

For immediate release

Contact: Kim McCullough, Public Relations
630/758-2736 (telephone)
630/255-6650 (pager)

630/758-2600
www.giftofhope.org

‘Lifesaving Partners’ named for 2004 achievements supporting organ/tissue donation

ELMHURST, Ill. (Nov. 23, 2004) – A select group of hospital and civic professionals from throughout Illinois and northwest Indiana have been recognized for outstanding achievement in their fields addressing the region’s critical need for organ and tissue donation.

Named 2004 Lifesaving Partners by Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network, the honorees were selected from among thousands of hospital, forensic and business professionals who work to coordinate donation, enable lifesaving transplants, support the families of donors, educate other healthcare professionals and draw public attention to the critical need for donation.

“These individuals’ accomplishments set a gold standard in our collective efforts to ultimately help the lives of so many in need of life-giving organ and tissue transplants,” said Gift of Hope President/CEO Jarold Anderson.

The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Chicago on Dec. 2 hosted by Gift of Hope and emceed by ABC 7 Chicago reporter Harry Porterfield. The honorees are:

- **Hilary Appeluquist, RN, NICU, Rush University Medical Center, and Patti Ludwig-Beymer, PhD, RN, Administrative Director, Education and Research, Edward Hospital**, for consistently advocating continuous improvement in donation processes, providing education opportunities and taking a leadership role in their hospitals’ work with Gift of Hope through the Organ Donation Breakthrough Collaborative. The collaborative is a national initiative through the Boston-based Institute for Healthcare Improvement and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to rapidly identify and implement best practices in increasing organ donation.
- **Kim Busboom, RN, SICU, Carle Foundation Hospital**, for significant and ongoing support in facilitating donation at Carle.
- **Evelyn Denny, contract translator for OSF Saint Francis Medical Center**, for excellence in working with Spanish-speaking families considering consent for organ donation.
- **Jana Lacera, Manager, Institutional Review Board/Bio-Ethics Committee, The Community Hospital**, for excellence in facilitating continuous improvement in donation processes, providing public and professional education opportunities, and taking a leadership role in development of donation after cardiac death policy and procedures.
- **Michele M. Mellett, MD, FACS, Trauma Services/Surgical Critical Care, Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center**, for ongoing excellence in facilitating organ and tissue donation, and recent leadership in development of donation after cardiac death policy and procedures at Advocate Illinois Masonic.

(continued)

- **Judy Petrus, RN, ICU Nurse Manager, Provena United Samaritans Medical Center**, for longtime advocacy for donation, recent leadership in development of donation after cardiac death policy and procedures, and ongoing excellence in facilitating organ and tissue donation at Provena United Samaritans.
- **John Sage, MD, Family Physician, Advocate Lutheran General Hospital**, for outstanding collaboration with Gift of Hope to develop a successful CME program with the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians on organ and tissue donation, and for educating other family physicians through the IAFP “Medicine for Today” lecture series and to family practice residents at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital.
- **Sister Janet Wahleithner, RSHJ, Director, Pastoral Care, St. Bernard Hospital and Health Care Center**, for outstanding direction of Pastoral Care’s involvement with every family experience at St. Bernard and instrumental leadership in providing professional education opportunities ensuring St. Bernard’s referral compliance.
- **Alejandro Castillo, Director, Office of Hispanic Communications, Archdiocese of Chicago**, for significant initiative and outreach coordination to educate Catholics about the Church’s support for the faith-based decision to donate life.
- **The Daily Herald**, for excellence in ongoing coverage demonstrating the critical need for donation as a serious public health issue that impacts local readers.
- **Leigh Hammer, Effingham County Coroner**, for ongoing work ensuring that as many families as possible within the coroner’s jurisdiction receive the opportunity to donate.
- **Marvin Reznik, funeral director, Weinstein Family Services**, for selfless and significant service to educating the public and colleagues funeral services profession about donation and transplantation.

More than 4,500 patients in Illinois await lifesaving organ transplants, in addition to thousands more in need of cornea, heart valve and other tissue transplants. Nationally, an average of 17 people die each day waiting for transplantable organs that do not become available, while more than 100 new names are added to the national organ transplant waiting list

Gift of Hope is the federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization (OPO) responsible for coordinating organ and tissue donation in the northern three-quarters of Illinois and northwest Indiana. Since its inception in 1986, Gift of Hope has coordinated donations that have saved the lives of more than 10,000 organ transplant recipients, and improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of tissue transplant recipients.

Organs and tissues from a single donor can help more than 25 individuals. Everyone, no matter how young or old, can be a lifesaver by choosing to be a donor. To become a donor, sign a Uniform Donor Card (such as the card on the back of a driver’s license) and, most importantly, inform family members of the decision. In Illinois, a family’s consent is required before donation can occur.

For more information, contact Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network at 888/307-DON8 or visit www.giftofhope.org.

###