

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.

National Donate Life Month

SAVE LIVES

from HOME

OUR LIFE-SAVING MISSION CONTINUES thanks to our inspiring and compassionate community, once again the most generous in the nation for organ donation. *(details on page 3)*

Stay safe and help save lives from home this April as we celebrate National Donate Life Month. Join us in virtual outreach to help spread awareness of organ, tissue and cornea donation far and wide as we urge everyone to register as a donor and share their decision with family and friends.

This year's **DASH FROM HOME** will feature a spirit week of activities, contests and fun for everyone. *(details on page 2)*

We miss seeing you in person, but our powerful connection endures through our shared commitment to donors, donor families, transplant recipients and every person on the waitlist.

Here are additional ways to get involved:

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Get the latest news by following *Gift of Life* on Facebook and Instagram. Read and share stories about the impact of organ and tissue donation.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL BLUE & GREEN DAY

on Friday, April 16 Wear Donate Life colors and decorate for the day to show your support. You can even dress up your pets! Please share your photos using hashtag **#BlueGreenDay** and tag **donors1**.

LEARN MORE Visit donors1.org and sign up for our colorful and informative monthly eNews.



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GIFT of LIFE
DONOR PROGRAM
THE REGION'S ORGAN & TISSUE TRANSPLANT NETWORK
800-DONORS-1 • www.donors1.org



A Donate Life Organization

Support Our Life-Saving Mission

Join **THE FUN:** **DASH** from **HOME**



Have fun, save lives and be part of *Gift of Life's* biggest virtual event of the year as we Dash From Home during National Donate Life Month! This is the second year that our popular in-person Donor Dash is going virtual. Dash From Home will be bigger and even more exciting with an entire Spirit Week of games, contests and prizes.

It's easy to participate. Simply walk or run in your favorite place between April 10-18 and you'll help support our life-saving mission. Visit DonorDash.org for details. Register today and enjoy the comradery of our *Gift of Life* community virtually.

Last year's #DashFromHome social media reached more than 100,000 people.



Since 1996, a quarter of a million people have been part of Donor Dash, our largest fundraiser with all proceeds benefitting the charitable foundation that supports programs and activities for donor and recipient families. These include Team Philadelphia's participation at the Donate Life Transplant Games of America and Gift of Life Family House.



APRIL 10-18, 2021
WALK/RUN - SAVE LIVES

Fun Activities, Contests & Prizes
Everyone is invited to participate!

3K Walker: \$30 • 5K/10K Runner: \$35
Kids Under 13 Walking Only: \$15

REGISTER NOW: DonorDash.org

If you registered for the 2020 Donor Dash:

- Your registration will carry over for 2021 Dash From Home.
- Your 2020 fundraising will also carry over.
- Not sure if you registered? Visit DonorDash.org and enter your name in the "search participants" field on the home page.
- If you purchased any 2020 Donor Dash gear, you'll receive Dash From Home gear as this year's event gets closer.
- Any questions, please email Dash@donors1.org



A Year of Extraordinary **COMPASSION** and **CLINICAL LEADERSHIP**

Gift of Life Donor Program leads the nation in the most organ donors for the 13th consecutive year thanks to our selfless donors and compassionate donor families. *Gift of Life* has coordinated the most organ donors in the nation every year since 2008 – the leader among all 57 organ procurement organizations in the U.S.

Gift of Life coordinated life-saving gifts from 619 organ donors in 2020, resulting in 1,619 organs transplanted. Gift of Life's annual donation rate, 55 organ donors-per-million-population, is among the highest in the world.

"Gift of Life Donor Program steadfastly advanced its life-saving mission, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic," said *Gift of Life* President and CEO Howard M. Nathan. *"This is a testament to the dedication and expertise of our staff, the commitment of our hospital partners and the inspiring generosity of our donors and donor families. Our compassionate community is the most generous in the nation, choosing to save lives and support families despite their grief and the many challenges of this past year."*

Gift of Life also recovered life-enhancing tissues from 2,295 donors, including 1,385 musculoskeletal donors and 1,726 cornea donors.

The *Gift of Life* team rapidly adapted to new challenges by implementing COVID-19 testing for donors, adjusting procedures and communications with hospitals and families, and securing personal protective equipment (PPE) for its frontline clinical team to ensure our life-saving mission continued.

Gift of Life partners with 128 acute care hospitals and 15 transplant centers across its service area to save and heal lives through organ and tissue donation.

