

Media Release



NORTHERN STUDENTS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Lakehead University Nursing students raise awareness in aboriginal communities

February 12, 2008 – Thunder Bay, ON – Two Nursing students at Lakehead University are partnering with Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) to raise awareness of organ and tissue donation in the aboriginal population.

Shallyn Kocis and Tamara Kreidl, both fourth-year Nursing students, have been working to assess the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs regarding organ and tissue donation in the aboriginal population of Lakehead University and the Pic River First Nation for the last six weeks.

“Trillium Gift of Life Network is thrilled to work with such energetic future nurses. We are especially pleased with Shallyn and Tamara’s dedication to looking at an issue that is so important,” said Frank Markel, President and CEO of TGLN.

Their six-week study included examining support for donation at the University amongst the aboriginal students there, but also looking at support on the Pic River First Nation.

“Being from Pic River, I have seen these issues first hand and am aware of how important they are and how great an impact donation can have,” said Kreidl, who is of Ojibway decent.

The organs and tissue that can be donated include: the heart, liver, kidneys, pancreas, lungs, small bowel, stomach, corneas, heart valves, bone and skin.

“This is an incredibly important initiative,” said Sandra Petzel, Organ and Tissue Donation Co-ordinator, Thunder Bay Health Sciences Centre. “It gives us a better understanding of our aboriginal families and allows us to work together to provide the best possible end-of-life care.”

One organ donor can save up to 8 lives and enhance the lives of up to 75 others through tissue donation.

“This experience has opened my eyes to the issues that surround organ and tissue donation. The low donor rate and lack of knowledge that I have witnessed made me realize that, as a future nurse and frontline worker, I need to do my part to educate everyone around me,” said Kocis, who is originally from Kenora with a Metis background.

For more details on Trillium Gift of Life Network or where you can obtain an organ donor card, please visit our website at www.giftoflife.on.ca or call 416-363-4001 or toll free 1-800-263-2833.

Carrie Hoto, Trillium Gift of Life Network, 416-619-2299 (office), 416-735-0099 (cell)