

# GIFT OF LIFE NEWS



A publication of *Gift of Life Donor Program*, the region's organ and tissue transplant network, serving the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware.

## Team Philly Proudly Represents Region at TRANSPLANT GAMES!

### Most medals of any traveling team!



Once again the largest traveling team at the Donate Life Transplant Games of America, with more than 200 members who ranged in age from 7-77, *Gift of Life Donor Program's Team Philadelphia* proudly represented our region winning a total of **150 medals** at the Games – **69 gold, 43 silver and 38 bronze!** The Games took place August 2-7.

Team Philadelphia has been part of this exceptional event since its inception in 1982, when the team traveled to Athens, Greece.

The Transplant Games, which feature swimming, track and field, basketball, volleyball, cycling, darts and more, celebrate organ donation and transplantation and raise awareness for the need for more people to register as organ and tissue donors.

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A Donate Life Organization

TEAM PHILLY, continued from page 1

Participating athletes are organ, cornea, bone marrow and tissue transplant recipients and living donors. Most have overcome life-threatening hurdles and are able to participate in this special event because of organ donation and transplantation. Team Philly members included more than 60 donor family members, in addition to supporters and Gift of Life staff.

Two of the most poignant moments at the Games involved donor families. During Opening Ceremonies, the families entered the stadium to thunderous applause. Everyone at the Games felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the generosity of those families and their loved ones who gave the gift of life. Another very emotional and beautiful ceremony featuring donor families was the Butterfly Release, which paid respect to the selfless and heroic legacies of donors.

The success of Team Philly sends a powerful message that organ donation and transplantation works! There are 115,000 men, women and children on the wait list for organs in the U.S., and 20 people die each day waiting. In this region, 5,300 people are currently waiting. Events like the Transplant Games help increase visibility and awareness for the critical need for more organ donors.

For more information on Team Philly and the 2018 Transplant Games, go to [donors1.org/TeamPhilly](http://donors1.org/TeamPhilly).

## November 9-11: National Donor Sabbath

We seek to engage all houses of worship to celebrate life, learn about the critical shortage of organs and pray for those affected by donation and transplant.

Visit [donors1.org](http://donors1.org) for information on how your congregation can participate or email [Leslie Jean-Mary at ljean-mary@donors1.org](mailto:ljean-mary@donors1.org).

## Gift of Life Launches New and Improved Website!

We are excited to announce the launch of Gift of Life's newly-redesigned website at [donors1.org](http://donors1.org)! The new site has a fresh, new look, is fully mobile, easy to navigate and highlights compelling stories from our community that inspire us every day. We believe our new site will be a great vehicle for raising awareness of the life-saving importance of organ and tissue donation and will drive organ donor registrations.

Visit our site and share our news! [www.donors1.org](http://www.donors1.org)



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## National Donate Life Month

### Celebrating the Gift of Life

From Blue & Green Day to the Donor Dash to events across Delaware, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, National Donate Life Month (NDLM) was a resounding success. Thank you to all who participated throughout April on behalf of the more than 5,300 people awaiting a life-saving transplant in our region.

Blue and green lights illuminated the Ben Franklin Bridge and Pennsylvania state capitol. State, county and local government leaders issued NDLM proclamations. Media shared inspiring stories of donors and recipients.



In Philadelphia, "Gift of Life Weekend" officially kicked off April 13 with the 16th annual THE Party at The Bellevue Hotel, hosted by Donor Are Heroes, which drew 500+ supporters (see story below). On Saturday, Dash participants enjoyed a cookout at the Gift of Life Family House to pick up their race packets. And on Sunday, April 15, "Dash Day" (see story pages 4-5), Mayor Jim Kenney proclaimed April 2018 to be National Donate Life Month in the City of Philadelphia in a proclamation read by Councilman Mark Squilla.

Our dedicated volunteers, Dash attendees, hospital partners and other supporters helped spread the word about donation to thousands of people. Together, we are making a powerful impact in the fight to save more lives.

LEFT: Ben Franklin Bridge in Philadelphia; ABOVE: Local transplant recipients and donor families in front of the State House in Harrisburg on Blue and Green Day.

"As a school principal, I believe education is the most important way we can increase the number of organ donors."  
—Carol Domb, Co-chair, THE Party 2018

## Donors Are Heroes Dazzle with THE Party

Five hundred guests enjoyed cocktails, music and sumptuous food from more than thirty of Philadelphia's premier restaurants at THE Party on Friday, April 13 at The Bellevue Hotel.

Donors Are Heroes hosted the exciting and stylish event for the 16th year, raising more than \$135,000 to fund community initiatives, including school summits that dispel myths and inspire students to support organ and tissue donation.

The event was featured on the 6abc's program "FYI Philly" and on 6abc's Action News.

Since it was founded by volunteers Don and Renee Freeman, Donors Are Heroes has raised more than \$1 million and it has educated thousands of students and the general public with its



life-saving outreach. Volunteers Carol Domb and Karleigh Rose Pettit co-chaired THE Party.

