



Jane Smith, Donor Mom, presents the family of Patricia Skinner with Gift of Life Certificates at the Gift of Life Ceremony on Sunday, May 6

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Gift of Life

Held each May, *Gift of Life* is a ceremony that recognizes the generosity and courage of Nova Scotians who have donated organs and tissues, and the families who supported their generous decisions.

“Our goal is to make sure donor families know the significance of the legacy left by their loved ones,” said Tami Murphy, Organ Donor Coordinator with the Capital Health District Authority.

The event combines brief comments from leaders in the health care community with inspiring stories by donor family members and transplant recipients, who speak from the heart about the impact organ and tissue donation has had on their

lives. Their stories are heart wrenching and unforgettable, and tell of great courage and humility.

Each family receives a Gift of Life Certificate, signed by the Premier of Nova Scotia, to recognize the tremendous generosity and selflessness of the donors. Family members also get an opportunity to mingle and share their experiences. In some years, as many as 250 people have attended this moving ceremony. Annual surveys of participants show that families appreciate the recognition of their loved one’s gifts, and the chance to interact with other donor families.

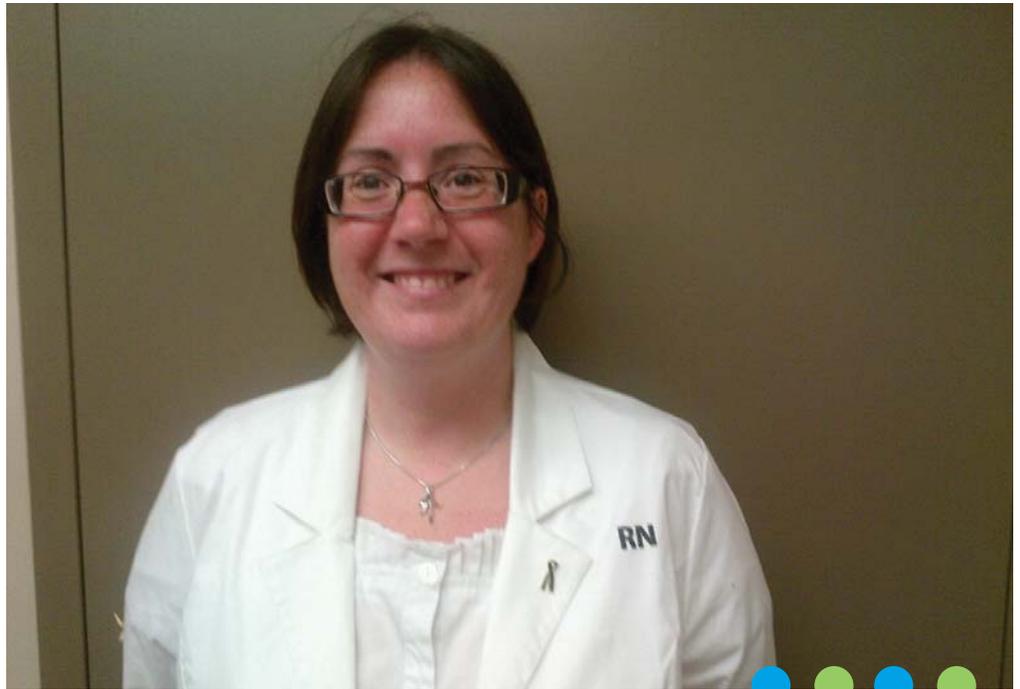
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Legacy of Life will soon celebrate its sixth year anniversary. Our strategic plan, developed in 2006 and updated in 2009, has been reviewed again, with a focus on new strategic priorities for 2012-2015. A program evaluation highlighted the work of the program since 2009, including a significant increase in the number of referrals and actual organ and tissue donors – our ultimate goal. 2011 saw 25 organ donors and 158 tissue donors, a tangible demonstration that all our stakeholders, working together, are getting the results we hoped for and needed. The organ and tissue donation environment has changed in recent years. To continue to build on the successes to date, we need to be vigilant and creative as we strive to the vision that “all Nova Scotians will know about organ and tissue donation and will choose to donate.” ■

Gift of Life *continued*

Gift of Life is a private ceremony to which donor families from across the province are invited as a small way to express a sincere thank you. The event reflects one of Legacy of Life's strategic directions, “to ensure donors and families are supported during and after donation.”

