

# ADOT MVD Connection



A newsletter published by Donate Life Arizona

## Licensed to Save Lives



Tyler Hedstrom, 17, gave many people hope of a restored life through cornea and tissue donation.

While at the Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division (ADOT MVD) getting his license, Tyler Hedstrom checked the box to give the gift of life. His mother, Sheila Hedstrom-Pelger, recalls the moment he made the selfless choice.

"He said, 'Why, yeah, of course. Why wouldn't you check this box?'" says Hedstrom-Pelger. "I just remember him saying that, because that's just how he was. Just checked the box and that was it."

Hedstrom was a seemingly happy kid, with a talent for drumming and dreams of becoming a rock star. But his decision to become a donor made an impact only months after getting his driver license. In July 2017, at just 17 years old, he died by suicide. It came as a shock to his family, particularly his mother, who had no idea the teenager was suffering.

"Now I'm learning he was already full deep in the depression. It just did not show," says Hedstrom-

Pelger. "He was very talented. He was a drummer. He was about to start his senior year of high school. He was just always a good kid."

Through the tragedy of losing her son, Hedstrom-Pelger finds hope and healing knowing her son changed the lives of numerous people with his generous gifts of donated corneas and tissue. Hedstrom gave many people a second chance at a fulfilling life, whether it be through restored mobility, renewed vision, or reconstructive surgeries for breast cancer patients. Receiving letters from donor recipients is a constant reminder for his mother that Hedstrom made an impact on others and that he lives on.

"Just getting those letters in the mail—you might be having a bad day anyway. Our days are up and down, it's a bright spot," says Hedstrom-Pelger. "It just reminds me that Tyler is still here, still with us, and still giving back."

It's no surprise Hedstrom said yes to donation. He always put others before himself and cared about everyone, according to his mother. Through his compassionate decision, he joined 3.4 million Arizonans who have registered as organ, tissue and cornea donors.

Organ donation has already saved 500 lives this year, which is a 20 percent increase over last year. ADOT MVD plays a vital role since 95 percent of registrations happen at ADOT MVD. Checking the box is a quick decision that may have a lasting impact on many other people.

"There's some days, where I think it hits me more than others," says Hedstrom-Pelger about the loss of her son. "We miss him dearly, and it does provide comfort that he saved others and added to their quality of life."

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# Greetings

From DNA's President and CEO Tim Brown

**W**e are just shy of a year since Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division (ADOT MVD) gave Arizona residents a new opportunity to register as organ and tissue donors. The option to register as a donor after renewing a vehicle registration on ServiceArizona.com resulted in more than 15,000 new registrations since its inception in October 2017.

The number of registered organ donors in Arizona continues to increase. There are 3.4 million people on the list, with more than 200,000 added to the registry this year alone so far. Since 95 percent of new registrations come from ADOT MVD, we're humbled by your partnership with Donor Network of Arizona (DNA) to make the gift of life possible.

We head into the end of the year grateful for ADOT MVD ambassadors like Betty Day, a donor mother and kidney recipient, who helps DNA share information and extend appreciation to your team. This includes authorized third party locations, which only harness more lifesaving potential.

Some of your teams go above and beyond to encourage generosity, such as Jimmie Willis, ADOT MVD employee and heart



DNA President and CEO Tim Brown (r) and ADOT MVD Director Eric Jorgensen (l) hold two recognitions that represent the lifesaving partnership between both groups.

recipient. In the years following her transplant, she's explained to countless people the importance of checking the box, and she shared her story with local media for ADOT MVD Saves Lives Month in August. This makes our collaboration that much more valuable.

As the end of year approaches, I thank you for your contribution to sharing life and making it easier than ever for Arizonans to join the DonateLifeAZ Registry, which has helped make 2018 successful in saving more lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tim Brown".

## A Full Circle of Donation



Jimmie Willis (pictured second from right with her family), heart recipient and ADOT MVD employee, works hard each day to encourage people to register as donors to help others receive the gift of life like she did.

**A**n Arizonan may check the box to become an organ and tissue donor at an Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division (ADOT MVD) office without much thought. Others may take time to consider how registering as an organ and tissue donor may align with their values. Either way, ADOT MVD employee—and heart recipient—Jimmie Willis knows just how much of a difference the choice to save and heal lives can make.

