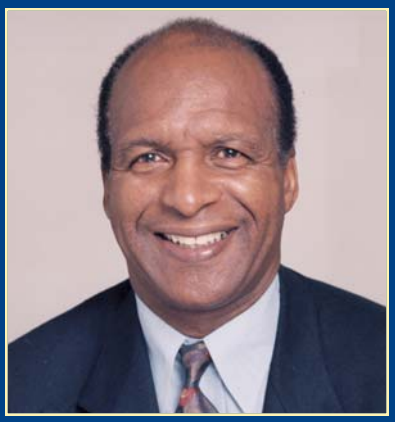

Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Summer 2015

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

It's been a whirlwind spring 2015 with many wonderful donor activities and showcase events! We kicked off Donate Life Month on April 1 with a press conference and the unveiling of our public service announcement featuring cornea recipient Rosemarie Beedy from Chicago. Her daughter was her donor–a heartfelt tribute to them both.

Our "Be A Hero" community college program concluded this spring with Elgin Community College winning first place, Lake Land College in Mattoon in second place and Olney Community College taking third place. Congratulations to all colleges that participated this year.

Many of our Driver Services facilities observed National Blue and Green Day in recognition of the importance of organ/tissue donation. In an effort to promote organ donor awareness, I was able to visit several facilities and was impressed by the level of participation and interest.

Keep up the fantastic job asking the donor question hundreds of times each day. Every "yes" answer could mean saving several lives.

Jesse White

Jesse White
Secretary of State

"Be A Hero" competition winners

Our second "Be A Hero" community college challenge wrapped up in April. Elgin Community College was the first-place winner this year and received the top $1,500 prize (granted by DLI) for its efforts to register donors on campus. Lake Land College in Mattoon received second place and Olney Central College was the third place winner this year.

"I want to congratulate Elgin Community College on being named the first-place winner for their registration efforts and creative campaign," Secretary of State Jesse White said. "By registering donors and bringing awareness to the program, they are saving lives. I also commend Lake Land College and Olney Central College for their efforts as well and thank all the colleges that participated in this meaningful program," he added. We extend a special thanks to our Donate Life partners and the Illinois Community College Board for their contributions in strengthening the Illinois Donor Registry.

Elgin Community College students accept a plaque and the first place prize of $1,500 for the 2015 "Be A Hero" community college challenge. They were honored in May at the Secretary of State's Springfield office. Pictured (left to right) Candy Moore, Elgin Community College; nursing student team members Charles Ramos, Tirzah Nikolaou and Eric Kaplan; Secretary White; Amanda Wright; Melissa Webb; Montana Mirus; Beverly Felder, RN, BSN and team faculty coordinator and team member Mayra Perez.

Left: Secretary White presents Lake Land College in Decatur with a plaque for its second-place win in the "Be A Hero" competition. Pictured are Phi Theta Kappa members (left to right) Kelli Lutz, Neil Rhoads and Hollie Austin. Right: Secretary White presents a plaque to Olney Central College for its third-place win in the "Be A Hero" competition. Accepting the award on behalf of the college are Dr. Karen Anderson-Hunter, executive director of the Illinois Community College Board; and Brian Bush, donor program coordinator from southern Illinois.

United Network for Organ Sharing reaches milestone

Half a million transplants since 1987

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) reached a milestone this spring as it has coordinated 500,000 organ transplants from deceased donors in the U.S. since its inception in October 1987. This milestone is a tremendous accomplishment as more and more individuals are being placed on the transplant waiting list, a list reaching 124,000.

Last year, nearly 24,000 transplants were performed in the U.S. involving deceased donors — more than doubling the number of transplants each year when UNOS was founded in the late 1980s. Technology, an increase in organ donors and organs that can be recovered from deceased patients have all been contributing factors in UNOS's success in recent years.

Illinois Eye-Bank is renamed Eversight Illinois

The Illinois Eye-Bank is now Eversight Illinois in a renaming move by the Midwest Eye-Banks and its affiliates. According to Eversight Illinois, the new name was chosen to better represent who they are — a growing network of community eye banks that provide resources and advanced technology to fulfill its mission of preserving and restoring sight through transplantation, research, education and partnership.

Donate Life Month puts spotlight on donor program

Secretary White kicked off Donate Life Month in April at a press conference unveiling the new ad campaign featuring cornea recipient Rosemarie Beedy of Chicago. Rosemarie's donor was her daughter Krissy, who sadly lost her battle with cancer at age 45.

"Many times people think that if they are suffering from cancer, they are not able to be a donor," said Secretary White. "But a cornea can often be donated regardless of disease," he added. The commercial aired in both English and Spanish throughout the month of April as well as on more than 400 movie screens across the state.

Other April events included National Blue and Green Day donor observances in many driver services facilities across the state on Friday, April 17. Calling attention to the need for more organ and tissue donors throughout the country, the day encourages facilities to decorate their facilities in blue and green colors, set up donor registration tables and have individuals share their personal donor stories with customers. Secretary White visited the Melrose Park, Chicago West and Orland Park facilities on April 17, meeting with managers, visiting with customers and enjoying the blue and green decorations.

