

Contact:  
Russ Breckinridge

For immediate release:

DRAFT #1

## **NATIONAL BIKE RIDE FOR LIFESAVING DONATION TRAVELING THROUGH ILLINOIS IN SEPTEMBER**

From throughout the United States, they come to Illinois in a few weeks. Their mission leads them here on bicycles.

Among them are the mother whose young son died waiting for a heart/lung transplant that never happened. The state parks maintenance chief whose bone marrow donation saved a woman fighting leukemia. The self-employed electrician who's a blood donor. The free-lance artist who was struck head-on by a car while riding her bike – and recovered after five surgeries and donated tendons to repair the trauma to her legs.

From Sept. 14-20, they and the rest of the 2002 Five Points of Life Bicycle Team will ride through Illinois during their 2,300-mile cross-country trek to raise awareness for blood, organ and tissue donation. Throughout the week, they will meet with other donors and family members of donors, transplant recipients, community leaders and media in Rockford, Chicago, Bloomington, Peoria and Springfield during special events calling attention to Illinois' need for blood, organ and tissue donation.

“We see this bike ride as one of the most inspiring and attention-getting community events in Illinois since the Olympic torch traveled through our area,” says Russ Breckinridge, Five Points/Illinois Chairman for the Illinois Coalition on Donation. “The goal is to focus local communities on the critical and growing need for organ, tissue and blood donation.”

In Illinois, more than 4,700 men, women and children are among the 80,000 across the United States awaiting lifesaving organ transplants. Each day, about 100 names are added to the national list, while an average of 17 people die waiting.

The Five Point team will enter Illinois on Sept. 14 and leave for St. Louis on Sept. 20. Biking with the team during various legs of the trip will be local bicycle clubs and donation advocates including the executive director of the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois. Local riders also are invited to join the ride as it enters their communities.

Incidentally, this week of donor awareness culminates on Sept. 21 with Illinois' annual remembrance ceremony in Peoria for families of organ and tissue donors, hosted by Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network, American Red Cross Tissue Services, Illinois Eye-Bank and Heartland Lions Eye Bank.

Organized every two years, the national Five Points of Life Ride visits communities across the country to bring new faces and new stories to support the ongoing need for donors for the Five Points of Life: donations of organ and tissue, whole blood, apheresis (another way of donating blood cells), umbilical cord blood and bone marrow.

Coordinating the Illinois leg of the ride are the Illinois Coalition on Donation, Lifesource Blood Centers, Heartland Blood Centers and the American Red Cross. Members of the Illinois Coalition on Donation include Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network, the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois, the Illinois Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program, the American Liver Foundation of Illinois and the Illinois Eye-Bank. For more information, call the Illinois Coalition on Donation at 888/307-DON8.

**2002 Five Points of Life Ride  
Illinois Events**

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 14**

- The team is scheduled to arrive in Rockford about 12:30 p.m. during a Celebration of Life/Remembrance Ceremony and community health fair 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Midway Village and Museum Center, 6799 Guilford Road. The public event will feature blood and bone marrow drives through Northern Illinois Blood Bank, the Illinois Secretary of State Mobile DMV License Renewal and Donor Registration Unit, health displays, children's activities and live music.

**SUNDAY, SEPT. 15**

- On Sunday, Sept. 15, following a morning visit to the LifeSource Blood Donor Center in Hoffman Estates, the Five Points team will bike to St. Agatha Roman Catholic Church on Chicago's Near West Side, 3147 W. Douglas Blvd., for a community health fair and LifeSource blood/bone marrow drive.

**MONDAY, SEPT. 16**

- Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, LifeSource (NAME AND TITLE) and Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network President/CEO Jerry Anderson will join the team along with Illinois transplant recipients, blood donors and donor families at a 9 a.m. press conference on Monday, Sept. 16 at the James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph.
- After a lunch and tour of Baxter International in Deerfield, a corporate sponsor for the national Five Points of Life Ride, the team will ride to Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood to greet patients and staff on the medical center's transplant floors and visit with pediatric patients at the Ronald McDonald Children's Hospital. LifeSource will hold a public blood drive during the day.

**TUESDAY, SEPT. 17**

- The team will make an appearance during an all-school assembly at Nequa High School in Naperville before arriving in time for a 11 a.m. press conference at Naperville City Hall with Mayor George Pradel, and (NAMES). From 10 a.m.-5 p.m., the public is invited to take part in a health fair featuring (WHAT) 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at City Hall, 400 S. Eagle.
- The team will head to a second press conference with Lombard Village Board President William Mueller, at 1:30 p.m. at Lombard City Hall, 255 E. Wilson. A public health fair provided by Heartland Blood Centers will be 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 18**

- State Farm Insurance will host the team for a noon press conference and tour during a employee health fair at its corporate offices in Bloomington, Wednesday, Sept. 18.

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 19**

- In Peoria, the Peoria Police Department will escort the team to the RiverPlex Recreation & Wellness Center, 600 NE Water, for a noon press conference with Mayor David P. Ransburg. Downtown businesses and city employees are encouraged to take part in the Community Challenge for Life by donating blood and signing organ/tissue donor cards during a 10 a.m.-2 p.m. health fair. Blood drive services will be provided by the American Red Cross. Local media and sports personalities will join Gift of Hope and the Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau for celebrity donor card signings throughout the event.

**FRIDAY, SEPT. 20**

- The Illinois State Capitol Rotunda will house a health fair and blood drive Friday, Sept. 20. Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White will join team members at a noon press conference on the Capitol lawn.

###