

Media Release



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FAMILY DAY HAS SPECIAL MEANING TO MANY

*Trillium Gift of Life Network encourages you to talk to your loved ones
about your organ and tissue donation wishes*

Toronto – Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) is celebrating Family Day on Monday, February 15 reminding everyone to talk to their loved ones about their organ and tissue donation wishes. It's a discussion that Janine Thompson and her family are thankful they had.

In November 2009 Thompson's dad suddenly passed away from a massive brain bleed.

"As a family we find peace in knowing that although our Dad, spouse, brother, Grandpa, is gone he was able to help three people. It is our hope that the recipients simply 'pay it forward.' We think of them daily and although we lost one person, three people have the power to make the world a better place," says Thompson, of Cambridge.

Thompson and her family will spend Family Day together. "We will likely go to my brother's and spend time with his family. We will think of my Dad, but we will also move forward knowing he helped others."

"As you are spending time with your loved ones on Family Day, talk about your organ and tissue donation wishes," says Frank Markel, President and CEO of TGLN. "Your decision could save up eight lives through organ donation and enhance as many as 75 others through tissue donation."

Harriett Kunz, of Toronto, is grateful to all donors and their families who have agreed to donate their organs and tissue. Because someone said yes to tissue donation, Kunz was given her sight back.

"The greatest joy I have ever had was after my transplant I was able to see colours. I remember the mailbox outside of my hospital room, it was the most magnificent colour of red. I had never seen that colour before. I have loved the colour red ever since," she says.

Kunz was diagnosed with Keratoconus, a condition that made her unable to see through her corneas since it caused the cornea to become pointed. She had cornea transplants in both eyes when she was only 30 years old. Since then, Kunz has had to have five additional cornea transplants because of rejection and the cornea wearing out.

In 2009, 953 men, women and children received a second chance through living and deceased organ donation. Nearly 3,000 others have an improved quality of life as a result of tissue transplantation. However, today there are still 1,643 people waiting for a life saving transplant.

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 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 Trillium Gift of Life Network, please visit our website at www.giftoflife.on.ca. You can also call 416-363-4001 or toll free 1-800-263-2833.

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