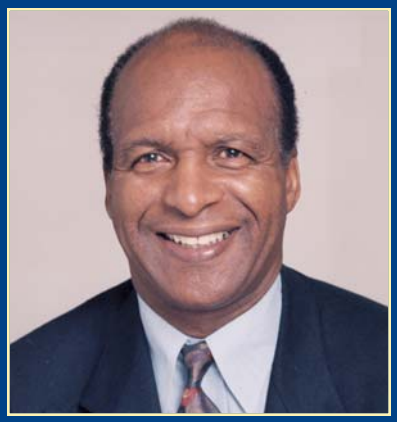


Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Fall 2015

A newsletter for Secretary of State facility employees and other organ/tissue donation advocates

The organ/tissue donor program had an active summer and early fall. Fairs and festivals were front and center on the calendars of donor staff members as they made their way across the state with donor registration tables and donor advocacy displays. Many staff listened to heartwarming stories of individuals who received the gift of life and to inspirational stories of courage as donor families relayed their donor decisions on behalf of loved ones.

National Minority Donor Awareness Week was highlighted by an event and press conference, which focused on the critical need for more minority donors, held at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago on August 5. On the weekend of November 13-15, the donor program will be observing National Donor Sabbath at places of worship in Illinois.

As we head into winter, please remember to spread the word about the importance of donation. We need to advocate for donation 12 months a year because organ/tissue donation knows no season. Your dedication is inspirational.

Jesse White

Jesse White
Secretary of State

"Wave Away the Waiting" draws crowd

National Minority Donor Awareness Week Observed on August 5 in Chicago

A crowd gathered at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago on August 5 to call attention to the need for more minority organ/tissue donors. The need is critical as many individuals of African-American, Latino and Asian descent wait on long waiting lists for transplants. Secretary of State Jesse White conducted a press conference with several guest speakers, attesting to the need for more minority donors.

"We need everyone, no matter their heritage, to sign up to be donors," Secretary White said to the crowd gathered on the plaza. "But we especially need minorities to register because a large number of them are on the waiting list. And many times, a better match can be found within one's own ethnicity."

Speaking with the Secretary at the press conference were Kevin Cmunt, CEO of Gift of Hope Organ and Tissue Donor Network; Jack Lynch, African-American Task Force, Gift of Hope; Craig Mathis, living kidney donor; Mayra and Antonio De La Cruz (daughter Maya is planning to donate her kidney to her mother Antonio); Mazhar Sahi, a liver recipient; and Nicole Brown, a heart recipient.

(Cont. on pg. 4)

LEFT: Secretary of State Jesse White addresses the crowd outside on the James R. Thompson center in Chicago for National Minority Donor Awareness Week. From left: Mayra and Antonio De La Cruz; Jack Lynch, African-American Task Force, Gift of Hope Organ and Tissue Donor Network; Barbie McKennie, Gift of Hope; Kevin Cmunt, CEO, Gift of Hope; Mazhar Sahi, liver recipient; Nicole Brown, heart recipient; and Craig Mathis, living kidney donor. **RIGHT:** The crowd watches a high-flying aerial performance by the Jesse White Tumblers during National Minority Donor Awareness Week on August 5 in Chicago.

LEFT: Dan Perryman, president and CEO of St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur, accepts a plaque for his facility's commitment to donation from Secretary of State Jesse White during National Minority Donor Awareness Week. **RIGHT:** Secretary of State Jesse White joins the Springfield Life Goes On Committee members at the Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade in August.

Organ/Tissue Donor Program Poster Contest underway

Illinois students encouraged to submit artwork by January 31, 2016

The 2016 Organ/Tissue Donor Student Poster Contest is underway! The contest is open to all Illinois students in grades K-12. Entries are divided into four categories: K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Contest rules and entry forms can be found on the organ donor website at www.lifegoeson.com.

Entries should be forwarded to the Secretary of State's office at the address provided on the entry form. Entries must be postmarked by January 31, 2016. Judges will select a winner from each category and one overall grand-prizewinner. Winners will be notified by mail to the school address provided on the entry form. Winners' family members, teachers and principals will be invited to attend a ceremony at the Illinois Capitol in late March or early April, 2016. Prizes will be awarded to each category winner, and the grand-prize winning poster will be duplicated and displayed in all Secretary of State Driver Services facilities, libraries and hospitals statewide, and posted on the Secretary of State's website. For further information, please contact the Secretary of State's office at 800-210-2106.

