

# From Strangers to a Support System

**S**gt. Rich Stringer was traveling home to Phoenix from Texas in October 2016. On a connecting flight through El Paso, he met 30-year-old Jacob Washburn and his mom, Kim Boswell, Dallas natives. From take-off to landing, Rich talked to Washburn and discovered the reason he was going to Phoenix.

Washburn has struggled with cystic fibrosis his whole life. He was going to St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center to be evaluated for his second double-lung transplant. He had already gone through 42 surgeries, and without a transplant he would die.

Rich was touched by the strength of this family and realized it was his purpose to help them.

Washburn was staying in an apartment nearby the hospital with his dad, so Rich and his wife Janne Stringer invited Boswell to stay in their guest bedroom.

"The Stringer family hasn't left our side," Washburn said. "They've been a huge support system; we don't know what we would have done without them."

Washburn received his double-lung transplant two days before Thanksgiving. He is doing well post-surgery and his relationship with the Stringer family continues to grow. The Stringers have opened their home to Washburn for the next year as he receives treatment.

**"I cannot express the unintended miracle this family has given me," says Boswell.**

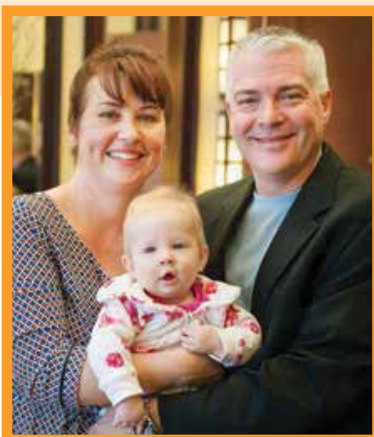


(from l to r) Kim Boswell, Sgt. Rich Stringer and double-lung recipient, Jake Washburn, had an instant bond after meeting on a flight to Phoenix in October 2016.

Washburn's successful surgery at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center has a deeper meaning for Rich. He has faced tragedy many times in his 20 years with the Glendale Police Department. Many of his friends were taken into the hospital with life-threatening injuries and later passed away. Witnessing a donor's generosity and the hospital staff's hard work save Washburn's life gave Rich hope.

Washburn's story inspired Rich to sign up as an organ donor just a couple of weeks after meeting him.

"I hope this story motivates others to make this choice," says Rich. "This man was given the opportunity to live on. He is a living example of why people need to be donors."



## Blood Drives at Donor Network of Arizona

As a Phoenix Police Officer, Rob was shot in the line of duty. Doctors needed 158 blood transfusions to save his life. Help save lives by scheduling an appointment at one of Donor Network of Arizona's blood drives!

**March 29, July 20 and Oct. 31**

**201 W. Coolidge St. Phoenix, AZ 85013**



A Donate Life Organization

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# DonateLifeAZ Registry

2,862,131

(as of August 12, 2016)



**Contact Us:**

For more information, please contact  
Rhiannon Knueven at 602-222-3806.

## Emergency Professionals

# Connection

A newsletter published by Donate Life Arizona



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#### Contributors:

Tim Brown  
Rhiannon Kneuen  
Sara Pace Jones

#### Writers and Editors:

Irasema Celis  
Alexa Haynes  
Kris Patterson  
Ariana Peery  
Miranda Reddy

## His Next Adventure: The Gift of Life



Phoenix firefighter Gary Johnstone enjoyed going on outdoor adventures during his time away from the station.

One day in early August 2014, Gary Johnstone went rappelling with his son, Alec, and two of Alec's friends on the Sugar Cube rock formation near the beginning of Echo Canyon Trail in Phoenix, AZ. This adventure ended in tragedy, as Gary and one of Alec's friends both suffered a deadly fall and passed away.

A firefighter for 25 years; he worked with Sun City Fire Department and Phoenix Fire Department. This career allowed Gary the opportunity to help people during some of their most tragic moments, a gift that he embraced and carried on even after he passed away as a tissue donor. Every day was a search for adventure for him, but above all Gary always knew he wanted to save lives. From his early childhood, he aspired to a career that would let him make a positive impact in the world.

Gary was married to his wife, Lisa, and was also a generous father to their three boys: Alec, 17; Nathaniel, 15; and Lucas, 14.

He was just as much a kid as his boys, and being with his kids made him happier than anything else in the world. Lisa says, "The thing that the boys miss most was that he would always come home from work and ask, 'What adventure are we going to have today?'"

Gary's tissue donation provided his family with a small glimmer of hope through this tragedy. His corneas went to two different people in Arizona while his skin went on to help others, including burn victims.

He was always supportive of donation and knew the value of giving life to others.

"When I got the letter that said he was able to donate all those things it was just so wonderful," says Lisa. "I talk to my friends about donation all the time. It would be a shame not to pass on life to others."

Gary enjoyed playing the bagpipes. He was part of the Honor Guard Pipes and Drums, a band that represents the fire department and honors fallen public safety officers by playing at their funerals and memorials.

"Gary played 'Amazing Grace' on the bagpipes hundreds of times in his career," Lisa says. "When I think back to the words of 'Amazing Grace,' and the lyrics 'I once was blind and now I see,' I think of Donor Network and the fact that Gary gave sight to others."

Lisa honored her late husband on their wedding anniversary, Dec. 21, by putting on his firefighter uniform and hiking up to the place where he died to spread rose petals.

"Of all the things that happened [when he passed], getting that call that he was able to donate was the best thing that happened that day," Lisa says.

# Greetings

From President and CEO, Tim Brown  
*Donor Network of Arizona*

Looking back on 2016, I am proud of the record-breaking successes for donation, and cannot wait to see the milestones that will be reached this year. As more Arizonans embrace generosity, the DonateLifeAZ Registry continues to grow. Currently, 3 million people statewide have registered to save and heal lives.