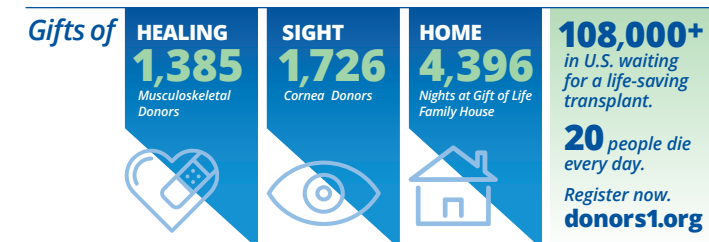
"Gift of Life's expert team addresses life-saving clinical situations every day, working side-by-side, 24/7 with critical care teams at the nation's foremost hospitals and transplant centers to provide families with the opportunity for donation," said *Gift of Life* Vice President of Clinical Services Richard D. Hasz.

NATION'S MOST **GENEROUS** COMMUNITY

Most Organ Donors Every Year Since 2008

2020 **619** Organ Donors

2020 **1,619** Organ Transplants



"Our hospital partners have staunchly continued to champion donation, along with the tremendous pressures of fighting COVID-19. Many have shared with us that donation and transplantation have been a silver lining offering hope to others during a very challenging year."

More than 108,000 people are waiting for a life-saving organ in the U.S. and every day, 20 people die waiting. There are more than 5,300 children and adults awaiting a life-saving transplant in *Gift of Life's* service area (the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware).

"Our generous community continued to demonstrate remarkable empathy and resilience in 2020," said *Gift of Life* Vice President of Administration & General Counsel Jan L. Weinstock. *"More than ever, we are so grateful to donor families. Many times, they couldn't even be with their loved one in the ICU because of the pandemic, but in the midst of their grief, cared enough about helping others to say 'yes' to donation."*

Celebrate with us virtually!

THE PARTY

Thursday, April 29, 2021
7-8 p.m.

DonorsAreHeroesTHEParty.com

Heroic Donor, Historic Transplant A LIFE TRANSFORMED

Joe DiMeo had just a 6 percent chance of finding a compatible donor for an extraordinary transplant – a new face and hands. **Gift of Life Donor Program found an exact match thanks to the generosity of a donor family and their heroic son.**



Eduardo D. Rodriguez, MD, DDS, director of the Face Transplant Program, NYU Langone Health with transplant recipient Joe DiMeo. (Photo courtesy of NYU Langone Health)

Joe, 22 suffered third-degree burns over 80 percent of his body in a car crash. He developed a highly sensitized immune system because of multiple blood transfusions and skin grafts after 20 reconstructive surgeries. Bone structure and skin tone were other special factors in finding a donor.

Rare and remarkable gifts from a stranger have transformed Joe's life. *Gift of Life Donor Program* is proud to have collaborated with an elite team of medical professionals at NYU Langone Health on the first successful face and bilateral hand transplant in history.

The donor's mother shares that she is proud and comforted that her son was able to help another young man while saving and healing others through organ and tissue donation. Her son will always be her "angel," she said.

GIFT OF LIFE A national leader in Vascular Composite Allograft (VCA) donation

Coordinated 12 of these rare donations since 2011 including:

- World's first successful face and bilateral hand transplant
- First U.S. African American full-face transplant
- First bilateral pediatric hand transplant
- Revolutionary donation of a uterus for transplant, making possible the birth of a baby boy
- Limbs recovered for transplant that restored mobility to amputees

GIFT OF LIFE AWARD 'Helping People Find the Courage'

Crozer-Chester Medical Center was honored with the prestigious 2020 Gift of Life Award presented by *Gift of Life* and the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) Southeast Connect.

The award is presented to a hospital for outstanding commitment to organ donation.

"We thank Crozer-Chester Medical Center's dedicated team for their commitment to best practices and for making organ donation a routine part of end-of-life compassionate care, providing others with a second chance at life," said Howard M. Nathan, *Gift of Life* President and CEO.

Crozer Health CEO Peter Adamo attributes the program's success to the team's commitment to care for a global community well beyond the hospital's home in Delaware County. **"Helping families understand the value of organ donation requires compassion, sensitivity and empathy and the team at Crozer-Chester Medical Center has years of experience in helping people find the courage,"** he said. "I'm proud of everyone at Crozer Health who embraces opportunities to champion worthy causes like *Gift of Life*. Together, we help each other achieve our mission."



