

**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:

- Phone** (877) 663-4437 or (877) 612-4389
- E-mail** psymons@rtix.com
- Mail** Paula Symons, Newsletter Editor,  
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 "Contact Us" link, and provide your name and address.**

**Back by popular demand...**

...the Donate Life dog tag-style necklace! This fun and trendy way to share the donation message comes with a silver ball chain. Even if you've ordered dog tags previously, you may still request more, with a limit of five per donor family. Place your order through the information listed above for phone, e-mail, regular mail or Web (via the "Contact Us" link). Provide your name and address, in addition to the amount of tags you'd like. You'll receive your order within two weeks.



**RTI Donor Services**  
6502 Odana Road  
Madison, Wis. 53719  
(877) 663-4437 or  
(877) 612-4287  
[www.rtidonorservices.org](http://www.rtidonorservices.org)

*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, Michigan, New York and Wisconsin.

4045 RO 11/10/06



**In This Issue:**

- Georgia Woman Tells Donation Story  
page 3
- Living Donors, Donor Families To Inspire Parade Viewers  
page 4
- Newest Quilt Dedicated in Wisconsin  
page 6
- Quilt to Honor Packer Fan Donors



page 3

# Weaving Lives together

A newsletter from RTI Donor Services

## Religion No Barrier to Holiday Gift of a Lifetime: Donation

This holiday season, consider the ultimate gift to your family, to patients in need and to yourself—the gift of organ and tissue donation.

The decision to give the gift of life should not interfere with the spiritual side of your holiday, says Beverly Bliss, Vice President of RTI Donor Services. The donation commitment is regarded as 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 Bliss. "Anyone thinking about 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.

"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.



continued on page 2

6502 Odana Road • Madison, WI 53719  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED




PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
MADISON WI  
PERMIT NO 1770

Religion No Barrier to Donation continued from page 1

- **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 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. ❤️

## 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.

## Campaign Aims for 100 Million Donors

A massive nationwide effort has been launched to increase organ and tissue donation.

Sponsored by Donate Life America (formerly the National Coalition on Donation), the Donor Designation Collaborative aims to increase the number of Actionable Donor Designations (ADDs) in the United States to 100 million. The term “ADD” means that someone has taken the appropriate steps in their home state to ensure their decision to become a donor is recognized and honored.

Achieving the 100 million-donor goal will double the current number, estimated to be between 50 and 60 million, or 20 percent of the American people.

The donation and transplant community continues to experience a shortage in the number of available organs and tissues for transplantation. The Collaborative seeks to close the gap between the more than 90 percent of Americans who believe donation is the right thing to do, and the estimated 20 percent who have effectively documented a donation decision.

Visit [www.shareyourlife.org](http://www.shareyourlife.org) and click on your state to learn how to commit to donation. ❤️



## Georgia Woman Tells Donation Story

Susan Dixon has many fond memories of her husband Beldon. “He was extraordinary,” she says. “He really was.”

The 71-year-old former salesman loved people and children, and enjoyed running his convenience store at a reservoir near Atlanta, Ga. “Local fisher-people would come in, buy bait and ask where the best fishing was,” Susan remembers.

His sudden death from a massive heart attack in June of 2005 was devastating. Despite the family's shock, Susan says she and one of Beldon's daughters completed the consent process for donation of his bones. She appreciated the help of an RTI Donor Services donation coordinator, who Susan describes as “accommodating, sensitive and kind.”

Susan says she knew she made the right decision when she learned how Beldon's tissues had been used. Sixteen recipients

in eight states received his tissues in a variety of spinal surgeries. Because tissues can be preserved for later use, two tissues are awaiting transplant.

Her donation experience a positive one, Susan is looking ahead to renewing her driver's license in a few weeks, saying “I plan to commit to donation. I'm very willing to do that.” ❤️



Susan and Beldon Dixon

## Quilt to Honor Packer Fan Donors

RTI Donor Services is planning the creation of a special memorial quilt honoring donors who were Green Bay Packer fans.

This project is open to all families, including those who created Packer-themed squares that already appear on current quilts. The first 20 squares received by June 1, 2007,

will be included in a quilt to be unveiled just before the 2007 football season.

Quilt square specifications are the same as current guidelines. Please call RTI Donor Services toll-free at (877) 663-4437 to receive information.



## Living Donors, Donor Families To Inspire Parade Viewers

**T**hey gave the ultimate gift—the gift of life—and now their good nature will encourage millions worldwide to follow their example as they ride the Donate Life float down Colorado Boulevard in this year's Tournament of Roses Parade. The Rose Parade theme is "Our Good Nature."


