation registration.



WHAT??? Registering with Donate Life New England is just an **alternative** to the DMV registry to record your donation decision. What sets the online registry apart is the ability to designate which organs and tissues you wish to donate, if there is a preference.

WHY??? Although most people support donation, many have not taken the important step of signing up to be a donor. Now it is easier than ever to make your wishes known by signing up at the **Donate Life New England Organ and Tissue Donor Registry**.

DLC Addresses Racial Disparities in CT

In 2008, Donate Life Connecticut was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Aetna Foundation to address racial disparities pertaining to donation in Connecticut. While the United States population is comprised of 14% African Americans, 32% of the people on the organ waiting list are African American. Certain minority populations are more prone to chronic illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, etc., that can lead to organ failure. Annually, over 25,000 kidney transplants were performed in the United States, but only approximately 25% of these transplants were African Americans. This disconnect between patients on the waiting list and patients actually receiving kidney transplants in the African American community may be in part due to donor-recipient matching. Since certain blood types are more prevalent in ethnic minority populations (while not always true), closer donor to recipient matching may occur within races. To help increase the number of minority transplants, the number of registered organ and tissue donors in minority populations needs to increase.

In July, DLC teamed with the state's African American Affairs Commission and Union Baptist Church in Hartford to hold a 'Donation Movie Night'. Volunteer, Mike Tutler, and member, Beth Ballard shared their personal transplant/donation stories with the attending parishioners. After an open discussion, a pizza dinner was served along with the donation themed movie; *John Q*. While attendance was not as hoped, the people that did attend left better informed about donation and were considering registering as donors.

In August, DLC partially sponsored the Prayer Tabernacle Church of Love 'Back to School' health fair. In addition to raising awareness about donation and providing lunch, DLC member agencies provided health screenings and education to the people of Bridgeport. In late August, DLC participated in the Suffield Third Baptist Church Fair, the church of the Extreme Makeover Hill Family. By reaching out to the African American communities in Bridgeport and Hartford, DLC is enabling them to make informed decisions about donation. Hopefully, these efforts will increase the donor registration rates and ultimately help everyone on the transplant waiting list. DLC plans to expand and continue this project over the next few years



(L-R). Kari Mull, Beth Ballard, Mike Tutler, Glenn Cassis (CT AAAC) at Hartford Event.

Continued from page 1

Donate Life Connecticut was at the build site every day, talking and registering the workers and spectators as donors. By week's end, nearly every worker (in blue shirts) was wearing a green Donate Life bracelet. Celebrity designers, Ty Pennington and Didiayer Snyder, interviewed members of DLC. Stay tuned to ABC this September for the airing of the Hill Family episode. Look for those green bracelets and member interviews. Great job, everyone!



Shelly & Beth



Leslie, Didi, Marjory, Zvi

Demolition!



Meet A Friend of DLC

Jennifer Panzer joined Donate Life Connecticut first by volunteering with Kari Mull, and then by committing to DLC as a voting member. As a teacher in the CT public school system, Jen is comfortable speaking in front of a group or engaging with strangers at a table. She has even picked up running and become a Donate Life Runner. Her first 5K came within days of her 1 Year Anniversary of her *double lung transplant*, in April 2008. Since her transplant, Jen has been busy. She has learned about her donor, Angie, and even traveled to Maine to meet her donor parents. Most recently, Jen married her sweetheart, Jon. Congratulations Jen! Thank you for being a part of DLC.

Get Involved

Most of the events are broken into shifts.

- 9/13 8:30a – 12p – ALF Liver Life Walk – Rentschler Field, Hartford (table)
- 9/24 10:00a – 1:00p St. Mary's Medal of Honor Ceremony Donor Awareness Table
- 10/10 8:30a – 11:30a World without Limits Wellness Fair, The First Cathedral Church, Bloomfield (table)
- 10/10 11:30a – 2:30p World without Limits Wellness Fair, The First Cathedral Church, Bloomfield (table)
- 10/17 9a-12p – AHA Heart Walk in Bushnell Park, Hartford (table)
- 10/17 1:30p – 5:30p NBC 30 Health & Wellness Festival, Hartford (table)
- 10/18 9:30a – 1:30p NBC 30 Health & Wellness Festival, Hartford (table)
- 10/18 1:30p – 5:30p NBC 30 Health & Wellness Festival, Hartford (table)

STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING VOLUNTEER MEETINGS DATES. Kari will be hosting a volunteer meeting in a few different locations around the state to better accommodate our volunteer's schedules and driving! You'll be able to choose which location is best for you!

There are many opportunities to raise donor awareness in your community and around the state! If you are interested in sharing your donation story, contact Kari. Together we can find the right atmosphere to impact Connecticut; speaking engagements, registration tables, etc. If you are interested in volunteering or attending any of these events, please email donatelifect@gmail.com. Details of these events will be distributed to you via email when you sign up to volunteer.



Jen (center) with her donor, Angie's, parents.



Connecticut

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You have the Power to Save Lives!

Find us on the web at:

www.donatelifect.org

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Donate Life Connecticut is a statewide collaborative volunteer organization consisting of healthcare organizations and passionate individuals. Together, through education and awareness programs, we publicly promote the importance of organ, eye and tissue donation. Our members include:

*American Heart Association
American Liver Foundation
American Lung Association
Connecticut Eye Bank & Visual Research Foundation
ESRD Network of New England
Hartford Hospital Transplant Program
Kenyon Consulting, LLC.
LifeChoice Donor Services
National Kidney Foundation
New England Organ Bank
The Hospital of Central Connecticut
Yale-New Haven Hospital Transplant Program
Individual Professionals
Donor Families and Transplant Recipients
Volunteer Members*