2020 Gift of Life Award Recipients

L-R: Joseph Paparo of *Gift of Life Donor Program* with staff from Crozer-Chester Medical Center: Stacie Maiers, Assistant Clinical Director, Emergency Department; Elaina Fernandez, Clinical Nursing Director, Neuro ICU; Tom McKniff, Clinical Director, Emergency Department; M. Hassan Budeir M.D., F.A.C.S., Trauma Program Medical Director; Loreen Evans, Clinical Educator, Emergency Department; Liz Dougherty, Clinical Nursing Director, Medical ICU; Sandra Durgin, Trauma Program Director and Interim Surgical Director for Surgical Trauma Unit.

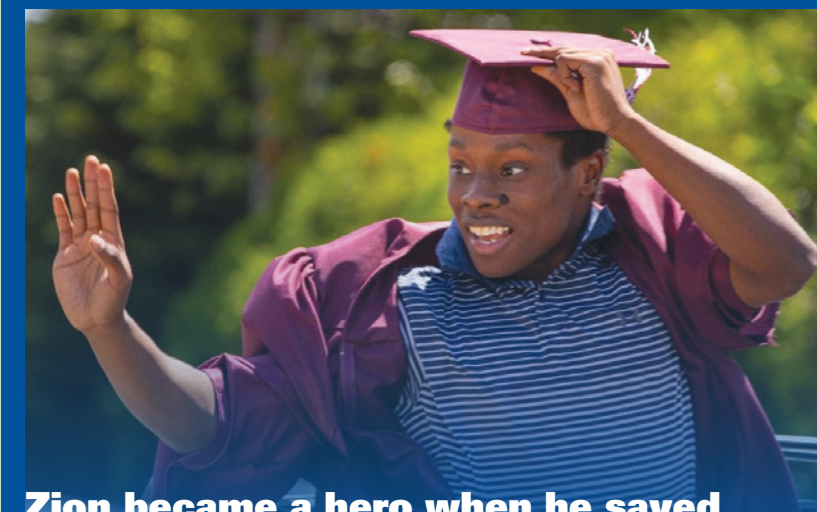
Gift of Life also recognized 14 Pennsylvania hospitals that achieved a 100% patient referral rate:

- Abington Hospital – Jefferson Health
- Bryn Mawr Hospital
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Crozer-Chester Medical Center
- Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania
- Jefferson Hospital for Neuroscience
- Jefferson Torresdale Hospital
- Lanakenau Medical Center
- Mercy Catholic Medical Center – Mercy Fitzgerald Campus
- Nazareth Hospital
- Paoli Hospital
- Penn Presbyterian Medical Center
- St. Christopher's Hospital for Children
- Thomas Jefferson University Hospital

Zion's Story:

Son, Singer, Student & Hero

Zion Desmarais made beautiful music singing bass in his high school chorale and all-state chorus. He was an honor student, manager of his school's baseball team and part of an award-winning team of emerging leaders and entrepreneurs. A friend described him as "kind, loving, selfless, humble and strong."



Zion became a hero when he saved and healed lives through organ, tissue and cornea donation at age 18 after a long battle with sickle cell anemia.

"It's what he wanted to do," said Zion's father, Michael Desmarais. Michael's sister saved four lives as a donor when she died as the result of a tornado. Her legacy inspired Zion to register as a donor when he got his driver's license.

Zion's parents are proud of the powerful impact he made in life and proud of his life-saving legacy as a donor. Hundreds of classmates and community members attended a service for him at his high school stadium in Delaware.

Zion's mother, Linda, was reassured by the "tender, beautiful" care he received when he was hospitalized for five days before he passed.

"When he passed on, we were pulverized. Not just broken. Pulverized," Michael said. "It was *Gift of Life* that really helped us through that. They understood our grief."

DONATE LIFE TRANSPLANT GAMES OF AMERICA



**July 16-19, 2021
Now Virtual!**

Learn more:
transplantgamesofamerica.org

**Team Philadelphia
TeamPhilly.org**



Gift of Life Hosts

FIRST VIRTUAL SUMMIT

Our Hospital Services team hosted its first *virtual Organ Donation & Transplantation Summit* in October 2020 to showcase the latest in best practices and innovations in donation and transplantation. The summit was attended by 243 participants from 67 hospitals in the area we serve. Our next virtual summit is planned for Thursday, April 28. Those interested may visit this link online to register: www.surveymonkey.com/r/April282021Summit

The Summits are part of *Gift of Life's* successful **Donation and Transplantation Improvement Initiative** that launched in May 2017. This initiative brings the region's hospitals together to increase donation and transplant outcomes and save more lives.