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Jesse White's Organ and Tissue Donor Public Awareness Campaign Wins Top Awards

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White won a pair of top awards for his office's organ and tissue donor public awareness campaign.

White's organ and tissue donor program was recognized during the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) Region III Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. The two honors were Public Affairs and Consumer Education (PACE) awards for top marketing campaigns.

"I'm honored that our efforts in Illinois have been recognized with these awards," said White. "The real winners are the people who benefit from this important program. Illinois has one of the largest organ and tissue donor registries in the nation, which is due to the generosity of Illinoisans as well as the state's commitment to public awareness and education."

The first award spotlights a feature story written by a Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor staff member for the 2011 Spring Life Goes On Newsletter called "Where Are They Now." The story was about a small boy whose father was waiting for a liver transplant. Joseph Kralicek was the first organ/tissue donor poster contest winner back in 1991. His poster was selected to be printed and displayed at all of the driver's services facilities, as well as libraries, schools and hospitals in Illinois. In 2011, staff member Margaret Pearson followed up with Joseph and discovered that his father did in fact receive a transplant 20 years ago and is alive and well. The office was awarded for showing the personal side to organ and tissue donation and how, years later, transplants remain successful.

The second award features the 10"x15" counter mats that were placed in driver's license facilities statewide at each transaction counter. The mats highlight the donor portion of a person's drivers' license indicating their wish to be a donor. The purpose is to catch the attention of each customer approaching the facility's counters for any transaction. This mat is designed as a "last stop" reminder about the importance of organ/tissue donation and gives the customer one more opportunity to join the registry.

Currently more than 5.1 million people are registered with the organ/tissue donor program. To register, visit www.LifeGoesOn.com.

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