

# Media Release

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## **EDUCATION PROGRAM ANNOUNCED TO INCREASE ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AWARENESS IN HIGH SCHOOLS**

*One Life ... Many Gifts will be piloted in 240 senior secondary school classrooms across Ontario in 2008/09*

April 22, 2008 – Toronto, ON – Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) working in partnership with the London Health Sciences Centre’s (LHSC) Multi-Organ Transplant Program and the Kidney Foundation of Canada (KFC) has developed *One Life...Many Gifts*, a senior secondary school pilot curriculum program aimed at raising the level of understanding about organ and tissue donation in secondary school classrooms across the province.

*One Life...Many Gifts* was funded by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Long -Term Care and an anonymous donor. This curriculum will be delivered in approximately 240 schools in 20 school boards across Ontario in the 2008/09 academic year.

“All Ontarians — including our students — are potential organ and tissue donors,” said Education Minister Kathleen Wynne. “Teaching them in school about the importance of organ donation encourages healthy living now and could save a life in the future.”

The Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care agreed.

“We all have the power to save lives,” said George Smitherman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. “Providing youth with information, case studies and real life stories about organ and tissue donation will raise awareness about the importance of giving the gift of life.”

The program is being piloted in both Public and Catholic schools and, is currently in its teacher-training phase.

“We are incredibly proud of *One Life ... Many Gifts*, this curriculum will start the conversation surrounding organ and tissue donation,” said Frank Markel, President and CEO of TGLN. “Our hope is that every student will start talking about the importance of organ and tissue donation and will talk to their loved ones about their wishes. The teaching materials that have resulted from this Partnership have produced a robust and effective set of teaching tools that are applicable across the curriculum and, we will be evaluating the results of this Pilot program to determine how we can best roll the program out to other schools across Ontario.”

“I have long been devoted to organ and tissue donation,” said Dave Levac, MPP for Brant. “We need to continue informing our youth about the importance of organ and tissue donation.”

Currently in Ontario there more than 1600 people waiting for an organ transplant.

"Since the development and introduction of One Life...Many Gifts in London in 2000, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response from both students and teachers," said Dr. Bill Wall, transplant surgeon at London Health Sciences Centre. "The students find the course content important, and relevant. We are pleased that TGLN and KFC have partnered with the Transplant Program at LHSC to make this curriculum widely available to students in Ontario secondary schools."

“The Kidney Foundation of Canada is very proud to be part of such an outstanding initiative,” said Peter Davis, President of the Kidney Foundation, Ontario Branch. “We need everyone in Ontario talking about organ and tissue donation. There are too many people waiting for transplants.”

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

The White family, whose husband and father, Dave, became an organ donor when he died while waiting for a heart transplant said “We miss Dave daily but, we are proud to have been a part of the organ donor system and will continue to advocate for it at any opportunity we have”.

For more details on One Life ... Many Gifts please visit our website at [www.onelifemanygifts.ca](http://www.onelifemanygifts.ca).

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