

***For immediate release***

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## **‘Lifesaving Partners’ named for 2007 achievements supporting organ/tissue donation**

ELMHURST, Ill. (March 3, 2008) – A select group of hospitals and hospital/civic professionals from throughout Illinois have been selected for outstanding achievement in addressing the region’s critical need for organ and tissue donation.

Named 2008 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 help coordinate donation, enable lifesaving transplants, support the families of donors, educate other healthcare professionals and draw public attention to the critical need for donation.

“The accomplishments of these hospitals and individuals set a gold standard in our collective efforts to ultimately help the lives of so many in need of organ and tissue transplants,” said Gift of Hope President/CEO Jarold Anderson. “Their commitment helps us fulfill our mission: To save and enhance the lives of as many people as possible through organ and tissue donation.”

Gift of Hope will present the awards at a ceremony in Oak Brook on April 24. The honorees are:

- **Advocate Lutheran General Hospital**, Park Ridge, for outstanding performance throughout the hospital that resulted in 51 organs recovered for transplant.
- **Carle Foundation Hospital**, Urbana, for education and process improvements resulting in an increased annual donation rate from 27 percent to 55 percent of those patients eligible for donation, and an increase of organ donors from four in 2006 to 12 in 2007.
- **OSF Saint Francis Medical Center**, Peoria, for outstanding performance as the top organ and tissue donor hospital in Gift of Hope’s service area. Supporting a culture that promotes donation throughout the hospital, Saint Francis also was the top organ and tissue donor hospital and Lifesaving Partner in 2006.
- **St. John’s Hospital**, Springfield, for outstanding performance of its critical care team. From initiating policy changes to facilitating operating room scheduling to maximizing its role in the clinical care of each donor, this team routinely goes above and beyond the call to make donation a priority.
- **Rita Berendt, MS, CNP, CNRN**, Clinical Nurse Coordinator, University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago, for unwavering service as a role model to nurses in critical care units and valuable resource to Gift of Hope staff. An outstanding educator, Berendt led the Neurosurgical Intensive Care Unit to a 100 percent referral rate of potential donors to Gift of Hope in 2007.
- **John DeNardo**, Chief Executive Officer, University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago, for exemplary leadership in advancing a hospital environment that supports all facets of donation, and setting a standard of excellence for all hospital CEOs.

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- **Nancy Haberichter, APRN, CCRN**, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Centegra Northern Illinois Medical Center, McHenry, for best practice in creating and sustaining an environment of donation support and education. In 2007, Haberichter's leadership directly contributed to the rise in NIMC's potential donor referrals from 67 percent to 100 percent.
- **Rev. Charles Jenkins**, Pastor, Fellowship Baptist Church, Chicago, for consistently demonstrating leadership in promoting organ and tissue donation in the African-American community. In addition to speaking about donation during services, at community events and in interviews, Rev. Jenkins encourages Gift of Hope's African-American Task Force to host donor registration tables at his church during religious holidays and events, resulting in hundreds of people hearing the lifesaving donation message.
- **Northern Illinois University Student Nurses Organization**, DeKalb, for outstanding achievement and teamwork in raising donation awareness and registrations. The NIU Student Nurses Organization registered 484 Illinois residents in the state's organ/tissue donor registry, the highest total registrations of the 20 colleges/universities that competed in the 2007 Donate Life Illinois Campus Challenge.

Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network is proud to serve as the federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization (OPO) that coordinates organ and tissue donation and services to families of donors 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 14,000 organ transplant recipients, and improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of tissue transplant recipients. As one of 58 organ procurement organizations that make up the nation's organ donation system, Gift of Hope works with 183 hospitals and serves 11.7 million residents in its donation service area.

For more information about organ/tissue donation, contact Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network at 888/307-DON8 or visit [www.giftofhope.org](http://www.giftofhope.org).

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