MESSAGE FROM THE CEO
SUSAN STUART, CENTER FOR ORGAN RECOVERY & EDUCATION CEO

Share the love.
Isn’t that what organ, tissue and cornea donation is all about?

We preach it year-round at CORE, because we see how donation can be a life-changing event for a person and their overall well-being.

The concept of sharing something so significant with another human being – with another family – is incredibly powerful.

It’s an unqualified, selfless act of love.

So what better time, then, to celebrate the good-natured spirit of our cause than in February?

National Donor Day is February 14; none other than Valentine’s Day itself.

It’s a day designated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to not only remember those who have donated organs, tissue and corneas, but to celebrate their lives.

As we see every day here at CORE, the best way to do so is to take action – and there are countless ways.

Share a personal story about how donation has positively affected you or someone you love with your friends and family.

Find a way to volunteer your time and skills to act as an advocate for the cause.

Help educate those around you about why donors are so greatly needed – and what difference they can make in the lives of those in need.

Whatever inspires you will shine through to inspire others, so now is your chance to get involved.

Short of registering as an organ, tissue and cornea donor, I can’t think of a better way to share the love.

February 2017

CORE MISSION
The Center for Organ Recovery & Education (CORE) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting donation, education, and research for the purpose of saving and improving the quality of life through organ, tissue, and cornea transplantation.

A Donate Life Organization

CORE CONNECTIONS
A Pledge for Life

CORE VALUES
INTEGRITY: CORE would not exist without the trust and support of the community it serves.
COMPASSION: CORE honors its donors and donor families.
QUALITY: CORE upholds stringent clinical standards to ensure the quality of donated organs and tissue.
RESPONSIVENESS: CORE operates in a fast-paced, detail-oriented manner.
EDUCATION: CORE recognizes that education is needed to uphold public trust and for the public we serve to make informed donation decisions.
INNOVATION: CORE is a long-standing pioneer in the organ and tissue procurement field.
RESPECT: CORE has respect for both death and life.
LIFE: Most importantly, we value the legacy of life our donors have left and the second chance at life that transplant recipients have as a result.

A Donate Life Organization
Between Laura and Daniel Chalich, the couple has one full set of kidneys. But if each still had two, they never would have met.

Despite never breaking a bone or even suffering a bee sting, Laura opted to donate one of her kidneys to help a friend in April 2012.

An anxious person, Laura, 36, was living in Toronto at the time and felt an immense sense of relief when the operation ended. To give other donors peace of mind, she started a blog called “A Kidney Story.”

More than a year later, and six hours away in Pittsburgh, Daniel, 36, of Sharpsburg, felt the same anxiety. After deciding to donate one of his kidneys to his father, he started researching the process. Googling “kidney” and “donation,” an endless list of resources popped up on his screen. “There were a billion, but I found hers,” he said.

So Daniel, a director at WTAE-TV, reached out to her — and the initial email correspondences were cordial, if not clinical; the antithesis of romance. They discussed every facet of kidney donation, from the down and dirty details of post-surgery bodily functions, to remembering slip-on shoes for the hospital (since bending over to tie laces was not an option during recovery).

“I shared gross pictures of my scars with him and gory post-surgery stories,” Laura said with a laugh and a grimace.

But over their 10-month, kidney-borne friendship, their correspondences became more frequent and drifted away from just kidney-centric topics. They discovered they both adored Neil Young and the Simpsons, vinyl and the slight differences in their cultures.

Despite some protests from co-workers and friends, Laura decided to make the long drive to Pittsburgh to visit Daniel while he recovered from his own kidney donation in September 2014.

In a grocery store parking lot, the two donors, who barely even knew what the other looked like, met for the first time.

“We just looked at each other and said, ‘You’re a real person!’” Laura said, reminiscing on the first time she met her future husband, Daniel. “We stayed up all night talking for hours.”

The next day, the two had their first date — at a hospital. Daniel needed to go in for follow-up blood tests to ensure he was healing properly. The two both agree that the organ donation process, while endless, has at least assured them they’re both in exceptional health.

Countless tanks of gas and miles traveled held the couple together for the next year or so. While apart, Laura left a purple and orange stuffed plush kidney with Daniel; the same one a friend had given her before surgery. It has two eyes and a smile and the tag reads, “When urine love.”

To pass the time, Daniel took photos of the stuffed kidney dressed in everything from sunglasses to bandannas and sent them to her. “I guess we do have a spare kidney,” he joked.