Rep. Natalie Manley & Secretary Jesse White promote donation

Donor program honors Joliet resident who was waiting for transplant

Secretary of State Jesse White and state Rep. Natalie Manley (D-Joliet) joined at a donor presentation in June to honor the life of Joliet businessman Robert Rogina who sadly died in 2014 while waiting for a transplant. The event, hosted by Presence St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet, honored Robert Rogina's memory and recognized his family members for their loss and dedication to donor education.

Secretary White presented a plaque to the medical center's CEO, Kathleen Rhine, for her facility's support of donation. In addition, Secretary White presented a plaque to the family of Robert Rogina, a longtime proponent of economic development in the Joliet area. Greg Alford, director of communications at Gift of Hope, also spoke, and John Obremski, director of environmental services at the hospital, and a transplant recipient, was recognized.

LEFT: Secretary of State Jesse White and state Rep. Natalie Manley (D-Joliet), honor Joliet businessman Robert Rogina who died while waiting for a transplant in 2014. From left: Representative Natalie Manley (D-Joliet); John Obremski, director of environmental services at Presence St. Joseph's, and a transplant recipient; John's wife, Diane; Secretary White; and Kathleen Rhine, CEO of the medical facility. **RIGHT:** Secretary of State Jesse White, center, mingles with mayors, state representatives and senators, and members of Robert Rogina's family in June at a donor tribute program at Presence St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

Southern Illinois kidney recipient also plays Santa Clause

Young donor loved Christmas

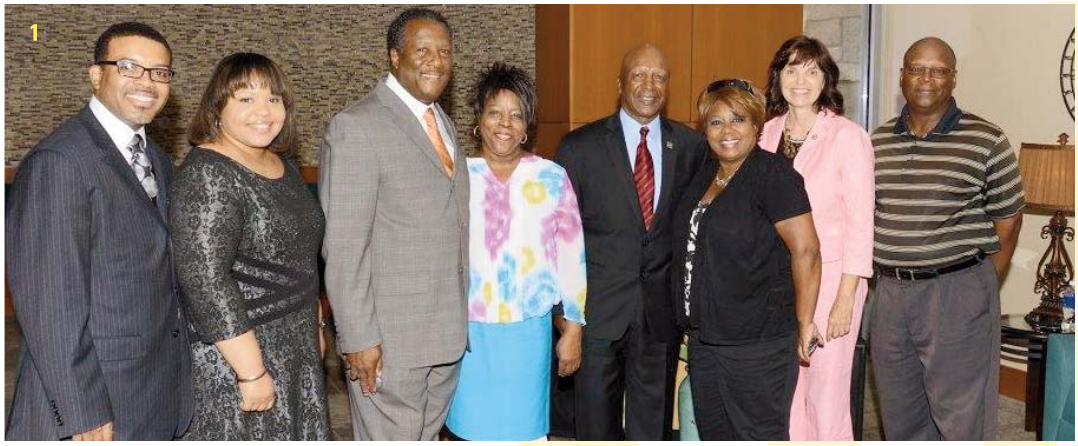
Mike Dalton of Vienna, aka "Santa Claus," received a kidney transplant in September 1999 from an 11-year-old girl from Louisiana. In April of 2014, Mike was humbled and honored to meet the donor family who provided him with the gift of life.

Mike was a former school bus driver while he was on dialysis awaiting his transplant. He has also worked as a dispatcher for the Johnson County Sheriff's Department and served on the fire department for 37 years. Mike said his transplant has given him the chance to see his son, who was only 6 years old at the time, grow up.

Mike said his kidney function is better now than it has ever been and seems to improve over time. He has more energy and overall good health since his transplant. Mike approaches each day in a way that honors his donor and donor family, living by the motto "you learn to live one day at a time – tomorrow is never promised."

Kidney recipient Mike Dalton, aka "Santa Claus."

Mike also plays Santa Claus for many local events and charities in the Southern Illinois area. His donor's mother actually said when meeting Mike, "I feel like my daughter would be so happy that "Santa Claus" received her kidney – she loved Christmas and this means the world to me."



