

# Western Courier (WIU)

## Organ donor registration a hot topic in October

**By:**

**Posted: 10/20/08**

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.

Oct. 1 marked 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 Nov. 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 to join the state's first-person consent registry and ensure their wishes as a donor are honored.

"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."

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, Western Illinois University 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 Megan Yockey, PRSSA president. "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, including: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Northwestern University, Northern Illinois University, Eastern Illinois University, Southern Illinois University (Carbondale), Illinois State University, University of Illinois at Chicago, 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](http://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.

-Associated Press

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