Twenty-three living donors and donor family members from 11 states and Canada will ride on the Donate Life float, "Giving From The Heart," to inspire people to save lives as organ, tissue and blood donors. Among the riders will be Palmetto, Ga. resident Susan Giess, who is being sponsored by RTI Donor Services and is the first-ever Donate Life float rider from Georgia. Susan is riding the float in honor of her daughter Mandy, a tissue donor in 2003 at the age of 22.

Ranging in age from 19 to 63, riders hail from Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Ontario, Canada. The float's first international rider is joined by the first blood donation representative and the first priest. Eight donated their own organs to

save family members, while 14 donated the organs and tissues of deceased family members to help people they did not know and might never meet.

The 2007 Donate Life Rose Parade float marks the fourth appearance of the donation and transplant community in the parade, in addition to the fourth year of sponsorship by RTI Donor Services. "Giving From the Heart" is laden with symbolism: eight gift-wrapped presents represent the lives that can be saved by a single organ donor; 50 bouquets signify the lives that can be saved or enhanced by a single tissue donor; and the red ribbon's three loops represent the lives that can be touched through a single blood donation.

The 118th Rose Parade will take place at 8 a.m. Pacific Standard Time on Monday, Jan. 1, 2007, featuring spirited marching bands from throughout the world, majestic floral floats and high-stepping equestrian units.

For more information on the Donate Life Rose Parade Float, visit the official float Web site at [www.donatelifefloat.org](http://www.donatelifefloat.org). 



## Rose Parade Float to Carry Donor Family Messages

**R**TI Donor Services and Kari Barlament, donor wife, invited families to submit dedications to their loved ones as part of the Family Circle program. As a result, several families are being sponsored by Kari and RTI Donor Services in the Family Circle Garden.

The Donate Life Float's Family Circle rose dedication program allows any individual, family or organization touched by donation and transplantation to dedicate a rose on the float. Dedicated roses are placed in the heart-shaped Family Circle Garden at the front of the float, themed "Giving From The Heart." Each rose carries the name of the person and a special message, which makes every rose in the garden a unique gift.

Following are some of the dedications submitted by donor families:



### **Bette Kroll, Kaukauna, Wis.**

Bette was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and friend who did everything she could to assist others. She was intelligent, had a sparkling sense of humor and was a totally unselfish person. I don't believe our children or grandchildren could have had a better role model. Her unselfishness is evidenced by her wish to become a tissue donor. I am sure that any recipients of her tissue can sense what a remarkable person Bette was. I thank God for Bette being in my life.

*Jerome Kroll, husband*

### **Alan Wayne LeClaire, Iron Mountain, Mich.**

Alan was a loving young man who had a hard time growing up, but later grew into a wonderful person. He rode his bike all over until an accident took his life.

*Ron and Rosemary LeClaire, parents*

### **Dolores Bardell, Cedarville, Ill.**

My mother was always the first one there to help anyone in need her whole life. She was never late to donate blood for those in need. Her pastor never hesitated to ask her to spend a day with an elderly couple unable to do certain things. She would be there. Even in the end, she committed to donate any body part that would



help anyone. So many people I'm sure are enjoying her company right now. She was and still is, beautiful.

*Randy Bardell, son*



### **Melissa Hanson, Waupun, Wis.**

My daughter and best friend Melissa was born on Christmas Day, 1985. As she grew up, she would quietly help and befriend everyone she met. We lost her in a car accident on April 19, 2002, at the age of 16. Many people shared with me their memories of Melissa which always included her caring, helpful, compassionate nature. Melissa chose to be a donor and it was with pride that I carried out her wishes. She became the third generation of my family to be an eye donor and the second generation to be a tissue donor.

*Loni Wendt, mother*

### **Armen Dockter, Muskego, Wis.**

My husband was 84 when he passed away. He had so many illnesses that we thought he couldn't donate, but what a "wonder" to find out he's helping lots of people through 123 tissues. What an honor!

*Clara Dockter, wife*



### **Chad Rudolph, Pulaski, Wis.**

Chad served seven years in the Army before coming home, and then was killed in a car accident. The band from Chad's alma mater, Pulaski High School, is marching in the Rose Parade and I will be there to watch. What a special treat for me to attend the parade and know that Chad has a rose placed in the Family Circle Garden.

*Rhoda Rudolph, mother *

## Newest Quilt Dedicated in Wisconsin

**M**ore than 75 donor family members celebrated their loved ones' gifts of life, and saw the unveiling of the newest memorial quilt during a special event held recently in Green Bay, Wis.

