

Do you have comments or suggestions?

We want to hear from you! Please contact us if you have ideas for *Weaving Lives Together* newsletter articles, photos or other information that would be helpful to donor families. Contact us by:

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- E-mail** psymons@rtix.com
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6502 Odana Road, Madison, WI 53719
- Visit us** www.rtidonorservices.org

If you would like to be removed from the RTI Donor Services mailing list, please contact us by phone, e-mail, regular mail, or through the Web site, and provide your name and address.

You Have the Power...

...to shine the light on donation! You may order free key ring flashlights by contacting us through the phone, e-mail, regular mail or Web site information provided above. Leave your name and address, in addition to the amount of key ring flashlights you'd like, available in green only. Because supplies are very limited, we will provide a maximum of five per donor family. You'll receive your order within two weeks.



RTI Donor Services
6502 Odana Road
Madison, Wis. 53719
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Weaving Lives Together is produced three times a year by RTI Donor Services to provide information on its tissue banks and their activities.

RTI Donor Services is a network of tissue recovery agencies that offers families the option of tissue donation and supports their wishes, while serving as responsible stewards of human donated tissue gifts. The not-for-profit organization provides donation awareness education and support to local communities in Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Montana, New York and Wisconsin.

During 2004, RTI Donor Services tissue banks offered the tissue donation option to more than 10,000 families.

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Weaving Lives together

A quarterly newsletter from RTI Donor Services

Donation Supported—and Encouraged—by Most Religions

The decision to give the gift of life—a donation of organs, tissue and eyes—is considered an act of faith and love for fellow human beings, according to most religious and spiritual organizations.

“People often mistakenly think that the donation of human organs and tissue is not supported by the religious community,” says Beverly Bliss, Executive Director - Donor Operations for RTI Donor Services. “Anyone considering donation, either for themselves after their death or for a loved one, should not automatically assume their religion doesn’t allow it.”

She notes that several religious organizations, including the Congress of National Black Churches and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, are working with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to educate members about organ, tissue and bone marrow donation. In addition, HHS asks dozens of faith organizations each November to observe National Donor Sabbath by urging their congregations to consider donation (See article, Page 7).

“So often, a donor’s religious and spiritual beliefs are used as the basis for the family’s decision to donate,” says Bliss. “Donation is a way to affirm the loved one’s generosity, kindness and spirituality.”

Following is a summary of the positions held by various religions regarding donation:

- **African Methodist Episcopalians**—Encourage members to support donation as an act of love and charity.

- **Amish**—Support donation if they know it is for the health and welfare of the transplant recipient.
- **Baptists**—Believe donation is an act of charity and decisions about donation and transplantation are up to the individual.
- **Buddhists**—Place high value on compassionate acts and believe donation is an individual choice that should be shared with loved ones.
- **Catholics**—View donation as an act of charity, fraternal love and self-sacrifice. Transplants are ethically and morally acceptable to the Vatican.
- **Church of Christ Scientists**—Do not have an official position on donation or transplantation, relying normally on spiritual means for healing. The decision on donation is left up to the individual.
- **Episcopalians**—Recognize organ and tissue donation benefits and support donation as part of their ministry to others in the name of Christ.
- **Greek Orthodox**—Supports donation as long as it is used for



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transplantation or research that will lead to improved disease treatment and prevention.

- **Gypsies**—Opposed to donation because of the belief that the body must be intact for its one-year trip through the afterlife.
- **Hindus**—Not prohibited by religious law from donation, but regard it as an individual decision.
- **Islam**—Strongly believes in the principle of saving lives, which includes donation and transplantation.
- **Jehovah's Witnesses**—Do not encourage donation, but believe the decision to donate should be left to the individual.
- **Judaism**—All four branches (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist) support and encourage donation.
- **Lutherans**—Believe donation contributes to humanity's well-being and is an expression of sacrificial love for neighbors in need.
- **Mormons**—Do not oppose donation, believing the decision is an individual one,

made in conjunction with family, medical personnel and prayer.

- **Pentecostals**—Believe the decision to donate should be left to the individual.
- **Presbyterians**—Encourage and endorse donation, respecting the individual's right to make decisions about his or her body.
- **Quakers (Society of Friends)**—Do not have an official position on donation, but believe it is an individual decision.
- **Seventh-Day Adventists**—Strongly encourage donation and transplantation.
- **Shinto**—Against donation because of the belief that it would affect the relationship between the person who has died and family members.
- **United Church of Christ**—Extremely supportive of donation and transplantation.
- **United Methodists**—Recognize the life-giving benefits of donation and encourage all members to sign donor cards.

Those with questions about a specific faith's moral, ethical, or spiritual position on donation should contact their clergy or spiritual advisors. ❤️

Do you know?

