Reality Check at Life Savers Rally

Three hundred students at the 2014 Life Savers Rally explored how today’s questions become tomorrow's answers. Becoming a living donor, lab-grown organs and 3D bio printers were among the topics. The annual rally hosted by Gift of Life at the Plaza Library’s Truman Forum, is designed to teach selected student leaders about organ and tissue donation and encourage them to lead awareness campaigns in their high schools.

The keynote speaker was Joan Schanck, Academic Research Program Officer, Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine (WFIRM), and Director of Education of the Regenerative Medicine Foundation. Encouraging students to explore science and research, she provided an introduction to the field of “regen med” that has developed as a response to the shortage of donor organs suitable and available for transplantation. Today, this cutting-edge technology is being applied to develop tissue and organs that can be supplied on demand for many therapeutic applications.

Personal transplant stories were shared by the rally’s MC, Suzanne Doris, who donated a kidney to her mother, Barb Frye. Kenzie Berwald, a college student, and Connor Janes, a local nurse, are two young adults who shared their experience as stem cell donors for bone marrow transplants. Faith, strength and courage was the final message delivered by Mindy Corporon, a donor mother. She opened her heart to tell the story of her son Reat, who was fatally shot at the Jewish Community Center this year with his grandfather, Dr. William Corporon.

Kim Harbur encouraged students to access the resources offered by Gift of Life to create their own Life Savers program. She presented the annual achievement award to Blue Valley High School. A competition to convey the Life Savers message through a thirty-second song was won by Shawnee Mission North with their send up to the musical “Rent.”

Evening Panel Continues Regenerative Debate

Lab-grown organs is the more sensational language used when discussing the complex field of regenerative medicine. Anne Peterson moderated a panel discussion on this topic hosted by Gift of Life the evening of the Life Savers Rally. The guest speaker was Joan Schanck, from Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine (WFIRM), That evening she explained how technology, current challenges and future applications of this highly interdisciplinary field can impact the world of transplantation.

Today, WFIRM’s interdisciplinary team is working to engineer more than 30 different replacement tissues and organs and to develop healing cell therapies — all with the goal to cure, rather than merely treat, disease. She explained how tissue, skin and bladders have been common in testing and real-life applications for the last ten years.

Special thanks to our panelists responding to Ms. Schanck’s remarks: Dr. Mark Reintjes, M.D., general surgeon, University of Kansas Hospital, and Tarris “Terry” Rosell, DMin, PhD, who serves in the Rosemary Flanigan Chair at the Center for Practical Bioethics. A reception prior to the presentation was hosted by Diane Ravis as a tribute to her late husband, Michael Ravis, liver transplant recipient. Beverages were hosted by Nathan C. Harbur, Chartered.

Thank You

Life Savers Rally Planning Team
Suzanne Doris
Ginger Ireland
Kathy Kratoftil
Sam Loughmiller
Pam McHugh
Diane Ravis

Message Contest Judges
Dan Auman & Karen Swope, Auman Mack

Message Contest Winning School
Shawnee Mission North

Life Savers Rally & Regenerative Medicine Panel Sponsors
Bertil & Ulla Brunke
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Michael Ravis Memorial Fund
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Saint Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City
Saving Sight
University of Kansas Hospital
Center for Transplantation, University of Kansas Hospital

Community Partners
John & Nell Bowen
Nate & Kim Harbur
Olathe Medical Center
University of Kansas Hospital

Special Thanks
Auman Mack
Planet Sub
Life Savers Rally Volunteers

Thanks to all who made the 2013–2014 Life Savers school year a success!

