

Hundreds of programs planned for National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week

Yes. It's such a simple word. But when it comes to organ and tissue donation, it can change the world. Say "yes" and life springs from death, sorrow turns to hope and a terrible loss becomes a gift.

April 16-22 is National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, the time when Americans commemorate the generosity of organ and tissue donors whose gifts of life give others a second chance at living.

Last year, because families in Illinois and northwest Indiana said "yes," 859 organ transplants and thousands of tissue transplants were performed using organs and tissues recovered by the Regional Organ Bank of Illinois (ROBI). These life-saving and life-enhancing transplants were made possible simply because people - families and friends, hospital personnel and coroners - chose to make something positive happen in light of the death of a loved one or patient.

Despite much success, the need for more donors is critical and the numbers are astounding. This year, the national transplant waiting list topped 72,000. In Illinois alone, more than 4,100 men, women and children are waiting for a lifesaving transplant.

Among the many NOTDAW programs and activities planned for Illinois and northwest Indiana:

- Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, Chicago Superintendent of Police Terry Hillard, Chicago Fire Commissioner James Joyce and other representatives from the donation and transplant community will join ROBI and several donor families and recipients to kick off the week at a news conference Thursday, April 12 in Chicago. They will announce that all Chicago police, detectives and firefighters will be wearing green ribbon pins to show their support for organ and tissue donation. Secretary White also will unveil commercials filmed for a media campaign urging Illinoisans to become organ and tissue donors.
- The National Kidney Foundation Donor Quilt, featuring quilted squares in memory of organ donors, will be displayed at Chicago's Thompson Center April 9-14.
- ROBI's African-American Task Force and the Minority Organ and Tissue Transplant Education Program (MOTTEP) will sponsor a Candlelight Bown 9pm- midnight Saturday, April 21 to raise awareness in the African-American community.
- ROBI and La X Tropical radio will sponsor a "Celebracion de la Vida" 6-9pm Thursday, April 26, at Chicago's Excalibur nightclub, bringing together Chicago's Latino community in support of organ and tissue donation
- Marshall Field's State Street store in Chicago will show off a window display featuring a donation message during the week, and banners will be displayed at the John Hancock Building. Also look for coffee shops throughout Chicago to serve coffee with a donation message printed on cup sleeves. Green ribbons will be displayed by businesses and organizations throughout the state.
- Employees at LaSalle Bank, Northern Trust and Albany State Bank in Chicago will wear green ribbon pins to show support for organ and tissue donation.
- Green ribbons and donation information will be displayed in throughout the Springfield area in businesses, physician offices, hospitals and outdoor areas. The Sangamon County Clerk's office will

celebrate a “Green Ribbon Day,” during which employees can provide monetary donations in order to dress casual and wear a green ribbon.

- In Quincy, the Chamber of Commerce will distribute donation information, and city officials will wear green ribbons. Street banners and displays by numerous city offices, businesses, day cares, churches and other organizations also are planned.
- A “Life Goes On” event take place at Peru Mall on Saturday, April 21, featuring the Jesse White Tumblers. free bone density scans, blood and bone marrow drives, and booths from local hospitals, ROBI, the Illinois Eye-Bank and the American Red Cross. A billboard campaign and Chamber of Commerce campaigns also will take place.

Organs and tissues from a single donor can help more than 25 individuals. Choosing to become a donor is as simple as signing a Uniform Donor Card (such as the card on the back of the driver’s license) and, most importantly, sharing your intentions with family members.

Right now is a good time to “yes.” As National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week is being commemorated nationwide, make the decision to become an organ and tissue donor and take the time to talk to your family about your decision.

For more information about organ and tissue donation, call the Regional Organ Bank of Illinois at 800/545-4438, or visit ROBI’s web site at www.robi.org.

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