

# Media Release



For Immediate Release  
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## **ORGAN DONATION AWARENESS AT BLUE JAYS GAME**

### ***Heart recipient hoping to raise awareness about organ and tissue donation in Ontario***

Toronto –Steve Huet, 13, who just months ago was on the brink of death, recently received a lifesaving heart transplant. Tonight, he will stand on the mound at *Rogers Centre* and will throw the first pitch at the Toronto Blue Jays Game in recognition of National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week (NOTDAW).

“I’m so excited! I’ve never been to a professional game before,” said Steve. Before his surgery, the young teenager had difficulty even walking, eating and doing everyday activities.

Today in Ontario, nearly 1700 patients are on the waiting list for a lifesaving transplant. Of those 26 are brave children. It doesn’t have to be this way.

“NOTDAW is entirely focused on making Ontarians aware of great people like Steve and how each of us can play a part in helping them to live their lives to the fullest by consenting to organ and tissue donation,” said Frank Markel, President and CEO of Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN). “Steve is a testament to the transformative power of organ donation and transplantation. His renewed ability to live life to its fullest gives hope to those patients who are still waiting.”

Dr. Anne Dipchand, Head of the Heart Transplant Program at Sick Kids and Associate Director of the Sick Kids Transplant Centre, continues to marvel at the miracles of science.

“To have Steve throw a pitch at a Jays game less than eight weeks after his transplant is a testament to the medical advances in transplantation. It is the generosity of donors that give children like him a fighting chance,” said Dr. Dipchand.

For the past five years, the Toronto Blue Jays have been consistent advocates for organ and tissue donation in Ontario. Each year the Jays dedicate a home game to organ and tissue donation, putting the message out to thousands of Ontarians who might not otherwise know about the topic. The Jays have also showed leadership by posing for TGLN’s celebrity publicity campaign that encouraged the public to talk to their families about their organ and tissue donation wishes. In recognition of this support, TGLN presented an award to Cito Gaston, Manager of the Toronto Blue Jays.

“We are pleased that this young man is healthy and able to join us on April 21 to throw out the first pitch. Organ donation is a large part of saving lives and we are proud to be able to support the Trillium Gift of Life Network.”

Today there are approximately 1.7 million Ontarians, 16 and older, who have registered their consent to donate on the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s database. This represents only 16% of the population over the age of 16. If more Ontarians registered their consent to donate, more lives could be saved. One organ and tissue donor can save up to eight lives and enhance as many as 75 others.

You can register your consent to donate your organs and tissue by visiting your local Service Ontario Health Card Services – OHIP office or outreach centre where you renew your health card. You can also register by downloading and filling out a Gift of Life Consent Form from [www.giftoflife.on.ca](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca) and mailing it to the address on the form.

If you’ve already signed your donor card, please also register your decision and talk to your family about your decision.

For more details on National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week events, occurring from April 19 – 16, or for more information on Trillium Gift of Life Network go to [www.giftoflife.on.ca](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca) or call 416.363.4001 or toll free 1-800-263-2833.

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