

For Immediate Release
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**MOST SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO
NATIONAL ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AWARENESS WEEK EVER**
Outstanding participation from Trillium Gift of Life Network's volunteers

TORONTO, ON – There are nearly 1,500 Ontarians waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, and every three days, one of them dies... simply because there aren't enough registered organ and tissue donors.

But hundreds of Trillium Gift of Life Network's volunteers have worked hard to change that and have surpassed all expectations for this year's National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week (NOTDAW). More than 160 "Life for 1500" events were held in 65 cities and towns this year, in recognition of the nearly 1,500 men, women and children currently waiting for a life-saving organ transplant.

Our local volunteer leaders — many of whom are also organ or tissue recipients, family donor members or patients in need of a transplant — gave generously of their time and resources.

"I always felt that volunteers were at the heart of our organization and today I personally want to extend my heartfelt thanks to them. "Life for 1500" could not have been a success without their dedication," says Frank Markel, President and CEO of Trillium Gift of Life Network. "Their efforts are certainly helping us spread the message about the need for organ and tissue donation and why it's so important for Ontarians to register their consent to donate. It saves and enhances lives," added Markel.

It is with sincere gratitude that Trillium Gift of Life Network recognizes the tireless efforts and commitment of its volunteers across Ontario.

Here's why some of them organized "Life for 1500" events for NOTDAW this year:

"Not so long ago, I was on the lung waiting list. I couldn't repay my donor family, but I could pay it forward by helping others on the transplant wait list. Along with other volunteers, we began to help our community understand organ and tissue donation needs by hosting "Life for 1500" events at malls, hospitals, schools and churches."

- Carol Dubeau, double lung recipient and volunteer, Life Donation Awareness Association of Midwestern Ontario

“NAV CANADA has some employees whose lives have been touched by organ donation. As part of this National Campaign, we’ve decided to participate, knowing that one or even more than one person can be given a second chance at life.”

Joanne Gaumond, Employee Wellness Advisor, NAV CANADA

“Our son saved four lives. The recipients of his organs have a second chance now. Every day that they're breathing, every day that they're laughing, it's because of Jonathon.”

- Heather Talbot, mother of Jonathon Talbot who died in 2009

“I was very touched by the number of Jonathon’s friends that got back together and played a little table tennis at the event we organized at J.S. Woodsworth Senior Public School in Scarborough.”

-Terry Talbot, father of Jonathon Talbot

“It was a great weekend for Gift of Life! It was really special for the first seven qualifying Lions Clubs in District A-3 (Southeast Ontario) that were among the 50 clubs that participated, to be recognized for registering at least 50 per cent of their members as donors. Many registered Lions and family members were so inspired that they took consent forms home for other family members.”

-Mary Grace Amann, bone graft recipient and Lions Club A-3 District Chair of organ and tissue donation

You can register your consent to donate your organs and tissue by visiting your local ServiceOntario centre where you register or 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.

Even if you’ve already signed your donor card, please also register your decision so that this information is accessible when needed, and talk to your family about your decision.

For more details on Trillium Gift of Life Network, please visit our website or call (416) 363-4001 or toll free 1-800-263-2833.

Trillium Gift of Life Network is a not-for-profit agency of the Government of Ontario and is responsible for planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting organ and tissue donation across Ontario and improving the system so that more lives can be saved.

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