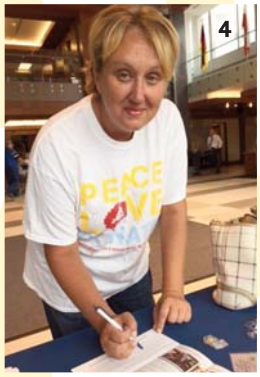


PHOTO 1: Secretary of State Jesse White joins community leaders and pastors at a National Minority Donor Awareness Week program on August 4 at St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur. Pictured are: state Rep. Sue Scherer, second from right; and NAACP local chapter president Jeanelle Norman, fourth from left.

PHOTO 2: The decorated organ/tissue donor float in the Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade.

PHOTO 3: Barack L. Watts, Jr. decides to join the donor registry during National Minority Donor Awareness Week at St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur. When asked why he chose this particular day to join, Watts said, "This was on my list of things to do. Thank you for the opportunity."

PHOTO 4: Patricia Reitz signs up at a donor registration table during National Minority Donor Awareness Week at St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur.

PHOTO 5: Waterloo Driver Services facility staff members sport blue Donate Life shirts to support organ/tissue donation at their facility earlier this year. Pictured from left: Brian Mckelvey, Bethany Hudson, Susan Dillenberger, Lynn Stumpf and Pam Muertz.

PHOTO 6: Lisa Nation, community health care coordinator with Southern Illinois Healthcare, stands with Joe Moore, a participant at the kidney health screening with the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois' Kidney Mobile at Stark's Fitness Center in Benton on August 10. Joe also stopped by the Secretary of State's donor registration table and signed up.

PHOTO 7: Secretary of State Vehicle Services employee Stephanie Grant helped promote donation at the Secretary of State's tent at the Illinois State Fair in August. Stephanie donated a kidney to Selina Hodge, a stranger at the time who desperately needed a transplant. The women have stayed in touch over the years and consider the friendship lifelong.

PHOTO 8: Bob Jakeway, kidney recipient, and Gloria Cudia, executive director of Salsa Business Network, gather at the group's monthly luncheon in Rockford. The Rock River Valley Life Goes On Committee attended the networking luncheon on August 7 and exchanged donor stories and information during National Minority Donor Awareness Week.

PHOTO 9: Sparta Driver Services facility staff celebrates National Blue and Green Day for donation earlier this year at the facility. Pictured from left: Karen Doiron, Dallas Risley, Brandy Gardner, Jackie Klausing and Mallory Poole.

BE AN ORGAN/TISSUE DONOR.

PHOTO 10: Staff from Driver Services, Field Services and the Organ/Tissue Donor Program were on hand to walk in the annual DuQuoin State Fair parade to kick off the fair and events in August.

PHOTO 11: Secretary of State Jesse White presents a plaque to Julie Pryde, administrator of the Champaign-Urbana Regional Public Health Department, in Champaign earlier this year in appreciation of the department's ongoing support of organ/tissue donation.

PHOTO 12: Mokena resident Jennifer Klouse, middle wearing green shirt, supports organ and tissue donation at a donor registration table with Lewis University nursing students at Sharefest in New Lenox on September 19. Jennifer received a lifesaving liver when she was just 17 years old and is a medal winner in the World Transplant Games in Britain and Australia for volleyball, track and basketball.

"Wave Away the Waiting" (Cont. from pg. 1)

Two dozen exhibitors inside the Thompson Center staffed table displays promoting donor awareness and registration, as well as information provided by the state of Illinois, health information from Walgreens and several of our Donate Life Partners such as Gift of Hope, the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois and Lifesource. After the press conference, the Jesse White Tumblers thrilled a packed plaza crowd.

St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur, Ill., hosted a National Minority Donor Awareness Week event on August 4. The event, attended by Decatur clergy and area minority leaders, helped to bring awareness about the critical need for donated organs among minorities. Secretary White presented plaques to St. Mary's Hospital and the Macon County Public Health Department in recognition of their commitment to organ/tissue donation.

National Donor Sabbath observed November 13-15, 2015

Clergy encouraged to speak to worshipers about donation

The second weekend in November is celebrated as National Donor Sabbath. Clergy are encouraged to talk to their worshipers about the benefits of donation and invite donor families and recipients to share their transplant stories with fellow members.

"During National Donor Sabbath, we share positive stories about transplantation with the religious community, especially letting individuals know that all major eastern and western religions embrace donation," said Secretary of State Jesse White. "That is one of the many misconceptions existing about donation, that religious views prevent donation. It's simply not true."

If you have a place of worship, please consider spreading this important message in November. For more information, please contact the Secretary of State's office at 800-210-2106.