The Facts About Cartilage and Tendons

- Cartilage is connective tissue that serves as padding between bones. In addition, the nose and outer ear are composed entirely of cartilage.
- Tendons attach muscle to bone, allowing for joint movement.
- Arthritis is inflammation of joints and the surrounding tissues, including tendons, ligaments and cartilage. The three most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and gout. Eighty percent of us will develop osteoarthritis by age 50.
- The Achilles tendon is the largest—and most frequently ruptured—tendon in the human body, able to withstand forces of

- 1,000 pounds or more. Achilles tendonitis is a common overuse injury and inflammation of the tendon that plagues both professional and weekend athletes.
- Cartilage and tendons are used to replace injured tissue around the knee, to correct abnormalities in the eyelid, and to reshape facial disfigurement.

Sources: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons; World Book Online; Rose State College Science Department, Midwest City, Okla.



Family Comforted by Donation Decision

James "Jimmer" Smith was a fun-loving person who, according to his mother Mardie, packed 100 years of living into 44. "The short life he had, he really lived it," she says. "He was the life of all our parties. He was funny. He made us all laugh."

A motorcycle enthusiast, Jimmer owned a sealcoating business and loved taking his two children camping.

But the Appleton, Wis. resident's life was cut short four years ago by a brain aneurysm that struck while he talked with a friend at a city park. He was rushed to the local hospital, and later flown to a regional trauma center. His parents were told he would not last through the night. "I took his hand," Mardie remembers, "and said, 'Jimmy, Mama's here. I love you.' I thought maybe he could hear me."

The pain of Jimmer's unexpected death was eased by the Smiths' decision to donate his kidney, pancreas, bone, connective tissues, eyes and veins after finding a donor card in his wallet. Although he never discussed his donation wishes with his parents, some of his friends confirmed that donation definitely was something he would have wanted.

Mardie says at first, she was uncomfortable with the idea of donation, but now is "really proud of the decision."

As many as 55 people benefited from Jimmer's donation. Tissue implant procedures

save lives and limbs, reduce pain, increase mobility and strength, repair injury, and decrease the chance of nerve damage.

Mardie says she has talked to many people about donation, as well as confirmed donation wishes of family members. Mardie, her husband Jim, and their two sons have made the commitment.

She has also distributed dozens of green "Donate Life" bracelets to family and friends. "The kids wear them to school and my boys wear them to work," she says. "I talk to everybody about it."

In addition, Jimmer is one of 17 tissue donors commemorated in the "Mountains of Memories" Memorial Donor Family Quilt, one of 10 quilts developed so far honoring Midwest residents. ❤️



Tissue donor Jimmer Smith enjoyed riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle.

Honor Your Loved One in a Memorial Quilt

The RTI Donor Services Memorial Donor Family Quilt Program is an on-going project to provide families with a beautiful way to commemorate their loved ones' gifts. Families in Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan who would like detailed information on submitting a quilt square for the program may call the RTI Donor Services office in Madison, Wis., at (608) 231-9050, or toll-free, (877) 612-4287.

Make the Donation Commitment

Here's how to ensure that your donation decision is carried out in the following states:

Wisconsin—Indicate your wishes on your driver's license, state identification card or Uniform Donor Card and carry it with you at all times.

Illinois—Sign up online in the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry at www.cyberdriveillinois.com/ContactFormsWeb/register.html. You may also note your wishes on your driver's license or state identification card.

Michigan—Sign up online at www.giftoflifemichigan.org or sign up on the Gift of Life Organ, Tissue and Eye Donor Registry at a Secretary of State branch office when applying for or renewing a driver's license.

Remember, it's important to tell your family members that you have decided to become a donor so they will understand and support your decision.

Rosa Perez: 'She Just Inspired Us'

Rosa Perez raised her three children to be independent, often advising them to “do what you love to do, not what will earn you a lot of money.”

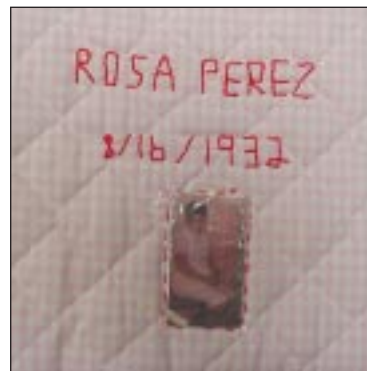
It was Rosa’s mission, too.

After moving to Brooklyn, N.Y., from Puerto Rico, Rosa worked nearly five decades as a sewing machine operator, a job she loved, to support the three children she raised by herself. According to her daughter Jenny Velez, the last thing Rosa made before she died at the age of 70 in March 2003 was a teddy bear.

And the last gift she gave was the gift of life to help others in need.

Rosa’s bone donation benefited more than 20 people who faced spinal surgeries, hip replacements or major dental procedures to help eliminate pain, increase strength and improve mobility.

Suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure before her death, Rosa functioned with a single kidney for much of her life. “She just inspired us,” Jenny says. “We knew donating would make her happy. At least somebody else is using something she didn’t need anymore.”



The donation helped comfort Jenny, who found solace in the many communications and resources she received from RTI Donor Services. “They do help,” she says, “especially the information related to the holidays. That was the worst time.”

Other information that caught Jenny’s attention described the Memorial Donor Family Quilt Program, an on-going effort to create quilts commemorating New York tissue donors. Although she had never tried her hand at quilting, she finished her mother’s square quickly and “I actually felt better.”

The first quilt in honor of New York donors is scheduled for completion in the fall.

In the meantime, Jenny and her family members have discussed donation and, she says, “All of us will be donating.”



Tissue donor Rosa Perez, right, celebrates the wedding of her daughter Jenny Velez.

Document Your Donation Decision

Sign up online in the New York State Organ and Tissue Donor Registry at www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/donor/index.htm or add your name to the registry at the Department of Motor Vehicles when applying for or renewing a driver’s license or non-driver identification. Also, make sure you tell your family about your decision.

Memorial Quilt Program Continues

A warm and loving tribute to tissue donors, the RTI Donor Services Memorial Donor Family Quilt Program is an on-going project available to donor families. Interested New York donor families may receive detailed information by calling the Donor Services office at (718) 273-6806 or toll-free (877) 612-4287.

In Honor of John Sims (Jack) Murray, Jr.

Dad always lived by example, never preaching or trying to change anyone’s mind. He exemplified what it meant to be a father, husband, brother, in-law and friend. Daddy loved children and animals, so our house was always full of pets and friends. He never sat in judgment of anyone, regardless of their appearance or background. He was always my best friend; I could go to him about anything. There were many nights—too numerous to count—when he and I sat up talking until the wee hours of the morning. Even during my teen years, I knew I could talk to Dad. In fact, some of my friends sought him out for advice and help because they didn’t feel like they could talk to their own parents.

Daddy’s generous spirit and tremendous love of others touched everyone he came in contact with. He was unselfish in every sense of the word, and happily shared his time, love and money with anyone in need. Because of his wonderful spirit, donating organs, tissue, bone and muscle was appropriate, as this reflects the many lives he enriched during his life with us.



John Sims (Jack) Murray, Jr.

We had talked about donation a few years before his passing. I can still hear him say, “By all means, if it will help someone to live a better life,” when asked about donation.

Though I know that Daddy is still with me in spirit, it is also comforting to know that a part of him is physically living on, and that the brain samples taken will further Alzheimer’s research.

—Kathy Spiker, daughter

Remembering Charles Grady Drake, Jr.

My brother, Grady Drake, never married and had no children of his own, but he did much for others, especially for children. Therefore, I know he would be pleased that he has been able to help others, even after he departed this life. In his retirement years, he spent much time fishing and even taught classes in this activity for senior citizens.

—Lillie Belle Drake Hamilton, sister



Charles Grady Drake, Jr.

Making the Donation Decision in Georgia

Indicate your wishes when you apply for or renew your driver’s license or state identification card. You may also become part of the Georgia Organ Donor Registry by signing and returning a donor card to the Georgia Coalition on Donation. In addition, share your wishes with your family members so they will understand and support your decision.

Heart Recipient Gives Back Through Tissue Donation

Elaine Maule fondly remembers her husband Robert as “extremely loving, giving and caring,” generously sharing his time, his knowledge and his resources.

He was a man with a big heart, although in reality, it wasn't his own. In 1993, the Scottsdale, Ariz. resident received a heart transplant. “Through the generosity of someone donating the heart of a beloved family member, Robert was able to live an extended life,” Elaine says. But on July 1 of last year—11 years after his transplant—his heart gave out just as they were about to board a plane to travel to a Fourth of July family event.

After he died at St. Luke's Hospital in Phoenix, Elaine discovered from hospital staff members that Robert could return the favor to his heart donor through tissue donation. She notes that he had assumed he would be unsuitable as a donor.

Instead, Robert was able to donate bone, veins, connective tissues, and tissue for research.

Elaine says she was ecstatic over the opportunity to donate. “I can't express the difference it made,” she says. “I couldn't

keep him, but it was great he could give back that way.”

She adds that she is not only committed to donation for herself, but also to spreading the word that everyone is a potential donor. “It is important to me to get the message out to organ recipients, as well as all others, that they, too, can donate.”