The Capital Health Critical Care Organ Donation Program leads the planning of the annual event, supported by the Regional Tissue Bank, Multi-Organ Transplant Program, and the Legacy of Life Nova Scotia Organ and Tissue Donation Program. ■



Nicole Wournell

Thirteen years ago, Nicole Wournell's niece became a tissue recipient, an event that left Nicole with a lifelong passion for organ and tissue donation. Today, Nicole serves as District Resource Nurse for Organ and Tissue Donation in the Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority (GASHA), a position she has held with the Legacy of Life program since July 2008. Over the past year Nicole has focused on education in her district. She has presented Meaningful

Donation Experiences workshops and conducted monthly orientation for new staff. Nicole credits a dramatic increase in referral rates to the required referral policy implemented in GASHA. Nicole tries to ensure all staff are educated on donor referral. Most recently, Nicole has been encouraging nurses and physicians to distribute information that is posted on the GASHA intranet to patients and their families. ■

INNOVATIVE IDEAS

To raise awareness about organ and tissue donation, the Life: Pass It On Transplant Society created a grass roots campaign where individuals and organizations install green light bulbs in their porch lights/buildings during Canadian National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week (NOTDAW) from April 20th to 27th, 2013 and American Donate Life Month in April. Janet Evans suggests Christmas is a great time to check your local hardware store for green light bulbs. As Janet says, “Buy Early, Light Up Later!” ■



Gracie, daughter of Shane Donovan, Manager of Acute and Tertiary Care, Department of Health and Wellness, proudly displays her green porch lights.

Professional EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS



Kate Hackett, Tissue Specialist, and Mark Bonin, Critical Care Organ Donor Coordinator, with an educational display at Capital Health.

The Professional Education Working Group developed an educational module for health professionals on the new Human Organ and Tissue Donation Act, set to be proclaimed in 2013. The module was developed with the RN Professional Development Centre and is comprised of a pre and post test, powerpoint presentation, video clips and links to important references.

The module will be available to all nurses in Nova Scotia through LMS Medworxx, and offers a short but effective way of learning what the nurse's responsibility

is around identification, referral and documentation of the organ and tissue donation process in Nova Scotia.

Education sessions will also be available through the district resource nurse in each district health authority. For more information or to arrange a session, contact the nurse for your district listed on the last page of this newsletter. The College of Registered Nurses will offer a Telehealth Session in November where you can learn more about the module and get a preview of the content.

The Professional Education Working Group has identified a need to develop and test a screening tool for frontline health professionals to use when making a referral for organ and tissue donation. The tool provides information on absolute contraindications so that an initial screening can be completed, how to make the referral, and the documentation needed. The screening tool is currently undergoing a pilot in selected units in Cape Breton District Health Authority.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

Strategic priorities and working groups

Legacy of Life will review the current working groups as part of the updated strategic plan to ensure that there is dedicated time and effort on the new directions. These four areas were prioritized at a planning session held in June: the

roll out of the Human Organ and Tissue Donation Act once proclaimed, the response to the CBS *Call to Action*, making donation an accepted part of end of life care, and program sustainability. We're looking forward to re-energized work in these areas!

The Donor Family Working Group has reviewed its Recommendations Report from 2009 to assess which focus areas

have improved for the donor family. Progress has been made on several of the recommendations: a donor family follow up survey has been implemented, an after care program is available to donor families, and a policy for living organ donor reimbursement for out of pocket expenses has been drafted. Efforts will continue to improve the organ and tissue donation process for donors and families within the new strategic priorities.

On June 20, 2012, *Call to Action*, a blueprint for the national strategy on organ and tissue donation and transplantation developed on behalf of the OTDT community in Canada, was released by Canadian Blood Services (downloadable at www.OrgansandTissues.ca). Canadian Blood Services is continuing to work collaboratively with governments and stakeholders on detailed implementation plans for consideration – ones that reflect the unique jurisdictional requirements and fiscal challenges of individual provinces.

Canadian Blood Services also launched the second patient transplant registry, the National Organ Waitlist (NOW), on June 26th. The first registry, the Living Donor Paired Exchange Registry, matches incompatible donor/recipient pairs with other pairs for transplant. The NOW will serve as the system of record for non-renal organ listing and allocation in Canada, and includes all non-renal patients of all statuses who have end-stage organ failure and are waiting for transplants.

Canadian Blood Services is also working on a third registry, the Highly Sensitized Patient (HSP) registry. The HSP registry is designed to identify, for highly sensitized kidney patients, potential matches with deceased donors from across Canada. The HSP registry is set to launch later this year.