"The Nature of Giving" is the theme of the new quilt, featuring 20 Wisconsin donors who were enthusiasts of nature, farming, hunting, fishing and other outdoor pastimes. The quilt was fashioned by Sue Vollbrecht, a quilt designer from Monona, Wis., with assistance from Caroline Smith of Madison, Wis.

Donor family members Kari Barlament and Kathy Rutherford, part of the Donor Family Ambassadors volunteer program, helped staff the event. They talked with families, answered questions, and participated in the quilt presentation and candle-lighting ceremonies.

Jerry Kroll of Kaukauna, Wis.—whose wife Bette is commemorated on "The Nature of Giving" quilt—appreciated the opportunity to attend the event. "The quilt is beautiful and it was a very moving experience for us to be there and see it." 🌸



The family of donor Charles Olk from Hortonville, Wis. poses with "The Nature of Giving," the newest RTI Donor Services memorial quilt.



At left, the granddaughter of donor Melvin Baker from Oshkosh, Wis. shares a story during the quilt dedication ceremony. At right is Kathy Rutherford, an RTI Donor Services Donor Family Ambassador.

### My Brother

My brother cannot be here, for he lives so far away.  
 But I know he wished he could be here, each and every day.  
 And although we cannot see him, I wanted you all to know  
 All about my brother, and how I loved him so.  
 He loved to play outside with me when we were just kids,  
 Building tree houses and fishing were among the things we did.  
 We would share Mom's cookies and laugh through the day, not knowing our days were few.  
 And although you cannot see him, I'm not alone; he's here, too.  
 Because my brother is always with me, and even though we're apart,  
 I know this because he told me he would forever be in my heart.  
 I love my brother so much. He is my shining star.  
 And if he could, he'd be here, but heaven is just too far.  
 My memories are all so wonderful. I wish you all could see  
 My brother was really someone that we would all want to be.  
 An angel sent down from heaven for only a very short time.  
 Blessed are the ones who knew him, for through me he always will shine.  
 In memory of my brother, I write this verse today,  
 To tell him how much I miss him, and that heaven's not far away.

—In memory of donor Joseph Goffard, Fremont, Wis. from his sister Lori Goffard

## New York Family Happy with Donation Decision

**M**igdalia Soto was a caring young woman, who loved children, singing and dolphins, devoting an entire room to dolphin figurines, watches, clocks, jewelry and bed linens. She often accompanied her mother to donate blood. Known as "Mindy", she is described by her mother Carmen Soto as "very giving and she cared about people."

So, when 26-year-old Mindy died unexpectedly in June this year, Carmen did not hesitate to consider donation of her organs, bone, skin, veins and eyes. "We got everybody together and made the decision as a family," says Carmen. "We're happy we did it."

Knowing that Mindy's donation benefited needy recipients gives comfort to Queens, N.Y. resident Carmen and her family. The donation was also a way to acknowledge a gift received by Carmen's husband Israel Soto, whose life was extended an additional two years because of a donated kidney.

Mindy's gifts will be recognized New Year's Day on the Rose Parade Donate Life Float, where a rose in her honor is being placed in the float's Family Circle Garden (see information on Page 5). A faithful parade viewer, Carmen often watched the national broadcast with patients she cared for in her role as a home attendant.

Carmen has recognized Mindy's donation through the RTI Donor Services Memorial Donor Family Quilt program, creating a quilt square that will be included in a future quilt.

Carmen is happy that Mindy's donation is helping others. "Her life goes on," she says. "I guess that's what God wanted."



### Family Circle Garden Dedication for Mindy Soto

I would like to honor my daughter Migdalia Soto with a rose placed in the Donate Life Float Family Circle Garden as a token of appreciation on behalf of all the people she helped when she was alive. My daughter worked for a city agency in the resource development unit. Her job was to help people get their lives back on track after going through difficult life experiences. No matter how complicated the task, she tackled it with a huge smile. Now she continues to do the same in her death with her organs and tissues.

## Share Your Donation Story With Others

**A**re you interested in sharing your donation story with others?

RTI Donor Services is organizing a speakers bureau focusing on donor families who would be comfortable speaking before community groups, conferences and recovery partner organizations. Speaking opportunities will cover a wide range of dates, times and locations.

If you would like your name included, contact RTI Donor Services by mail, 6502 Odana Road, Madison, WI 53719; by e-mail, greabe@rtix.com, or by calling toll-free (877) 663-4437. Please provide your name, address, e-mail address, phone number and the best time to contact you.