



UIC among leaders in donor drive

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Several UIC students took part in Campus Challenge, an effort to increase registration of organ and tissue donors, helping to make the school remain among the leaders that registered donors upon the program's closing last Friday.

The program, which is part of Donate Life, a nationwide organization, was a friendly and competitive way to involve college and university students to increase donor registration.

As of Nov. 10, with 19 participating schools and a total goal of 3,000 registrations, UIC had 169 registrations just behind UIUC, C.O.D. and NIU. UIC students and many others were racing to register Illinoisans to help donate organs to the 4,700 people in need statewide and the 100,000 people in need nationwide.

"Human life is invaluable, and the fact that a single donor has the ability to save the lives of not one but several individuals is a blessing of modern medicine; and to ignore this fact is to willingly hamper the quality and length of life," said Alex Durbin, fifth-year philosophy major.

The six-week challenge intended to call attention for the need to re-register after Jan. 1, 2006 in order to be a registered organ donor. Re-registering lets a person join the state's first-person consent registry and ensure that their wishes as a donor are upheld. Signing the back of a license is no longer adequate in Illinois; however, it only takes about 30 seconds to register and make a life-changing decision.

"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. "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."

Even though all campuses are different, UIC held registration drives both on campus and in the surrounding community. Information was also spread online through websites such as Facebook.

"Last year, 20 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," she said.

Any Illinoisan can still register by either visiting the Donate Life's Illinois campaign page at www.DonateLifeIllinois.org, visiting any Illinois state driving facility, or by calling the Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program at (800)-210-2106.

Donate Life Illinois is currently working on a campaign to register 5 million Illinois residents in the state's registry by Apr. 30, 2009. Over 3.7 million people have joined the state's registry since Jan. 1, 2006.