Web:
<http://www.OrgansandTissues.ca>

Twitter:
[@itsinyoutogive](https://twitter.com/itsinyoutogive)

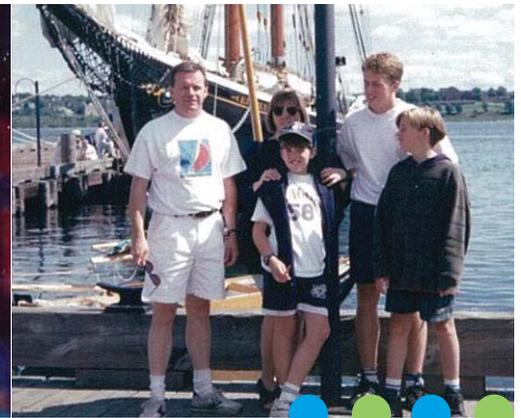
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/

CanadianBloodServices

YouTube channel:
18882DONATE.



Derrick Lewis



Derrick and Family

Donor Family – Bert and Maurina Lewis

Derrick Raymond Lewis, the eldest son of Bert and Maurina, was born Mother's Day, May 14, 1978. At the age of 17, he was an elite athlete, an honours student and a young man in the prime of his life who always strove to be the best at whatever he was involved in. This all changed on Good Friday 1996.

In 1996, our family found ourselves in a situation that no family wants to be in. Derrick was involved in a falling accident that resulted in irreversible brain injury. Our family of five – Sean, Steven, Derrick, Maurina (mother) and Bert (father) – was reduced to four in the blink of an eye. So many questions went through our minds – Why us? Why now? How can this happen to our family? What do we do now?

We had been involved with organ donation and awareness in our community before Derrick's accident. Family friends, The Young's, and their daughter Carmen's health challenges and advocacy introduced organ and tissue donation to us and many in our community. As a family, we openly talked about organ and tissue donation and its importance to so many people and their families.

During the difficult conversations we had as a family and with the medical staff at the QEII following the accident, we knew that Derrick's wish was to donate his organs and tissues. It was our role to have the courage to honour his wishes. As we sat together, we knew that this was the only decision we could make; Derrick would want others to have the chance to live their lives to the fullest the way he always lived his.

Through the donation of Derrick's organs and tissues other families were able to continue with their lives. The organ donation coordinators provided our family with updates and letters from some of the recipients of Derrick's gift of life – people who may not be alive without it. This gave us a sense of comfort in such a difficult and trying time.

Derrick has been honoured in many ways through our community, including high school scholarships, junior high recognitions, hockey awards and tournaments named in his honour. Derrick's spirit lives on in our family, our friends and community, but also in so many people that he knew and those that he never knew.

It is important that families talk openly about and be aware of the need for organ and tissue donation. We believe that our exposure to and discussion about this important gift of life, made the decision to donate Derrick's organs and tissues much easier.

Our family is involved in many aspects of Nova Scotia's organ and tissue awareness program. As active participants, we know that each year hundreds of Nova Scotians are given a second chance at life thanks to the generosity of people who register to be an organ and tissue donor.

Please talk to your family about organ and tissue donation and sign your donor card.