In 2016, she immigrated to the U.S. to live with Daniel in Sharpsburg. The two married shortly afterward on June 16 in a small courthouse proceeding. Laura now works as a receptionist for ALCO Parking Corp and both Laura and Daniel are active volunteers for CORE, where they promote the benefits of living donation.

Life with one kidney has treated the newlyweds well, they said. Laura has even said that living with one kidney has forced her to be more mindful about the way she treats her body.

Together, the couple is sure to drink lots of water, avoid excessive sodium and exercise. Laura is used to this routine since she lost 30 pounds in preparation for her donation surgery nearly five years ago.

“It [the kidney] was inside my body, but it didn’t belong to me anymore,” she said. “I was taking care of it for someone else.”

February marked their first Valentine’s Day together, and they have matching scars as a physical reminder of how they simultaneously gave life to others and also found love.

“I think it was different from traditional courtship rules,” Laura said. “We shared something so intimate.”

**This story was originally published in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**
On National Donor Day, Donate Life West Virginia shared a heart-warming story about a special bond shared by a mother and her young son.

While pregnant with her son, Easton, Alicia Petry suffered from peripartum cardiomyopathy. Due to this illness, Alicia badly needed a heart transplant. She would receive her transplant on Nov. 7, 2014, but was faced with another painful obstacle in her road to recovery: Alicia was unable to see her own newborn son until he was 7 weeks old.

“When I finally saw him, I knew I had to fight harder, pull myself together and keep moving forward,” Alicia said. “There is no stronger medicine than a mother’s love.”

Alicia is eternally grateful for her donor and says that because of their gift, “My son has his mommy.”

Grant Offers WV Physicians Support Through Donation

West Virginia physicians are now given the extra support needed to successfully integrate organ, cornea and tissue donation advocacy into their everyday practice – thanks in part to a grant to CORE from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

The overall goals of the grant program – the Physician Advocacy Campaign – are to reduce the supply and demand gap for donations by identifying successful strategies while increasing the public’s understanding of the options available through living donation.

With only 34 percent of people in West Virginia registered as donors and nearly 500 residents awaiting a life-saving organ transplant, the grant comes at a crucial time for West Virginians.

By training and empowering physicians and their office staff to approach patients about organ donation, the Physician Advocacy Campaign provides an important pathway by which people with doubts or concerns about organ donation can receive information from a trusted source with whom they have a pre-existing relationship.

With in-person training – as well as posters, brochures and designation forms strategically placed throughout hospital settings – the Physician Advocacy Campaign engages physicians, staff and office managers while making it easy for them to promote organ donation.

Remembering Yvonne Bryant Moore: An Advocate & Friend

CORE is saying goodbye to our friend Yvonne Bryant Moore, Kidney Recipient and WV Multicultural Taskforce Chairperson, who died in January of 2017. Yvonne was living proof of the transformation of transplantation.

By the end of 2001, the long-term effects of diabetes resulted in congestive heart failure, glaucoma, and the early stages of kidney failure.

She was a fighter on a mission to reach numerous organizations, associations and religious affiliates on the importance of organ donation.

Yvonne received a kidney transplant in 2007, then became a founding member and chairperson of the West Virginia Multicultural Task Force established in 2008. Her leadership brought together numerous minority sororities, fraternities, civic organizations and guilds to promote organ donation awareness. She leaves behind her husband Howard and canine companion Bandit.
The Hillman Center for Pediatric Transplantation at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC is ranked highest for pediatric liver transplant outcomes, according to January data released from the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR). Children's ranks as No. 1 out of 62 pediatric liver transplant centers in the U.S. in one-year overall patient survival as well as one-year overall graft survival.

Of the 29 centers performing pediatric living-donor liver transplants, Children's hazard ratio estimates also rank first in one-year patient and graft survival, as well as three-year patient and graft survival. Children's has performed over 135 living-donor liver transplants since 1997, and more than any pediatric transplant center in the last five years nationally.

"This new data exemplifies the extraordinary talent and skill our surgeons, hepatologists and entire transplant team bring to hopeful patients and families around the world," said George Mazariegos, M.D., chief, pediatric transplantation at Children's. "Our decades of experience are unparalleled — we have performed more pediatric liver transplants than any other center in the United States while achieving patient survival rates that are consistently among the best."

Children's has performed more than 1,700 pediatric liver transplants since the program's inception in 1981 through December 2016, including more than 135 living-donor liver transplants since 1997. In the last five years of recorded data (2011 to 2016), Children's has performed more living-donor liver transplants than any other pediatric liver transplant center in the country.