Every August, Donor Network of Arizona (DNA) celebrates ADOT MVD Saves Lives Month because of the lifesaving partnership

between the two groups. It's a chance for Willis to reflect on someone's selfless gift of donation that gave her a second chance at life.

Diagnosed with congestive heart failure in 1999, she wondered how much time she had to spend with her three children and three stepchildren—or The Brady Bunch, as her friends call her blended family. Fortunately, a complete stranger's generosity gave Willis more time with her loved ones.

"I thank God for my donor," Willis says. "It's hard for me to believe someone would actually donate something that important to someone else. That's just a human quality that [makes me] so thankful."

DNA partners with ADOT MVD to encourage the public to save and heal lives. ADOT MVD Saves Lives Month also recognizes that 95 percent of registrations happen at ADOT MVD offices, which brings the total to more than 3.4 million registered people in our state.

"We are very fortunate to have an incredible partnership with ADOT MVD," says Claudia Flaherty, DNA's MVD specialist. "Throughout the years, ADOT MVD has worked together with us to make it easier for Arizonans to register as organ, eye and tissue donors."



# Celebrating Blue and Green Pride



Claudia Flaherty (r), DNA's MVD specialist, with Eric Jorgensen (l), ADOT MVD director, as he won the Innovation Award presented by AAMVA.

**D**onor Network of Arizona (DNA) recognized the willingness of Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division (ADOT MVD) to think outside the box and recently nominated Director Eric Jorgensen for

the Innovation Award presented by Donate Life America at the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) Region IV Conference in Big Sky, Montana, in July 2018.

The Innovation Award recognizes a DMV or driver license partner (DLP) office that has implemented a unique and engaging event, activity or practice that demonstrates how the Donate Life mission is a part of their culture. Jorgensen and the ADOT MVD team, including Deputy Directory Chad Campbell as well as Title and Registration Specialist Ralene Whitmer, embody the generosity and compassion behind organ and tissue donation, and they make the donor registration option a priority in ADOT MVD locations across the state.

Since Oct. 31, 2017, donation registrations have soared due to being able to sign up as an organ and tissue donor after renewing a vehicle registration on ServiceArizona.com. In the first two months alone, there were a total of 7,182 clicks on the link to DonateLifeAZ.org. That converted into 2,826 completed donor registrations—a 39 percent conversion rate. That's an improvement of 17 percent compared to the same time frame in 2016.

## Ambassador Spotlight: Betty Day



Betty Day (center) with East Mesa ADOT MVD employees during Donate Life Month in April 2018.

**B**etty Day started her mission as a Donate Life Arizona volunteer in 2002. After she received a kidney transplant, the gift of life lit a fire inside her to educate the community about donation so more people could get a second chance.

But before she got that chance of receiving her organ donation, she spent

two years dealing with dialysis. Physically and mentally drained, she faced one of the most difficult times of her life. But her living donor changed her life forever.

"If it had not been for him, I would not be here today. I would not have been able to extend my life for another 17 years," says Day. "He is my knight in shining armor."

Day joined the Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division (ADOT MVD) ambassador program for the Southeast Mesa location when it started in 2016. She jumped at the chance to accept the opportunity.

"I consider myself a very social person, who is always happy and with a passion for speaking engagements," Day says. "So, being able to speak about my donation story to ADOT MVD employees was an easy decision to make."

She visits the Southeast Mesa ADOT MVD office to deliver newsletters, to drop off treats for special celebrations and

to educate staff about organ, tissue and cornea donation—a decision hundreds of thousands of people may make in an office like theirs each year across Arizona.

"My Southeast Mesa ADOT MVD group is a proactive one. They are great and always willing to help," Day says. "They understand when it comes to donation, because they have seen the generosity it brings with one of their coworkers being a heart recipient and another being a kidney recipient."

Day says having the conversation of donation is easier because the employees see firsthand what donation inspires in people. She is living proof that a second chance of life was possible through the selfless act of her donor, and she carries on the domino effect of generosity.