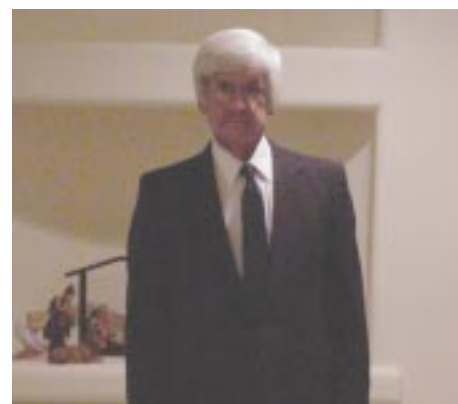
The donation helps Elaine deal with losing her husband, who she describes as “an awesome and incredible person in all ways.”

High school sweethearts, Robert and Elaine went their separate ways, but were reunited as adults, married and had five children. He owned an actuary company in Washington, working as a consultant before heart problems forced him to sell his practice and move to Arizona. His commitment to tutoring Arizona State University students in math led Elaine to set up a scholarship in his name.

Elaine is pleased that Robert will be remembered—along with several other tissue donors—on a memorial quilt recently completed by RTI Donor Services. To her, the quilt is “another bonus” to call attention to his contributions, as well as the importance of tissue donation.

“Everybody knows about organ donation, but tissue is not as well known,” she says. “[Donation] hands you a gift at a terrible time in your life.

“It gives you something to hold on to.”



Heart recipient Robert Maule returned the kindness of his donor by donating bone, veins, connective tissues, and tissue for research.

Document Your Decision

Your donation decision can be documented by signing up online in the Arizona Donor Registry, www.AZDonorRegistry.org. You should also discuss your decision with your family.

Memorial Quilt Program On-going

RTI Donor Services offers the Memorial Donor Family Quilt Program on an on-going basis. Arizona families are invited to participate at any time, with no deadline for submitting quilt squares. For detailed instructions, call the RTI Donor Services office in Tempe, Ariz., at (602) 347-0118 or toll-free at (877) 612-4287.

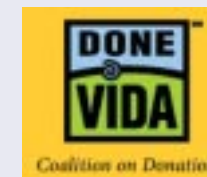
Minority Donor Awareness Highlighted

National Minority Donor Awareness Day is being observed Monday, Aug. 1, designed to emphasize the importance of organ, tissue and eye donation to all ethnic groups.

The annual observance reaches out to minorities and focuses on the various fears and obstacles associated with donation. The campaign's goal is to promote healthy living and disease prevention, as well as increase the number of people who sign donor cards, have discussions with their families about their wishes, and become donors.

Minority Donor Awareness Day is also aimed at increasing awareness of the behaviors that may lead to the need for transplantation, such as smoking, alcohol and substance abuse, and poor nutrition.

Brochures on donation that focus on African Americans may be obtained by calling toll-free (866) 538-7448. Spanish language brochures are available by calling toll-free (800) 485-8432.



Donor Sabbath to be Observed

Faith communities throughout the nation will participate in a special observance that falls two weeks before Thanksgiving and highlights the importance of donation.

National Donor Sabbath will be observed Friday through Sunday, Nov. 11–13, and will focus on the life-affirming gifts of hope passed on to those in need through organ, tissue, marrow and blood donors. Faith leaders will participate in discussions of donation and transplantation, and houses of worship will implement activities to increase awareness of donation's benefits and applications.

Most religions in the United States—whether they officially support organ and tissue donation, or support their members' individual choice—consider donation to be an act of compassion and generosity.

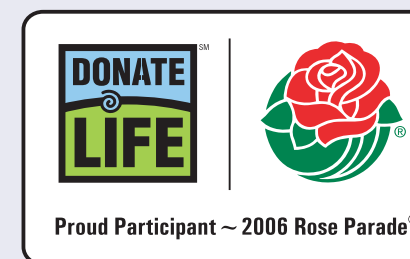
National Donor Sabbath began in 1997, implemented by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in collaboration with other groups interested in increasing donation. For more information on the observance, visit www.organdonor.gov/natl-donorsabbath.htm.

RTI a 2006 Rose Parade Float Sponsor

For the third straight year, Regeneration Technologies, Inc.—RTI Donor Services' parent company—will help sponsor a New Year's Day floral tribute to organ and tissue donor families, transplant recipients, living donors and their loved ones.

RTI is one of 37 national sponsors of the Donate Life Rose Parade Float, making its third appearance in the 117th Tournament of Roses Parade. In the spirit of the 2006 Rose Parade theme, “It's Magical” the Donate Life float will feature 22 riders who feel magically touched by organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

Because of a more than 100-year-old Rose Parade tradition barring it from being held on Sunday, the 2006 parade will take place on Monday, Jan. 2.



Calendar of Events

August 1, 2005

National Minority Donor Awareness Day

August 5, 2005

Organ/Tissue Donation Medal Ceremony
Madison, Wis.

November 4–5, 2005

Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association Annual Leadership Conference and Banquet
Phoenix, Ariz.

November 11–13, 2005

National Donor Sabbath

November 11, 2005

“Ripples of Hope” donor family event,
Marshfield, Wis.