Children's also is the first and only pediatric transplant center in the nation to expand the geographic reach of its program through a partnership with the University of Virginia Children's Hospital in Charlottesville.

February 3, 2017 marked the 195th birthday of Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States. Allegheny Health Network (AHN) joined healthcare organizations around the country to mark the day by recognizing and honoring female physicians and the important role they play in the health of patients and the community.

"Female physicians are an extremely important part of the medical workforce," said Susan Manzi, M.D., chair of AHN's Department of Medicine. "On this day, we proudly recognize the many women physicians at AHN who bring passionate, high-quality, patient-centered care to their patients each and every day."

According to Physician Moms Group, there are currently 311,886 practicing female physicians in the U.S., which constitute 34 percent of the total physician workforce.
Volunteer Spotlight

CORE Volunteers Gear Up for Erie Auto Show

Volunteers from Erie, PA, spent three days urging visitors of the Erie Auto Show to check the designation box on their driver’s license applications. Accompanied by a replica of Indy car driver Joey Gase’s Donate Life NASCAR vehicle, the volunteers said they had a great time and were able to get people revved up about donation.

Volunteers Race for Designations at Pitt Auto Show

The Pittsburgh Auto Show isn’t only famous for showcasing the latest exotic cars from McLaren, Ferrari and Lamborghini — it’s also known as one of the best CORE volunteer events of the year! And 2017 didn’t disappoint. From February 17-20, scores of CORE volunteers manned an info table to answer questions and sign up new donors!

CORE Volunteers Kick Off 2017!

More than 100 volunteers participated in CORE’s annual Volunteer Kick Off event on January 28 – in-person at CORE’s headquarters in RIDC Park in Pittsburgh, and via video conferencing from Charleston, WV.

The day featured representatives from CORE’s Community Outreach team as well as some exciting guest speakers, including former NFL head coach and heart recipient, Sam Wyche. UPMC Kidney and pancreas Surgical Director, Dr. Amit Tevar offered clinical insights on living donation and innovations in transplantation. From Charleston, Susan Hanna, RN and CCTC Pre Transplant Coordinator at CAMC Transplant Center approached the subject of transplantation from the center’s point of view, pointing out their role in the process and how volunteers can work to support and promote donation.

Other activities included a pennant decorating/ice-breaker opportunity and clinical jeopardy led by CORE’s Advanced Practice Donation Coordinator, Nikki Taylor.

Overall, the event successfully educated and motivated the audience of volunteers to continue their support of CORE’s mission to improve and enhance lives.

Legendary NFL Coach, Heart Recipient Cheers On CORE Volunteers at 2017 Kickoff

On Sept. 12, 2016, doctors caring for Sam Wyche, the former head coach of the Cincinnati Bengals and Tampa Bay Buccaneers, believed the then-71-year-old was down to his final hours – potentially less than that. After Sam called various family members and friends to say his final goodbyes, those same doctors appeared in his hospital room again – this time with better news.

In the early morning hours of Sept. 13, 2016, Sam received a new heart, and a new outlook on life. As Sam says, his life was spared because someone had the foresight to register to be an organ donor. And because of that, Sam plans to dedicate the rest of his life to raising awareness on and advocating for organ donation, and urging others to take 30 seconds to register to be an organ donor.

Sam’s new outlook – as well as his overall good health – was on display at CORE on Jan. 28, 2017, in front of a large gathering of CORE volunteers. Sam graciously accepted an invitation to be the keynote speaker at the annual CORE Volunteer Kickoff event, and used the opportunity to commend volunteers for their impressive work in 2016, and motive them for even bigger accomplishments in 2017.

After speaking with media and CORE volunteers as a whole, Sam took the rest of the morning to connect one-on-one with several volunteers; to listen to their stories, share updates on his new heart, and even talk a little football.

He left CORE that day speaking highly of the facility and the amazing work the volunteers do every day, and hopes to partner with CORE more in the future, to further strengthen the shared mission of saving lives.
DONATE LIFE DIGEST

I LOVE YOU WITH ALL OF MY...LIVER?

Each year, Valentine’s Day coincides with National Donor Day, and to mark 2017, Donate Life Pennsylvania invited everyone to get ready for Feb. 14 with custom digital greeting cards that celebrate both occasions.

“I would let my heart be yours,” reads one of the cards. Another says, “I love you with all of my kidney.”

Now, anyone can share the organ-shaped cards on social media, by email or by print-at-home cards.

