

Editorial: Be a life-saver; sign up to donate your organs

April 9, 2015

You could be somebody's hero. Maybe even eight somebodies. Not to mention all their families and friends. Wouldn't that be a legacy?

All you need to do is register to be an organ donor. The course of your life will determine the rest of the story.



Editor Marv Knox April is Organ Donation Month. What better time than spring—with new life abounding everywhere you look—to make a commitment to, one day, donate your organs and save other lives.

According to the [Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network](#):

- 123,363 Americans need a life-saving organ transplant.
- Someone joins the national transplant waiting list every 10 minutes.
- An average of 21 people die every day while awaiting a transplant.
- 11,676 Texans are waiting for one or more organs.
- The Texas numbers include 9,563 kidneys, 1,631 livers, 60 pancreases, 112 kidney/pancreas combinations, 403 hearts, 171 lungs, five heart-lung combinations and one intestine.

If you're feeling a sense of *déjà vu*, it may be because I reminded you April is Organ Donation Month about this time two years ago. And the situation is worse now than it was then. The need grows year by year. For example, in 1988, the national donor waiting list included 15,029 names. Now, it's more than eight times that long.

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Organ donation is a personal issue at our house.

My sister, Martha, died in April 2009, just a few months past her 50th birthday. Martha suffered from several physical maladies at birth, including severe kidney/bladder problems. Our dad donated a kidney to Martha when she was 35, and that gift extended her life more than 15 years.

Martha and I awaited clearance to participate in a national shared-donor program when she died. Although we looked a lot alike, I wasn't a match. But I could donate a kidney to someone else, so another person would donate a kidney to Martha. To our family's grief, she died before the swap occurred.

Every one of those 123,363 people on the national donation waiting list is a loved one—mother, father, sister, brother, daughter, son, cousin, friend.

You and I can save the lives of people on that list—or, more probably, people who will be on that list someday. The selfless act of organ donation can save as many as eight lives.

Sign up as an organ donor

So, please join me in registering as an organ donor. You can take two simple steps to declare your intent—and give your permission—to donate your organs:

- When you renew your driver's license, indicate you agree to be an

organ donor. Your new license will come with a little red heart with “donor” stamped on it.

- Register as a donor at the [Donate Life Texas website](#). If you live outside Texas, look for your state’s donor program on the Internet.

You have nothing to lose. And others have everything to gain.