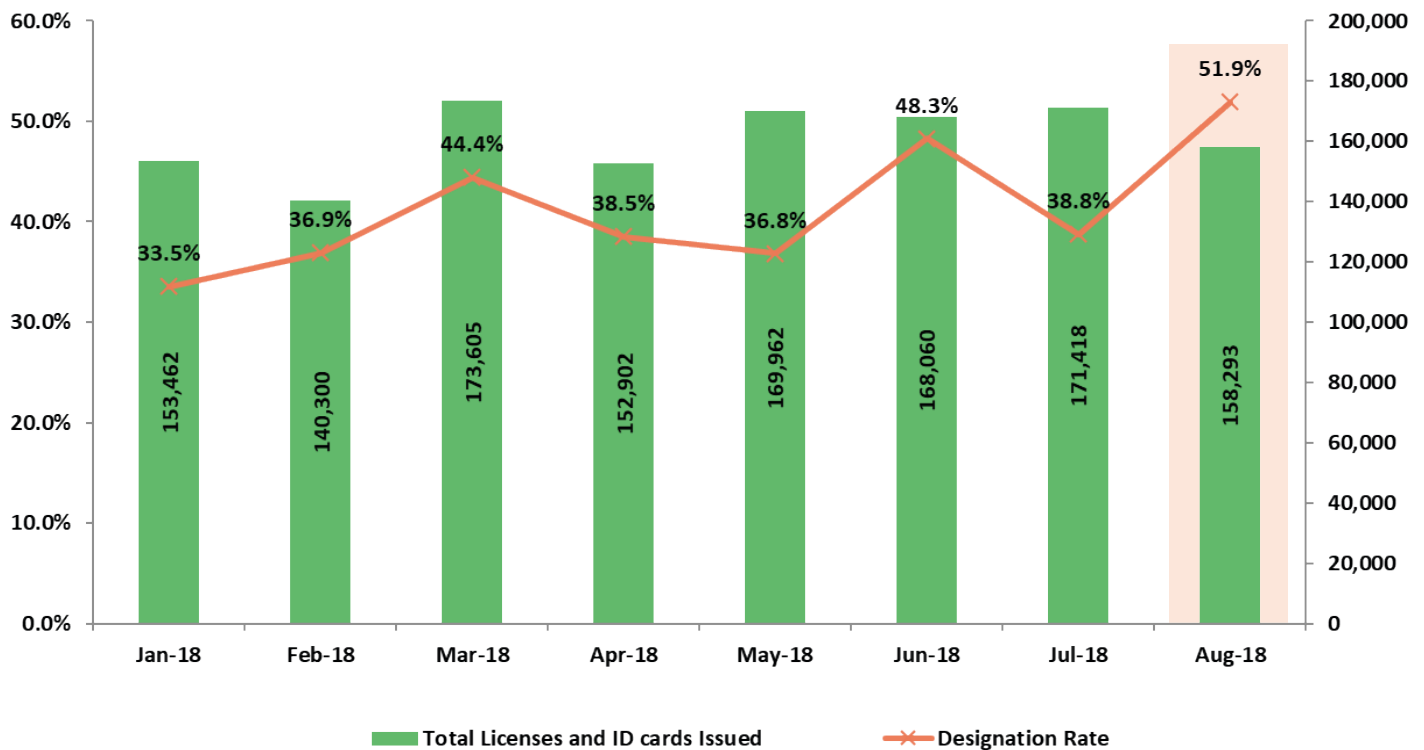
"Being an ADOT MVD Ambassador is worth every minute," Day says.

# DonateLifeAZ Registry

3,455,491

(as of Sept. 26, 2018)