Thank you to Diamond Sponsors: Parx Casino, Philadelphia Media Network and the Joan & Bernard Spain Family Foundation, along with all of the generous sponsors and vendors who made THE Party a stunning social occasion and dazzling success.

ABOVE, L-R: Donors Are Heroes Committee Members Anca Peruto and Angela Giannetti, pictured here with THE Party Co-Chairs Karleigh Rose Pettit and Carol Domb, Gift of Life Donor Program's Jan Weinstock and Karen Keener, Donors Are Heroes Founder Renee D. Freeman and Fox29's Mike Jerrick.

# 23RD ANNUAL GIFT OF LIFE DONOR DASH RAISES MORE THAN \$600,000

## Thousands Brave the Cold and Rain to Shine for Organ Donation

Whipping winds, rain, and the coldest temperatures that anyone can remember in the Donor Dash's 23-year history could not dampen the spirits of dedicated Dashers, who braved the elements to celebrate the power of organ and tissue donation and honor their loved ones who selflessly saved the lives of others through the gift of life. This year's Donor Dash, held April 15, drew more than 10,000 inspired Dashers, nearly 400 teams, and raised more than \$600,000 to support community education, programming and support services for transplant families. Ali Gorman, 6abc's health reporter, served as celebrity emcee of the event.

The 23rd annual Donor Dash offered several course options for participants – a 5K Run, a 10K Run and a 3K Walk – so people of all

fitness levels could get involved. The Dash began at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and continued along Martin Luther King Drive, a USA Track and Field certified course. Also back by popular demand, the event included a Kid's Fun Run for children six years old and under.

On average, 20 people die each day in the United States while waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. The Donor Dash, founded in 1996, was created to raise awareness about the critical need to increase the number of registered organ and tissue donors and to acknowledge the more than 5,300 men, women and children in *Gift of Life's* region who are waiting for an organ transplant.

To view more photos from the Dash visit our Facebook page.



L-R: Dashers take off at the starting line; Black Girls Run! helped *Gift of Life* celebrate the power of organ donation at this year's Dash.

## CONGRATULATIONS

to the **DASH'S TOP THREE FUNDRAISING TEAMS** that combined raised more than \$40,000!

**FIRST PLACE** Kristin's Krew  
**SECOND PLACE** Ellen's Eagles  
**THIRD PLACE** Team Louie

to the **RACE WINNERS**

**5K MALE** Ray Bordogna  
**5K FEMALE** Alexandra Pyper  
**10K MALE** Ronnie Russell  
**10K FEMALE** Brianna Mengini

“This is the most generous region for organ donation, with more organ donors and transplants than any area in the country, so it is extremely fitting that the City of Brotherly and Sisterly Love is the setting for this incredible event,” said Howard M. Nathan, *Gift of Life Donor Program* President and CEO. “Most importantly, we made tremendous progress raising awareness for the more than 5,300 people waiting for life-saving organs in our region.”



L-R: *Gift of Life* President & CEO Howard M. Nathan with Dash Emcee and 6abc Health Reporter Ali Gorman; Young dashers with *Gift of Life's* Mascot Heartman!

**THE DASH WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM ITS SPONSORS:**

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# CLINICAL



Donate Life Flag Raising Ceremony, Christiana Care Health System, DE



Donate Life Event, AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center, NJ



Tree of Life Dedication Ceremony, Main Line Health System, PA

## Hospitals, Transplant Centers Highlight Commitment to Donation

### Nearly 200 Events To Raise Awareness During Donate Life Month

Nearly 200 hospital-based events took place throughout the region to mark National Donate Life Month in April. Events featured flag raising ceremonies, speaking forums, news conferences, tabling opportunities, Tree of Life dedications, and more.

Hospitals invited a variety of guest speakers, including donor family members and organ transplant recipients, to talk with staff, patients and media about their personal connections to organ donation. Medical personnel and *Gift of Life* representatives also spoke about the life-saving power of organ donation and transplantation – all in a collective effort to educate others, increase donor registrations and keep attention focused on this very important public health issue throughout the month.

In addition, hospitals hosted different types of events to commemorate the generosity of organ donors. Many held Donate Life flag raising ceremonies. These events included a donor's patient care team, donor family members and loved ones. At each ceremony, the Donate Life flag was signed by each member and the group participated in a flag raising. Flags were flown for one day and then presented to donor families.

The excellent and close working relationships that *Gift of Life* enjoys with the 130 acute care hospitals and 15 transplant centers throughout our region are integral to making us the most generous region for donation. We thank them for their partnership, their commitment to outreach and education and for their dedication to saving and enhancing so many lives.



Pictured at iHeart Studios are (from left): kidney recipient Ervin Miller, donor mom Markita Lewis, kidney recipient Timmy Nelson, journalist Loraine Ballard Morrill, double lung recipient Ta'Mar Ellensworth and *Gift of Life* Transplant Coordinator Kimberlee Mander.