



For Immediate Release
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ILLINOIS COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY STUDENTS UNITE FOR LIFESAVING COMPETITION IN SUPPORT OF ORGAN & TISSUE DONATION

Students Working to Save Lives Through Registrations

CHICAGO – Having settled in for a fresh school year, college students across Illinois are uniting to take action in support of the 4,700 Illinoisans and more than 99,000 people nationwide currently in need of lifesaving organ and tissue transplants.

October 1 marks the launch of the second annual Donate Life Illinois Campus Challenge – a friendly statewide lifesaving donor registration competition between students at Illinois colleges and universities. The six-week Challenge ends on November 14 and is intended to call attention to the nearly two-thirds of adults in Illinois who are unaware of the need to **re-register** after January 1, 2006 to join the state's first-person consent registry and ensure their wishes as a donor are honored.

"Last year, twenty schools participated in the Campus Challenge, helping register over 2,500 Illinois residents as donors," said Joslyn Osten, Donate Life Illinois member and public education coordinator at Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network. "We've seen great response from students getting their schools involved with the Challenge again this year, and we hope to have an even greater impact in registrations resulting from this effort."

An array of student groups at different campuses have agreed to help with outreach efforts including Students for Organ Donation chapters, Public Relations Student Society of America chapters, pre-med and nursing student groups, honor societies, and health or community service-oriented organizations.

Though each school's approach to encouraging fellow students, faculty and alumni to register will vary, students will host campus and surrounding community registration drives and spread the word online via social networking sites such as Facebook.

"College students often overlook the critical importance of registering to be an organ donor and the drastic impact one person can have on helping save the lives of others in need of transplants," said Jeff Hamper, Phi Delta Chi fraternity's community service chair and a participant in the Challenge. "We're hoping that our registration drives on campus and online outreach through sites like Facebook will help students realize how easy it is to register and encourage others to do the same."

Currently, student groups and students from seventeen other colleges and universities have signed on to participate in the Challenge as well, including: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Northwestern University, Western Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, Eastern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University (Carbondale), Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, Loyola University,

Illinois Central College, College of DuPage, Knox College, Augustana College, Millikin University, Midwestern University, Lewis University, and MacMurray College.

“Most Illinois students are still quick to assume that signing the back of your driver’s license is adequate to ensure your wishes as a donor in Illinois,” said Diane Eikenberry, Donate Life Illinois campus campaign manager. “This is no longer the case, and the Challenge will help students realize it only takes 30 seconds to join the registry and make a lifesaving difference.”

Students, alumni, faculty and all Illinoisans can join the state’s donor registry by visiting the Donate Life Illinois campaign site at www.DonateLifeIllinois.org; visiting any Illinois state driver’s license facility; or by calling the Illinois Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program at 800/210-2106.

About Donate Life Illinois

Having launched in January of last year, the Donate Life Illinois campaign is seeing great progress toward its goal of registering 5 million residents in the state’s new registry by April 2009 with currently 3.5 million Illinoisans already signed up.

Donate Life Illinois is a coalition of agencies responsible for organ, tissue, eye and blood donation, as well as donor registration and education in Illinois. It is one of 45 regional coalitions and 50 national businesses or associations making up Donate Life America, a not-for-profit alliance that serves as a national voice and inspires all people to save and enhance lives through organ, eye and tissue donation.

Currently, Donate Life Illinois is working on a campaign to register 5 million Illinois residents in the state’s registry by April 30, 2009. To date, more than 3.7 million Illinoisans have joined the state’s registry since Jan. 1, 2006.

Donate Life Illinois member organizations include:

- American Liver Foundation-Illinois
- Biological Resource Center of Illinois
- Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network
- Heartland Lions Eye Bank
- Illinois Coalition of Community Blood Centers
- Illinois Eye-Bank
- Illinois Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program
- LifeSource
- Mid-America Transplant Services
- Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation
- National Kidney Foundation of Illinois
- National Marrow Donor Program

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