## MVD Donor Designation



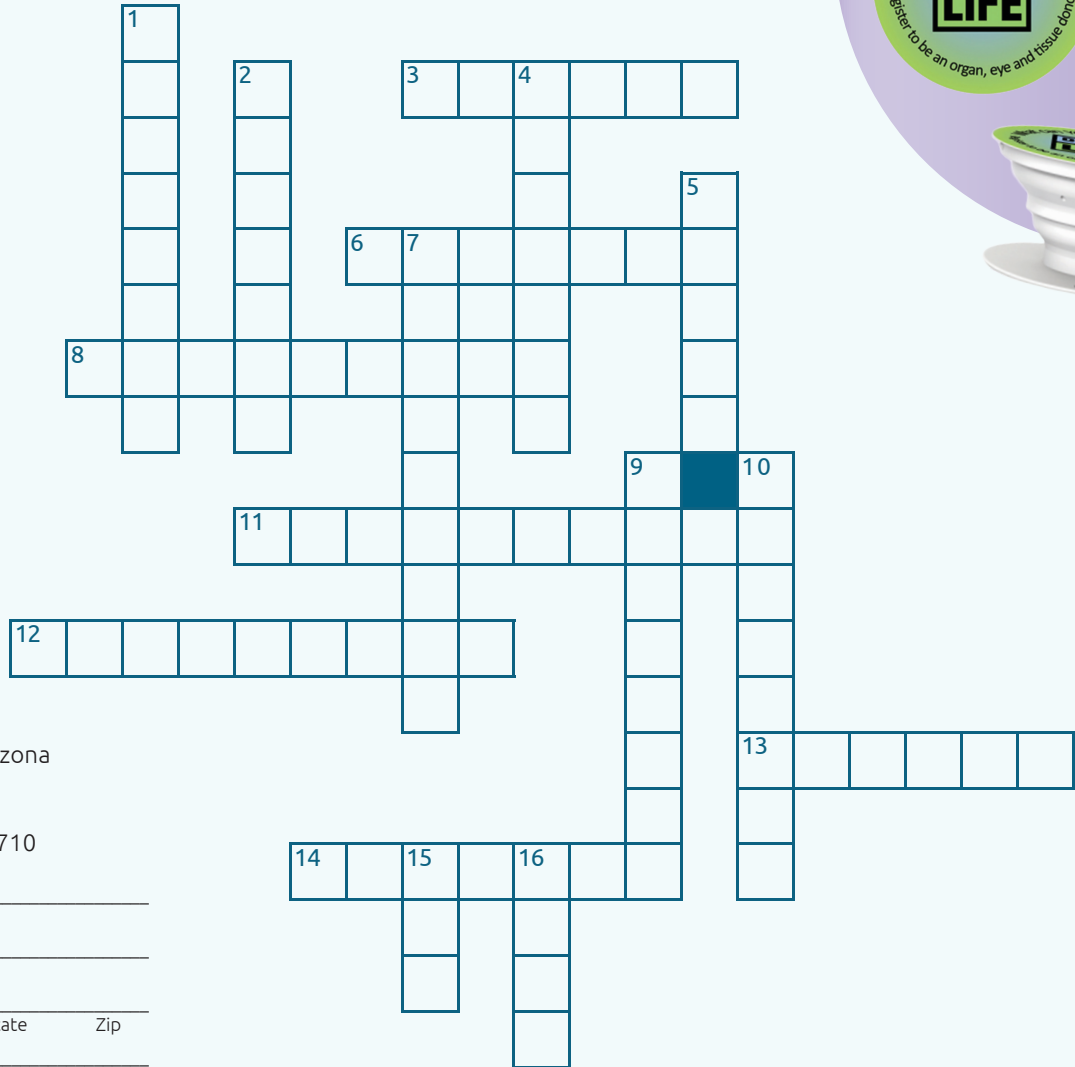
## Checking the Box

Donor designation continues to be strong this year. The orange line represents the percentage of people who apply for a driver license or ID card and check the box to be a donor.

## Record Breaking

The donor designation rate for August 2018, at 51.9 percent, is the highest designation rate on record and the first time that it has crossed over the 50 percent mark in Arizona. Reaching a 50 percent donor designation rate is a national goal set by Donate Life America.

Mail in your completed crossword puzzle  
to receive a free Donate Life Phone PopSocket!



### Mail original to:

Donor Network of Arizona  
Attn: Claudia Flaherty  
201 W. Coolidge St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85013-2710

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

\*Answers to this puzzle can be found throughout the newsletter.

## across

3. Tyler Hedstrom gave many people a \_\_\_\_\_ chance at a fulfilling life.
6. Ambassadors deliver newsletters, drop off treats for special celebrations and they \_\_\_\_\_ staff about donation.
8. DNA partners with ADOT MVD to \_\_\_\_\_ the public to save and heal lives.
11. DNA recently nominated Director Eric Jorgensen for the \_\_\_\_\_ Award.
12. Betty Day started her mission as a Donate Life Arizona \_\_\_\_\_ in 2002.
13. Every \_\_\_\_\_, Donor Network of Arizona celebrates ADOT MVD Saves Lives Month.
14. Sheila Hedstrom-Pelger receives \_\_\_\_\_ from donor recipients.