- Classroom programs delivered 517
- Individuals reached 24,000
- Participating metro high schools 90
- Classroom speakers 24
- 10 Year Milestone: 200,000 individuals reached
Special Thanks & World Series Fever

Crawl for Cancer (C4C) is an organization that represents the philanthropic voice of young professionals in Kansas City. This month C4C contributed $10,000 to support the programs offered by Gift of Life. In October, our volunteers were also found on the golf course with members of the 1985 Royals at Precision Roofing’s Annual Celebrity Golf Tournament. Precision’s gift of $5,000 is greatly appreciated, but the bonus for volunteers included great photos with Frank White, Al Fitzmorris and other baseball greats! The William G. McGowan Charitable Fund has also announced a $25,000 contribution to Gift of Life. Their generosity will underwrite ten video success stories to enhance the virtual-mentoring section of our website. The McGowan gift will extend the reach of the program to those not well enough to visit a Life Mentor. Other gifts were received from Whole Foods for Community Giving Day and the Olathe Junior Service League to continue the Life Savers program in their local schools. The Johnson County Bar Foundation has partnered with Gift of Life to present an evening discussion focused on the paperwork needed for those facing a chronic illness and transplantation. That program will be part of the new Pre & Post Transplant series hosted by Gift of Life on February 11th with attorneys from the Bar Foundation. ★

Foundations Underwrite Transplant Survey of Local Patients & Families

Gifts from the American Century Investments Foundation and the William G. McGowan Charitable Fund underwrote a major research project led by Gift of Life examining the transplant experience in Kansas City. Professionally facilitated by Kassie Sands, SupportKC, the summer was consumed with three focus groups including new transplant recipients and medical professionals. The second phase was to compare the feedback with a community-wide survey. Exceeding expectations, eighty transplant households responded. The results will be revealed at a special Transplant Town Hall, 5:30 pm, January 13, at the Gift of Life office, 6405 Metcalf, Suite 109, Overland Park KS 66202. Space is limited. A second evening will be scheduled if there is interest. ★
Life Mentors Offer Encouragement

Over 350 solid organ transplants were performed in Kansas City last year. Our transplant Life Mentors were there to offer encouragement and support to new recipients, living donors and their families. We extend special thanks to our four local transplant hospitals which refer patients to the program; Children’s Mercy Hospital, The Transplant Institute at Research Medical Center, Saint Luke’s Hospital, and The Center for Transplantation at the University of Kansas Hospital. Listed below are volunteers who have made a difference this year through this effort:

Bobbi Abram
Carl Anderson
Charles Anderson
Greg Andrews
Willene & Lawrie Arthur
Patty Banks
Terrence Brown
Amber Burris
Sheryl Chadwick
Bonnie Chaney
Vicki Clagett
Lisa Claudel
Cheryl Davis
Lesley DeFio
Gail G. Dicus
Tracy Doane
Brenda Donahue
Dwight Douglas
Melissa Edris
Sandy Edwards
Kellie Elliott
Shery & Dave Fogle
Robert Fowle
Suzanne Frye
Lowell & Teresa Ghesue
Jeanne & Bob Glidewell
Julie Goodman
Sheryl Granville
Don Hall
Kim Harbur
Linda Haslauer
Kellie Hearst
Andy Heath
Tham Hoffman
Lisa Holleron
Becki Kling-Huether
Maureen Hultbert
Ginger Ireland
David & Lydia Jeter
Everett Johnson
Jim Jones
Dick Kaegel
Gene Kern
Kathryn Kieffer
Denise Koorse
Keith Kopf
Kathy Kratofoil
Merikay Lott
Sam Loughmiller
Sarah Lovitt
Alex McCallow
Kevon McCarty
Peggy McGinnis
Rita McGuire
Michael McSweeney
Sue Mehl
Dee Jo Miller
Sonya Miller
Lanna Moluf
Lorie Morrison
Ashleigh Moulder
Jeff Mowry
Mike Murrell
Rebecca Murray
Paula Naughtin
Felicia Neal-Burns
Pat O’Connor
Keith & Melissa
Ostermeyer
Eric Otte
Chris Paxton
Josh Peters
Lee Pettijean
Ansara Piebenga
Nancy Post
Diane Ravis
Tim Reed
Craig Rettmer
Kathy Riegelman
Jill Riester
Dick Rosenstock
Ann & Jim Rumsey
Debby Sager
Christina Scholdberg
Will Shireman
Alice Smirl
Jim Smith
Judy Smith
Jennifer Smothers
Sharon Spencer
Andy Staley
Doug Strickland
Terra Ullery
Marllyn Unger
Katelyn Walter
Janice Weaver
Don Whitson
Lester Williamson
Ramiro Zelada
Lisa Zimmerer
Merle Zuel