And an Elk County woman used the card to surprise an old friend with the gift of a lifetime: a new liver.

Toni Pearson, 69, was surprised Tuesday by her friend Sally Peterson and daughter Traci. Sitting on the couch, they exchanged the anatomical liver cards and then Sally announced she was a match to donate her liver.

Toni and Sally worked together as cashiers in the town of Kane as teenagers. Years later, when Toni posted on Facebook that she needed a transplant, Sally came to the rescue.

She knew she might be a match because of the test she had taken as a bone marrow donor. Sally’s mom died a few years ago of bone cancer and she decided then to become a donor to help others.

“The best way to celebrate Valentine’s Day is to give your heart to the person you love. Roses and chocolates never last long, but the 30 seconds it takes to register as a donor can have a lifelong impact,” said Susan Stuart, president and CEO of the Center for Organ Recovery & Education in Pittsburgh.

PINWHEELS TO SYMBOLIZE NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH

Donate Life America was inspired by the concept of the pinwheel for the 2017 National Donate Life Month (NDLM) artwork (left). A pinwheel evokes various images and meanings, but the strongest association revolves around opportunity and energy.

The pinwheel is symbolic of an instrument that turns obstacles into opportunities. The pinwheel’s ability to capture and pass on energy parallels one’s potential to make life possible. Each Donate Life pinwheel has four sails supported by one stem, symbolizing the power one person has to be an organ, eye, tissue or living donor. For recipients, donation can turn sickness and injury into a second chance at life. For donors, their decision to register can turn a sorrowful time into a source of comfort for family as a result of renewed life for others.

The pinwheel reminds us that we all have the potential to capture and pass on life, comfort and hope to others by registering as a donor.

NDLM was instituted by Donate Life America and its partnering organizations in 2003. Celebrated in April each year, NDLM features an entire month of local, regional and national activities to help encourage Americans to register as organ, eye and tissue donors, and to celebrate those that have saved lives through the gift of donation.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, March 24  •  12pm
Saturday, April 28 • 12pm
Panera Bread Meeting Room
3401 Blvd of the Allies,
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

The meetings are open discussion; bring your personal victories to share, your concerns, and your questions.

Our goal is to provide support to pre-transplant and post-transplant individuals in the physical and emotional areas through discussion. The information shared is personal and should be kept private within the support group.

To attend, please contact Tom at t.meshanko@verizon.net.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join Us to Celebrate

The Art of Life

Monday, March 6, 2017
6:30–9 pm
Senti Restaurant and Wine Bar

$95 per person
(including tax and gratuity)

In 2010, artist Traute Ishida – whose paintings adorn the walls of Senti – received a second chance at life thanks to her daughter, Senti owner Annette Ishida, who donated a liver to help save her mom.

On Traute’s birthday, we’ll be celebrating her vibrant artwork and precious gift of life while raising funds for the Center for Organ Recovery & Education (CORE).

The evening will feature a special menu and a performance by jazz musician Fred Pugh and Friends.

CORE works throughout western Pennsylvania and beyond to bridge the gap between donor families, health care professionals and transplant recipients to deliver the gift of life.

RSVP to eat@sentinrestaurant.com by March 1 or speak to your server.

WESTERN PA KIDNEY SUPPORT GROUP FUNDRAISER

The Western PA Kidney Support Groups needs your support. Bringing together more than 10,000 people in the region, we hold support groups to share experiences and provide vital information for our members. In addition to connecting with our 600 members through our support groups, we provide phone line support, and host seminars and conferences, as well as attend events to raise awareness of our organization. For each donation of $20 or more, you will receive a free T-shirt of your choice plus a button and bumper sticker. We have a limited selection of sizes from S-3XL. To make a donation, please call 412-427-2969 or email Jack Silverstein at silverjacki@yahoo.com and include your address, as well as which shirt size you would like. Upon receiving a check, your shirt, button and bumper sticker will be shipped to your home.

QUICK LINKS

Comments / Questions
Submit Your Story
Become a Volunteer
Join Our Mailing List
REGISTER TO BECOME A DONOR
www.donatelifepa.org
www.donatelifewv.org
VISIT OUR LINKS

CORE CALENDAR

CORE holds special events throughout the organization’s service area to enhance the profile of organ, tissue and cornea donation, and to provide opportunities for fellowship to those whose lives have been touched by donation. To stay on top of upcoming events throughout CORE’s service area and local events, visit core.org/community-outreach/calendar-of-events/.