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## **COMMUNITIES URGES TO OBSERVE NATIONAL DONOR SABBATH**

The Regional Organ Bank of Illinois joins its colleagues with the Illinois Coalition on Donation in urging communities to plan prayer services and programs in observance of National Donor Sabbath, Nov. 9-11.

The three-day event is an interfaith celebration of the gift of life through organ and tissue donation, observed by faith communities and donation/transplant organizations throughout the country.

“God gave us life, and when we come to the end of our lives, we can give life to another person,” says university educator Sister Joyce Marie Rankin, a 1991 kidney recipient and longtime ROBI volunteer leader in the Chicago area. “It is a beautiful way to continue God’s work on earth. This ‘yes’ to donation is in our hands.”

More than 4,500 Illinoisans are awaiting lifesaving organ transplants possible only through organ donation. The national waiting list has surpassed 78,000 people. Yet, a critical shortage of donated organs means that 15 people die each day while waiting.

One of the most common reasons that families give when they decide against organ and tissue donation is “it’s against my religion.” But the fact is, all major religions in the United States support donation as one of the highest human acts of compassion and humanitarianism.

To address that misconception, individuals, religious leaders and communities are asked to observe National Donor Sabbath by:

- Arranging for displays of green ribbons at places of worship, symbolizing support for organ and tissue donation.
- Speaking or arranging for speakers on the religious aspects of donation at worship services, youth classes or adult ministry groups.
- Arranging information tables in the community.
- Writing letters to the editor of local newspapers.
- Writing open letters or encouraging articles about donation in religious bulletins or newsletters.

ROBI provides free materials and support for all of these activities. Call 888/307-3668 to request a Donor Sabbath Kit, including a poster, a bulletin insert, brochures and an order form for materials that can be used during Donor Sabbath or any time of year.

Everyone, no matter how young or old, can be a lifesaver by choosing to be an organ and tissue donor. 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 the decision to donate with family members.

Members of the Illinois Coalition on Donation include the Regional Organ Bank of Illinois; American Liver Foundation, Illinois Chapter; Central Illinois Lions Eye Bank; Illinois Eye-Bank; Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Transplantation; Juvenile Diabetes Research Association; Mid-America Transplant Services, Minority Organ/Tissue Transplant Education Program, Chicago Office; National Kidney Foundation-Illinois; Organ Transplant Support, Inc. and Office of Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White – Organ/Tissue Donor Program.

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