Gift of Life Speakers Bureau:
Gary Boring, heart recipient
Pam Bransted, recipient mother
Bob & Tonya Brown, donor parents
Debra Callaway, living kidney donor
Jerri Carroll, donor mother
Danna Dahl, recipient family
Michele Shanahan DeMoss, donor mother
Gail G. Dicus, heart recipient
Sherri Doherty, recipient & donor family
Dwight Douglas, heart recipient
Phil Duncan, heart recipient
Sandy Edwards, liver recipient
Suzanne Doris, living kidney donor
Beulah Gaskin, donor grandmother
Sheryl Granville, liver recipient
Amy Honeycutt, liver recipient
Maureen Hultbert, living kidney donor
Ginger Ireland, living liver donor
David Jeter, heart recipient
Sharon Kelly, lung recipient
Kathy Kratofil, liver recipient
Sam Loughmiller, kidney recipient
Frank Mascaro, heart recipient
Pete McHugh, liver recipient
Pam McHugh, recipient family
Larry McMillin, donor father
Michael Nolte, donor family & tissue recipient
Erica Peters, recipient family
Anne Peterson, donor mother
Emilee Rickard, recipient family
Deb Simaitis, donor mother
Libby Stone, liver recipient
Mitt Strader, kidney recipient
Steve White, donor family
Emily Williams, donor family
Fred Wingert, pancreas recipient
Lisa Zimmerer, kidney/pancreas recipient

Pre & Post: Transplant Conversations

“Pre & Post” is a series of informal conversations held at the Gift of Life office or a local coffee shop for anyone who may be curious to speak with successful transplant recipients. A range of topics are selected, but the intent is to allow flexibility so those present can have their concerns addressed. Pre & Post is a great opportunity for new transplant candidates, new recipients and caregivers. Volunteer coordinator for the evenings is Nancy Post who received a transplant twenty six years ago.

Contact Andy Donnelly, andyd@giftdonor.org or call 913-851-1947 for location and time.*
Gift of Life hosts meaningful conversations about organ and tissue donation in high school classrooms, local hospitals, on our web site (giftdonor.org) and Facebook page (giftoflifekc). None of this would be possible without the ongoing financial support of those listed on this page. Thank you!
Make a Difference! Support Gift of Life

Please consider supporting Gift of Life with a year-end gift. We are proud to say that 83% of every dollar goes to programs to help build awareness and provide support to the transplant community. Simply call 913-851-1947, give online at giftdonor.org/participate/become-a-supporter/ or mail a contribution to Gift of Life, 6405 Metcalf, Suite 109, Overland Park, KS 66202.

Board of Directors Lead Volunteerism

After more than twelve years of service we extend heartfelt thanks to retiring Gift of Life board members Dr. Jameson Forster, transplant surgeon, and Anne Peterson, donor mother. Both are founding members of the board and play key roles in our legacy of saving lives. We welcome three new board members Dan Lowe, liver recipient and Managing Partner of Red Legacy, LLC, Hilda Fuentes, liver recipient and CEO of the Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center, and Dr. Sean Kumer, transplant surgeon, The Center for Transplantation, University of Kansas Hospital.

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1. Incoming board president Bob Watson and his wife Meta, with Kim Harbur.
2. Founding board member Dr. Jameson Forster with Kim and Nate Harbur, co-founders.