KUDOS CORNER

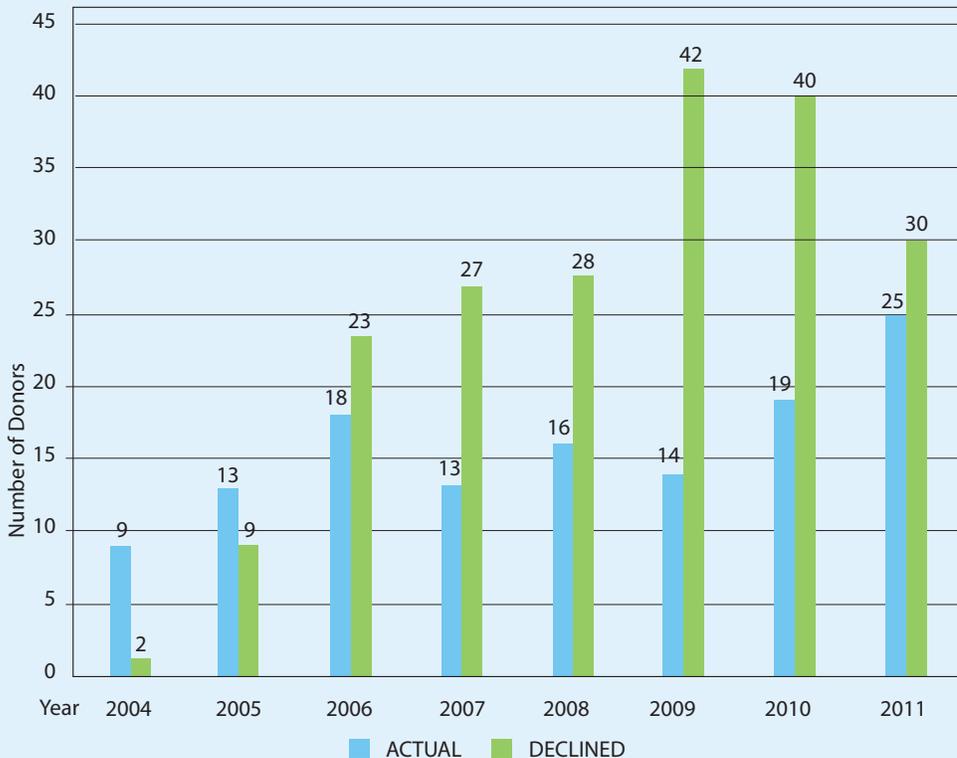


Kidney Foundation of Canada's living green ribbon

There has been a significant increase in referrals for tissue donation from a number of the district health authorities in 2011. Kudos to South Shore Health, Annapolis Valley District Health Authority, Pictou County Health Authority, Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority and Cape Breton District Health Authority. ■

STATS

**Nova Scotia Organ Donor Actual and Declined
(due to medical or other reasons)
2004-2011**



DID You Know?

Is there an age limit for donation?

For organ donation there is no age limit. For tissue donation the age limit is 80 years.

If I sign my MSI card to be a donor will everything still be done to save my life?

Yes! Every effort will be made to save your life.

Organ and tissue donation are considered as an option only after a physician has declared the death of the patient and a decision has been made to stop treatment.

If I have a chronic illness or medical condition, can I still donate?

Thorough medical screening is done at the time of donation and only healthy organs and tissue are used for transplant. If you have an illness that affects a particular organ, it is still okay to sign your health card to be a donor. Indicating your wish to be a donor does not necessarily mean that all organs will be recovered.

Can I be an organ and tissue donor and also donate my body to medical science?

You may be eligible to donate corneas only.

Will donation delay or change funeral plans?

Donation may cause a slight delay of up to 24 hours. ■

PARTNER UPDATES

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is active in organ donation awareness and is it any wonder? Kidneys are the most commonly transplanted organs. Of the over 4,300 Canadians on the waiting list for an organ transplantation, nearly 80% are waiting for a kidney. This reality is shocking and it is sad to think that only 41% of Canadians being treated for kidney failure have a functioning kidney transplant. The other 59% require dialysis treatments to stay alive.

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the national volunteer organization committed to reducing the burden of kidney disease through:

- Funding and stimulating innovative research;
- Providing education and support;
- Promoting access to quality healthcare;

and,

- Increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.

Organ donation awareness walks are held each year throughout all of Atlantic Canada. These walks are used to highlight the importance of organ donation and to raise funds to support the mission of the Kidney Foundation. Research, funded by the Kidney Foundation, has led to the development and perfection of dialysis treatment. It has made transplantation the treatment of choice for an increasing number of patients, and has led to the development of the anti-rejection drugs that have made kidney transplants so successful. All of these advances as well as countless others, would never have been made were it not for thousands of hours and millions of dollars first

being spent on basic and clinical medical research.

The Foundation relies heavily on volunteers to deliver its mission, including the organ donation message. In Atlantic Canada, the Foundation has recently undergone significant organizational change, amalgamating the existing branches into one Atlantic Canada Branch. This will lead to increased efficiencies in delivering the mission. At the community level, volunteers continue to be the driving force of the Foundation and new volunteers are always welcome.

To volunteer with The Kidney Foundation of Canada or to learn more about the Kidney Foundation, please call 1-877-453-0533 or visit www.kidney.ca.

ORGAN AND TISSUE CONTACTS



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South West Health
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Shelley Orr - DHA3

Annapolis Valley Health
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Jill Peterson – DHA4

Colchester East Hants Health Authority
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Sue Boiduk – DHA5

Cumberland Health Authority
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Cathy Timmons – DHA6

Pictou County Health Authority
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Daily: 902.752.7600, ext. 2610

Nicole Wournell – DHA7

Guysborough Antigonish-Strait
Health Authority
Cell: 902.870.5443
Office: 902.867.4500, ext. 4258

Janet Evans – DHA8

Cape Breton District Health Authority
Cell : 902.574.2912
Office : 902.567.7031

Corinne Corning

Legacy of Life Program Manager
Halifax: 902.424.7916

Capital Health

Call and ask for the
Organ Donor Coordinator or the
Tissue Bank Specialist on call
Halifax: 902.473.2220