To bring donor awareness to Illinois residents, program staff created numerous opportunities for increasing donor awareness in communities statewide. Many staff held donor drives in various community venues including public libraries, colleges and businesses. Driver services facilities handed out donor materials to customers in waiting areas, encouraging them to sign up when asked the question at the counter. Several recognition and plaque ceremonies were held at hospitals (Memorial Medical Center), colleges (Moraine Valley Community College and Illinois State University), public health departments (Champaign-Urbana) and other venues.

The city of Chicago illuminated the Blue Cross Blue Shield building and the Wrigley building downtown in honor of Donate Life Month, an impressive display of organ and tissue donation. Secretary White threw out the first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals baseball game this spring and participated in an on-air interview.

The 12th Annual Red Shoe Run for Donor Awareness saw more than 500 runners join to support its annual run in Rockford. Organ Transplant Support's annual tree planting ceremony and donor family dedication in Naperville drew a large audience to honor donors and their families.

Secretary of State Jesse White speaks at the April Donate Life Month press conference April 1 at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. Cornea recipient Rosemarie Beedy (left of the Secretary) was featured in the 2015 public service announcement that is shown to the right. Rosemarie's family and donor advocates (from left) Monica Fox who is waiting for a kidney; Jack Lynch, Gift of Hope; and Diane Hollingsworth, Eversight Illinois also show their support.

Photo 1
Rosemarie Beedy, a cornea recipient whose story was featured in the Secretary of State's 2015 April Donate Life Month public service announcement, speaks at the April 1 press conference at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago.

Photo 2
Secretary White is pictured with Illinois State University students and faculty during a press conference at the university in April. The group held a month-long donor drive to honor two students who were donors.

Photo 3
Blue and green colors illuminate the Blue Cross Blue Shield building in Chicago in honor of National Donate Life Month.

Photo 4
Donor advocates stand with Secretary White at a press conference in April at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hills.

Photo 5
Secretary White throws out the first pitch at a St. Louis Cardinals baseball game in May.

Photo 6
St. Louis Cardinals baseball broadcasters (from left) Mike Claiborne, John Rooney and Mike Shannon join Secretary White after his on-air interview with the Cardinals Radio Network.

Photo 7
The Metropolis facility employees get into the spirit by decorating for National Blue and Green Day in their facility.

Photo 8
Secretary White presents a plaque to Melrose Park facility employees for their support of donation on National Blue and Green Day April 17. Pictured with Secretary White is facility manager Karl Dipping.

Photo 9
Oregon facility staff dressed in their blue Donate Life polo shirts and decorated their facility with balloons for National Blue and Green Day April 17. Pictured are: facility manager Jill Carlson (left), Stacy Flanagan (right) and Kristen Merrill (center).

Photo 10
Chicago West facility staff accepts a plaque from Secretary White during National Blue and Green Day April 17 at the facility. Facility manager John Toschi (center) accepts the plaque.

Photo 11
Sparta facility employees celebrated National Blue and Green Day on April 17 by wearing blue Donate Life polo shirts and treating customers to donor information and giveaways.

BE AN ORGAN/TISSUE DONOR.

Photo 12
It was all blue and green colors at the Belleville facility for National Blue and Green Day on April 17. Employees sported blue and green shirts, decorated the facility with balloons and offered customers donor information and giveaways.

Photo 13
Secretary White presented a plaque to Julie Pryda, administrator of the Champaign-Urbana Regional Public Health Department in Champaign in April in appreciation of the department's ongoing commitment to organ and tissue donation.

Photo 14
Family and friends of Ryan Marusich of Streamwood gather around a storyboard display that follows Ryan's journey of illness to a successful liver transplant in November 2014. Ryan has rejoined his Little League baseball team and was honored at the Streamwood Little League Parade and Celebration May 30.

Photo 15
The 12th Annual Red Shoe Run for Donor Awareness was held in April in Rockford. Here, more than 550 runners take off at the start of the race.

Photo 16
A group of runners at the 12th Annual Red Shoe Run for Donor Awareness in Rockford sport bright orange sweatshirts with their team name, IronDan, in honor of a co-worker at Jamco who became an organ and tissue donor earlier this year.

Photo 17
Memorial Medical Center staff join Secretary White for a press conference at the hospital in Springfield in April. The hospital was recognized for its support of donation.

Photo 18
Northwestern University Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students staffed several donor registration tables at the campus and in the Evanston community including the Evanston Public Library earlier this spring.

Photo 19
A group of bagpipe players serenade the group that attended Organ Transplant Support's Annual Donor Family Tribute and Tree Planting Ceremony in April at Naper Settlement in Naperville.

Photo 20
Mike Mayer, director of driver services (far right) presents the Benton facility with an award for winning second place for Customer Appreciation Week.

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