



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Secretary of State Jesse White Announces Organ/Tissue Donor Campaign

White Unveils New Commercial Focusing on Recipient

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White unveiled the new organ and tissue donor campaign Tuesday that features 16-year-old Tonisha Daniel whose life was saved last year when she received a liver transplant.

White was joined by Daniel, who after waiting over a year, received her liver on May 3, 2004. Daniel, of Dolton, is featured in this year's television commercial promoting organ and tissue donation.

"Tonisha sincerely encouraged everyone to sign up to become an organ donor in order to give others a second chance," White said. "This year we're all so pleased that someone did donate and gave her an opportunity to live her life and enjoy all of the activities teenagers participate in."

Tonisha is on the school newspaper, she is writing articles about organ and tissue donation, in the National Honor Society, singing in the choir, and part of a youth group. Tonisha is very excited because she is not on a restricted diet, and can eat whatever she wants.

This year, Daniel is star of the Secretary of State's organ and tissue donor advertising campaign. The television commercial includes the song, *The Scientist* by Coldplay. Adelstein and Associates produced the spot.

"I really believe that the commercial is for a good cause and that it will be very effective!" Tonisha said. "I really had a fun time making it-- it was an awesome experience!"

Tonisha's mother thinks the message of Tonisha's story will encourage others to donate.

"I believe God will touch the hearts of millions to become donors, and there will no longer be a waiting list filled with children and other loved ones," said Merinda Daniel.

The event took place at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago. White and Tonisha were joined by Dr. Richard Cohn, members of the Illinois Coalition on Donation, as well as 11-year-old recipient Crystal Gonzalez, whose kidney was donated to her by her best friend, Jimmy Hatton, when he died of a brain aneurism in August of 2004.

The Secretary of State also announced the creation of a new website, www.LifeGoesOn.com, where potential donors can sign up for the registry.

White is also pushing for a new state law to create a First-Person Consent Organ and Tissue Donor Registry in Illinois, which would make a person's decision to donate organs and tissue following their death a binding decision. Similar legislation has been approved in 42 other states.

While Illinois has the largest donor registry in the country with more than six million participants, organs and tissue may not be donated unless the registrant's next of kin gives consent.

According to Gift of Hope, an organ and tissue procurement organization covering much of Illinois, 40 percent of families say no to organ donation when approached for permission. Families also say no 19 percent of the time even when notified their loved one had joined the state's donor registry. Gift of Hope estimates that a first person consent law could save at least 100 additional lives each year. One donor can save or enhance the lives of more than 25 people.

Anyone can become an organ donor by:

- 1) Signing the organ/tissue donor portion on the back of your Illinois driver's license or ID card directly on the plastic with a ballpoint pen. Two people, preferably family members, should sign as witnesses.
- 2) Joining the Organ/Tissue Donor Registry. When you visit a Driver Services facility, you will be asked if you want to sign the back of your driver's license and join the Registry. You also can join the Registry by filling out an organ donor card and mailing it to this office, by calling 1-800-210-2106 or by visiting my Web site at www.lifegoeson.com.
- 3) Telling your family. Organ and tissue donation will not take place without permission from the donor's family.