

## **Video on organ donation earns ICC student award from state**

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NORMAL -- Mikahla Thornton is only 10 years old, but as a heart transplant recipient, the Bloomington girl already knows what it's like to get a second chance at life.

She shared her story on camera for a project by college student Audrey Williams. The resulting work — a short public service announcement urging Illinoisans to register for the state's organ/tissue donor registration — earned Williams the top prize in a first-of-its-kind collegiate video contest on the matter.

Secretary of State Jesse White visited Normal on Friday to present Williams the award, and Thornton joined her at the news conference in Illinois State University's Founders' Suite.

"Meeting someone like Mikahla was really a wonderful thing," said Williams, 20, an Illinois Central College sophomore from Tivoli who will transfer next fall to ISU. She said the project made her more dedicated to raising awareness about the need for organ donors.

In the video, Mikahla and her mother, Wendy Montgomery, talk about how Mikahla's life has changed since the transplant — she's now strong enough to swim, ride a bike, and run, for example.

"After working on this, I e-mailed everyone I knew about signing up — my co-workers, friends and family. Really, it only takes a minute to do," she said.

Williams is studying mass communication and plans a career in broadcast journalism.

The McLean County branch of the state's Life Goes On group and Donate Life Illinois co-sponsored the contest as a way to encourage college students to get more involved in the awareness campaign, said Moreena Tiede, a member of the county's Life Goes On group.

She said they'll sponsor a second video competition next April.

For information on organ donation in Illinois, or to join the organ/tissue donor registry, call (800) 210-2106, visit [www.lifegoeson.com](http://www.lifegoeson.com), or visit one of the state's 136 driver's license facilities.

The new registry implemented Jan. 1, 2006, bars family members of the deceased from interfering with the donor process. Because of the change in the law, donors who registered before Jan.1, 2006, need to re-register with the secretary of state's office to guarantee that their wishes to donate are fulfilled.