

GIFT OF LIFE NEWS



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

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.

we all
HAVE THE ABILITY TO

make a DIFFERENCE.

This is so true of our extraordinary Gift of Life family every day.

THANK YOU FOR BEING
THE DIFFERENCE.

NEVER COULD I IMAGINE all that we would accomplish when I began here in 1978 as one of three employees. I am proud and humbled to have served as President and CEO for the past four decades alongside dedicated leaders, hospital colleagues, transplant teams, volunteers, community partners, advocates, and our staff of 270 professionals.

YOUR COMPASSION AND STRENGTH are shining beacons of hope for our community.

WE ARE INSPIRED BY AND GRATEFUL for our donors and donor families, transplant recipients, patients bravely awaiting transplant and their caregivers. Their courage will carry us into an exciting new era in January as I transition to become Executive Director of our Transplant Foundation and Rick Hasz, our current Vice President of Clinical Services, will become my successor as President and CEO. As leader of our day-to-day clinical operations and a tireless champion of donation, Rick is ready to accelerate *Gift of Life's* tremendous growth and positive impact on those we serve.

WE MOVE FORWARD steadfast in our life-saving mission, committed to providing a second chance at life for every person on the waitlist.

Along with my deepest thanks for your support, you have my

WARMEST WISHES **JOY**
FOR EVERY SPARKLING
THIS **HOLIDAY SEASON**

and a New Year filled with love.

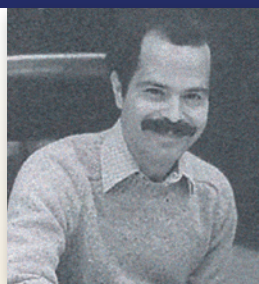
Howard M. Nathan





43 YEARS OF SAVING LIVES

Howard M. Nathan joined *Gift of Life Donor Program* in 1978 and has been its inspirational leader for 38 years, the longest-serving CEO of any organ procurement organization in the U.S. He was one of only four organ transplant coordinators in Philadelphia when he began his career at age 24 after growing up in Johnstown, PA and graduating from Juniata College.



Howard in 1982

Howard had worked as a research biologist and had deep, personal experience with grief following the death of his father when he was nine. Years after joining *Gift of Life*, he was personally touched by donation and transplantation when his sister Martha received a liver transplant in 1991 after two and a half years on the waitlist and weighing less than 85 pounds.

Talking with Grieving Families:

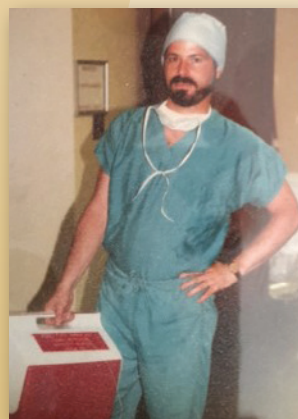
You can't say, "I understand what you're going through." Nobody understands. You can say, "How can I help you get through this?" I learned the true meaning of compassion and courage from people who said "yes" to saving a stranger's life moments after losing someone who meant everything to them.



Howard with donor mom Cynthia London

Early Challenges as a Transplant Coordinator:

I was part of the early days of organ donation and transplantation – one of the biggest medical breakthroughs of our time. My life was a 24/7 stream of phone calls, rapid response, intense conversations, magnificent improvisation, and urgent coordination designed to recover organs and tissues. Then, I had to find a match for the organs without the many systems and advanced technologies we have today. The clock was always ticking. We did – and still do – whatever is necessary to save a life.



Starting out as a transplant coordinator



Howard with his wife Liz and their two dogs



Howard with liver recipient Onyi Kenine

Career Highlights:

- Helped develop the first national training program for transplant coordinators in 1982.
- Partnered in writing Pennsylvania's landmark Act 102 of 1994, which established mandatory reporting of all deaths by hospitals to OPOs and created the driver's license registry for donors. It was so effective that it became a model for federal regulations, saving hundreds of thousands of lives.
- Founded *Gift of Life Institute*, an international training center that has shared best practices on organ donation across the U.S. and in over 30 countries, and has presented more than 400 scientific papers.
- Founded *Gift of Life Family House*, which is celebrating 10 years as a haven of comfort, hope and caring for transplant patients and their families.
- Received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from his alma mater, Juniata College, in May 2021, when he gave the commencement address. He was introduced by Onyi Kenine, a liver recipient and high school student he has known since her transplant as a baby. The speech was highlighted in a *USA Today* article.
- Served as leader of *Gift of Life*, which has coordinated the most organ donors in the U.S. every year since 2008, and is retiring as the longest-serving CEO of all OPOs.



Celebrating Team Philadelphia at the Donate Life Transplant Games of America



Howard with fellow *Gift of Life* leaders Rick Hasz and Jan Weinstock

Teaching and Continuous Improvement:

Continuously teaching people how they can improve is essential and why we started *Gift of Life Institute*. As the most active OPO in the country, we can show other OPO professionals in a few weeks what it may take months to see in their own organization. We're teaching best practices in saving lives across the world.

On Organ and Tissue Donation:

It's the right thing to do. Why not try to help somebody else? That's what life is about.

Our *Gift of Life* family is filled with admiration and gratitude for Howard's epic contributions to the field and his impact on countless lives. A shining example of the powerful, positive difference one deeply compassionate and determined person can create, his extraordinary accomplishments will be celebrated at an event in spring 2022.



