



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Jesse White Unveils New Organ and Tissue Donation Campaign Featuring 13-year-old Heart Recipient and Brittney Payton

White Kicks Off Donate Life! Month at Children's Memorial Hospital

Secretary of State Jesse White urged all Illinoisans to join the state's organ and tissue donor registry, following the unveiling of an ad campaign featuring 13-year-old heart recipient Mikahla Thornton and Brittney Payton, daughter of legendary Chicago Bears great Walter Payton, whose efforts had a dramatic impact on donation.

"This campaign shows that organ donation can transform lives and make anything in life possible," White said. "Thanks to the giving spirit of an organ donor, Mikahla can grow up happy and healthy with an opportunity to make her mark in the world."

April is National Donate Life! Month. Organizations will be working together to promote organ and tissue donor awareness throughout the state. Television and radio ads will air statewide throughout the month in English and Spanish. The ad will also be played on approximately 650 movie screens across the state.

In the ad, Payton and Mikahla say, "Be an organ donor because to the world you may only be one person, but to one person you may be the world." The spot features Eric Clapton's song "Change The World."

The press conference was held at Children's Memorial Hospital. Mikahla and Payton were joined at the event by eight-year-old Noelle Krockey, a liver recipient, as well as doctors from the hospital.

Illinoisans can register by visiting www.LifeGoesOn.com, calling the Illinois Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program at 1-800-210-2106, or while obtaining or renewing an Illinois driver's license or state identification card at any state driver's license facility.

White will attend events throughout Illinois to encourage donation. Libraries are distributing organ and tissue donation materials and hosting donor drives. A number of donor drives and displays will be featured at health fairs, health clubs, schools, universities and hospitals statewide.

Donate Life! Illinois partners include Gift of Hope and Mid-America Transplant Services (MTS).

"Public awareness is crucial with organ and tissue donation," said Jarold Anderson, President/CEO of Gift of Hope Organ/Tissue Donor Network. "We commend campaigns such as this one launched by Secretary White. These efforts have made and continue to make a tremendous impact in our efforts here in Illinois to save and improve the lives of as many people as possible."

"Mid-America Transplant Services (MTS) is privileged to work with the Illinois Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program to help increase awareness across the state of Illinois," said Tammy McLane, director of corporate communications for the downstate procurement agency.