

## Illinoisans to ride inaugural Coalition on Donation Rose Parade float

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ELMHURST, ILL. (DEC. 1, 2003) - When the 2004 Rose Parade ushers in the New Year, it will also mark a milestone in raising awareness of organ and tissue donation - as 22 people from across the country come together to ride the first-ever Coalition on Donation Rose Parade float.

Among the select 22 will be Beecher resident and donation advocate Pat Perry. Her husband Don, a police sergeant for the Cook County Forest Preserve District, became an organ and tissue donor after suffering a stroke in 1995.

Perry travels to Pasadena on Dec. 27 to help decorate the float and prepare for the Rose Parade with other float riders and donation officials from around the country. Joining her will be her son, U.S. Marine Staff Sgt. Sean Perry, with his wife Amanda and their three children. Sgt. Perry recently returned from active duty in Iraq.

Perry, an admissions and marketing director for a Chicago Heights nursing home, was nominated to participate as a donor family representative with the Coalition on Donation Rose Parade float based on her long-time volunteer service with Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network. An outspoken advocate for organ and tissue donation, Perry also serves on Gift of Hope's Donor Family Advisory Council. "Over the course of several years I have received letters from each of Don's major organ recipients," Perry says. "While my children and I mourn Don, we know that his death has continued his life of service to others."

The Coalition on Donation float riders were nominated by organ and tissue recovery organizations, research foundations and transplant centers nationwide. Leading the riders' contingent will be Dr. Kenneth P. Moritsugu, MD, MPH, U.S. Deputy Surgeon General and a donor husband and father, and snowboarder Chris Klug, who received a lifesaving liver transplant 18 months before winning a bronze medal at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics.

The float carries the theme "A Symphony of Life" and features two gardens connected by a dramatic 50-foot bridge, symbolizing the living bridge between organ and tissue donors and recipients. It is supported by 55 partners across the nation, including Gift of Hope.

The 115th Rose Parade, themed "Music Music Music," will take place Thursday, Jan. 1, 2004 at 10 am CST, featuring marching bands from throughout the nation, majestic floral floats and high-stepping equestrian units.

Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network is the federally mandated not-for-profit organ procurement organization working with hospitals and families in the northern three-fourths of Illinois and northwest Indiana. For more information, call 888/307-DON8