Howard with his mother Shirley, brother Ben and sister Martha (liver recipient), October 1991

Howard guided *Gift of Life* as it became a world-class organization with a staff of 270, coordinating more than 53,500 organs for transplant and more than 2 million tissue transplants. A transformational champion, Howard has brought expertise and best practices to organ procurement organizations (OPOs) across the world. In January, he will retire from that position and take on a new role as Executive Director of *Gift of Life's* Transplant Foundation.

Here are some of Howard's reflections.

About His Life's Work:

Being able to orchestrate the transition from someone's deepest loss to new life still gives me chills...every day is a tremendous privilege.

CLINICAL CORNER

COLLABORATING to Save More Lives

Donation after Circulatory Death (DCD) is a pathway to organ donation when a patient dies following a family's decision to withdraw support. The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) launched a national DCD Collaborative this year to give more families the opportunity to donate through DCD.



Gift of Life is an active participant in the new DCD Collaborative as our clinical staff works with transplant and intensive care teams to ensure families are aware of this opportunity. Through this effort, *Gift of Life* increased its DCD donors by 61 percent from January 1 to July 31 over the same period in 2020, providing more families with a heroic life-saving legacy for their loved one as a donor.



A compelling tribute to *Gift of Life's* first DCD heart donor, Alex Anaya (pictured), was published by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* earlier this year. Alex was 29 when he died of a brain aneurysm in 2020. His heart was preserved thanks to new technology, which can potentially increase the number of hearts available for donation by 30 percent. Medical innovations and the extraordinary generosity of donor families are making it possible for more patients to receive the gift of life.

SUPPORTING Muslim Families

Gift of Life's transplant coordinators are increasing their knowledge of how to best support families of the Islamic faith. Recent training sessions covered the origins of Islam as well as religious and cultural traditions surrounding the death of a loved one. Training was led by Tahir Wyatt (pictured), Ph.D., Executive Director of the United Muslim Masjid in Philadelphia, and Aliya Z. Khabir, a communications expert who specializes in diversity. *Gift of Life* has partnered with these Muslim leaders for several years as part of our outreach to this growing community.



COMING UP IN 2022!

Save The Date:

PA DONOR DAY All Pennsylvanians are encouraged to join us for the third annual PA Donor Day on **January 8, 2022**. The date, 1/8, spotlights the power of one organ donor to save eight lives. Donor Day is an opportunity for us to educate and encourage our family, friends, colleagues, and classmates to register as donors. Watch our social media channels for messages to share. Healthcare, business, faith, community and other organizations are invited to register as partners. **Contact Dwendy Johnson at djohnson@donors1.org for details.**

College Challenge:

STUDENTS SAVE LIVES College clubs/organizations such as nursing, marketing, PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America) chapters, fraternities and sororities can sign up now to join the Gift of Life College Challenge and help end the critical shortage of organs for transplant. College Challenge 2022 will bring our life-saving mission to thousands of students and faculty.



Here's how it works:

- Students will use our online portal to register new organ and tissue donors.
- Groups will earn points by sharing information and driving engagement.
- The Challenge will run from February 14 through April 2022.
- Cash prizes will be awarded.
- Visit donors1.org/gift-of-life-college-challenge for details and to register.

Seven colleges participated in the 2021 Challenge and registered 138 people as organ and tissue donors. Congratulations to students from Susquehanna University's PRSSA Chapter (pictured), Arcadia University's 1853 Communications group and DeSales University's marketing and nursing classes, who won first, second and third prize!



DONOR DASH Plans are under way for our biggest and most exciting event of 2022. The Donor Dash is our flagship celebration of organ and tissue donation held every April as part of National Donate Life Month. Watch for details!

LIFE-SAVING Multicultural Message

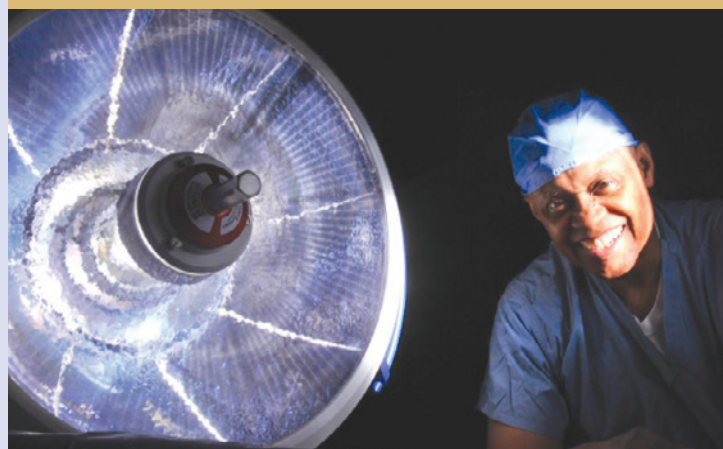


PHOTO: Howard University

Gift of Life showcased the vital role that multicultural communities play in donation and transplantation throughout National Minority Donor Awareness Month in August. Virtual programs and social media for this special observance reached an audience of thousands. A highlight was our collaboration with Donate Life PA and CORE (Center for Organ Recovery & Education) as we presented a Facebook town hall session featuring Clive O. Callender, MD, (pictured) renowned transplant surgeon and founder of the National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP). Since MOTTEP's founding 30 years ago, African American organ donation rates have more than tripled. **Learn more at natlmottep.org.**



Recipient Inspires Atop Legendary Peak

Peter Matthews set a sky-high goal after receiving a life-saving liver transplant in 2017. He reached the top of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania this summer after more than a year of rigorous training. "I'm living for me and the young man who helped me live. To make him proud, and hoping others will give the gift he gave me. Pure, sweet, life."