## down

1. Since October of 2017, Arizonans are able to sign up as an organ and tissue donor after \_\_\_\_\_ a vehicle registration.
2. There are 3.4 \_\_\_\_\_ people registered in the state of Arizona.
4. While getting his license, Tyler Hedstrom \_\_\_\_\_ the box to give the gift of life.
5. ADOT MVD employee, Jimmie Willis, received a \_\_\_\_\_ transplant.
7. Jimmie Willis was \_\_\_\_\_ with congestive heart failure in 1999 .
9. Before Betty Day received her organ donation, she spent two years dealing with \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The number of registered organ donors in Arizona continues to \_\_\_\_\_.
15. In the first \_\_\_\_\_ months alone, there were a total of 7,182 clicks on the link to DonateLifeAZ.org.
16. Betty Day is an ADOT MVD ambassador program for the \_\_\_\_\_ Mesa office.

# Registering to be an Organ and Tissue Donor at the Motor Vehicle Division:

## Behind the DONOR ♥

1

The client checks the box on their DL/ID application. Their decision is entered into the ADOT MVD computer system.

2

A temporary credential is issued for the client featuring the **DONOR ♥** insignia. The insignia is also printed on the permanent credential sent to the client in the mail several weeks later.

3

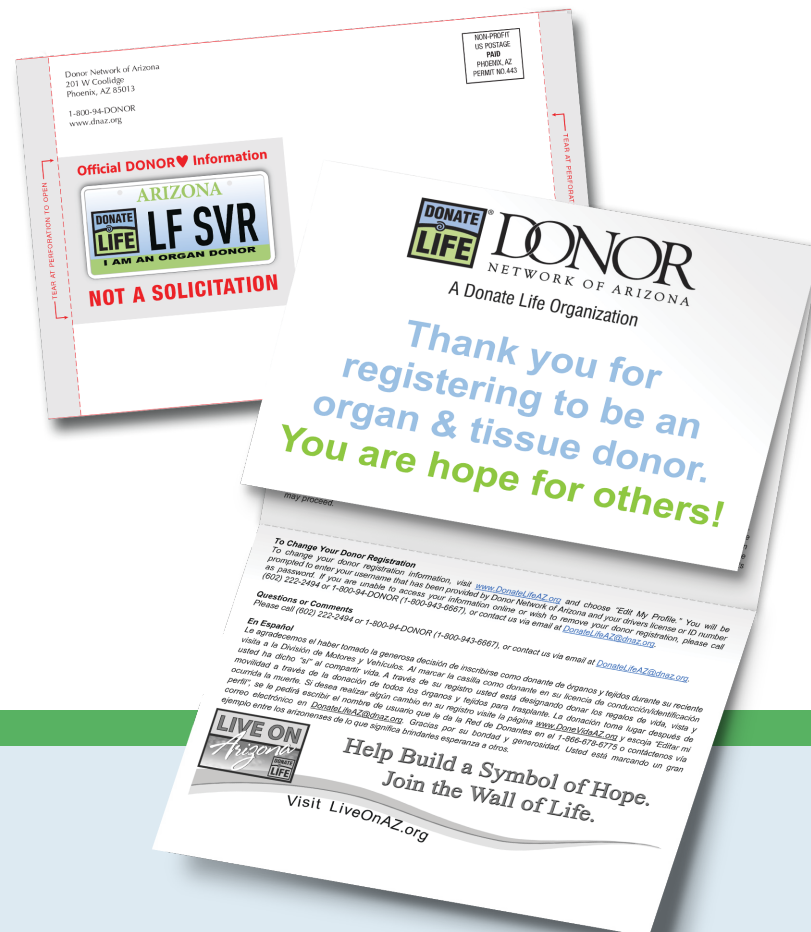
Each week, the ADOT MVD computer system automatically sends information of the clients who registered to the DonateLifeAZ Registry.

4

Information is automatically uploaded into the DonateLifeAZ Registry. New registrations are added and updates are made to existing records as part of this process.

5

Within four to six weeks, all new registrants are sent a letter from Donor Network of Arizona detailing how their decision can save and heal lives through organ and tissue donation.



### Contact Us:

For more information, please contact Claudia Flaherty at 602-222-2212.



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Join the Wall of Life.

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