In 2016, for the first time ever, Donor Network of Arizona (DNA) surpassed an impressive milestone of 225 organ donors. The previous record was 180 organ donors in 2013. I am pleased to share that this year Arizona donors and their families have saved more than 610 lives, but these numbers represent so much more than just another statistic.

Each of those 614 recipients is a family member or friend to so many others, and they are living on today because someone decided to give the gift of life. Donation shines a light on the best in all of us, and gives us an opportunity to make one of the worst moments of someone's life into a hopeful new beginning.

With the help of emergency professionals, DNA can help families see beyond their immediate tragedy and find the



(l to r) Tim Brown and his wife Cathy wore green to support organ, eye and tissue donation during Donate Life Day at the Diamondbacks on April 10, 2016.

strength to selflessly give to help someone else. Each and every one of you can help turn a heartbreaking story like that of firefighter Gary Johnstone into a story of recovery and hope for new friendships like Sgt. Rich Stringer and Jacob Washburn. First responders are quite literally some of the first people to reach an Arizonan and their family when misfortune strikes.

Every day you save more lives than you know, even in situations that seem hopeless. Through donation, and with the proper resources and communication, DNA and emergency professionals help donors become heroes and provide hope for countless families under their care.

## The 30th Anniversary Blue and Green Gala

Donor Network of Arizona (DNA) and its partners gathered to celebrate 30 years of saving and healing lives during the 30th Anniversary Blue and Green Gala on Nov. 11, 2016. The donation process in Arizona is an intricate program that relies on the support of many stakeholders all across the state. None of this work would be possible without the help of many partners – from media partners who bring heartfelt donation stories to their communities to emergency professionals who care for their patients and fulfill the last wishes of donors and their families.

At the Gala, DNA presented 42 awards to its community, governmental, health care and media partners.

Karla Navarrete, reporter for CBS 5 Arizona and 3TV KTVK, emceed the award ceremony and shared her personal donation story. Because of her father's heart transplant, Karla had the chance to spend 10 more years with him.

Celebrated on Veteran's Day, the Gala highlighted Diana Pike's story of her son Christian who saved five people through organ donation after he was killed in the line of duty. Christian was



Larry Fowler (r) shared the story of how he and his twin brother, Robby (l), were saved through donation at the 30th Anniversary Blue and Green Gala.

known for his generosity and giving soul. His "last act of service was being an organ donor," says Pike.

Veteran and heart recipient Larry Fowler showed just how much his family had been touched by donation. His life and the life of his twin brother depended on the generosity of an organ donor after they both experienced heart failure due to a genetic condition.

Even with DNA's small beginnings, so many lives have been saved over the past 30 years as the organization has grown. This growth is all thanks to the generosity of donation champions, donors and their families.

# 2016

## A REMARKABLE YEAR FOR DONATION

Organ Donors

**225**

Tissue Donors

**971**

Ocular Donors

**1,266**

**614**

lives were  
saved through  
organ donation.

Approximately

**270,000**

Arizonans were added to the DonateLifeAZ Registry.

*Thank you for being a part of this lifesaving year!*

Emergency Medical Service & Fire Departments	July - Dec. 2016 *Total Organ, Eye and Tissue Donors	Emergency Medical Service & Fire Departments	July - Dec. 2016 *Total Organ, Eye and Tissue Donors
Air Evac	4	Mesa Fire Department	23
AJO Ambulance	1	Mountain Vista Fire District	1
Ak-Chin Fire	1	Native Air	3
American Medical Response	5	North County Fire & Medical	1
AMR	18	Northwest Fire District	6
Avondale Fire	2	Pascua Pueblo Fire Department	1
Avra Valley Fire Department	1	Payson Fire Department	2
Bisbee Fire Department	2	Peoria Fire Department	10
Buckeye Fire Department	8	Phi Air Medical	1
Bullhead City Fire Department	3	Phoenix Fire Department	75
Camp Verde Fire District	2	PMT	3
Casa Grande Fire Department	1	Prescott Fire Department	1
Central Fire and Medical	1	Rincon Fire Department	1
Chandler Fire Department	8	River Medical	4
Daisy Mountain Fire District	1	Rural Metro	15
Douglas Fire Department	1	Salt River Fire Department	1
Drexel Heights Fire Department	1	San Carlos Apache EMS	1
El Mirage Fire Department	1	Scottsdale Fire Department	14
Fry Fire Department	3	Seligman Fire	1
Gila River EMS	2	Sierra Vista Fire Department	4
Gilbert Fire Department	5	South West Ambulance	4
Glendale Fire Department	14	Sun City Fire Dept.	1
Golder Ranch Fire District	1	Superior Fire Department	1
Goodyear FD	2	Superstition Fire and Medical District	3
Guadalupe Fire Department	2	Surprise Fire Department	6
Guardian Air	1	Tempe Fire Department	6
Healthcare Innovations	4	Timber Mesa Fire	1
Heber-Overgaard Fire Department	1	Tolleson Fire Department	1
Kingman Fire Department	1	Tonopah Valley Fire	2
Life Line Ambulance	11	Tri City FD Ambulance	1
Life Net	7	Tucson Fire Department	23
Maricopa Fire Department	1	Verde Valley Fire Department	4
Mayer Fire Department	1	Yuma Fire Department	3

\*These statistics reflect the number of donor cases directly impacted by EMS involvement during the given time frame.

Major religions support donation as an act of generosity and a **GIFT OF LIFE.**

There are no health requirements or age limits on **HOPE & GENEROSITY.** Anyone can register to be a donor!

Not sure if you're already registered? Reaffirm your decision and **register again!**