



Arizona

THE CONNECTION

A YEAR IN REVIEW

WE MAKE THE MOST OF LIFE

JUNE 2017 - MAY 2018

Cover: Hundreds of posters decorated the Senate lawn at the Arizona legislature to honor donors and recipients.

Below: Reggie the Donor Cactus strikes a pose at Donate Life Day at the Capitol March 8, 2018.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 STORY OF GENEROSITY: VICTORIA ARIAS

06 ADVANCEMENTS AND EDUCATION

08 MAKING CONNECTIONS TO MAKE AN IMPACT

10 DONATION BY THE NUMBERS

12 SAVING LIVES THROUGH COLLABORATION

14 CELEBRATING OUR DONOR HEROES

16 IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE HOPE

18 STORY OF HOPE: ROBERT PEAK



GREETINGS

FROM TIM BROWN, *PRESIDENT AND CEO*

Even with all the technical details, rapid deadlines and clinical procedures involved in the daily work at Donor Network of Arizona (DNA), it's no surprise the staff consistently expresses the best part of their job is the people involved in donation. Countless individuals, both inside our doors and within the many organizations we partner with, make donation possible across the state.

The passion DNA sees is remarkable. More than 285,000 people joined the DonateLifeAZ Registry from June 2017 to May 2018, continuing a five-year record-breaking trend. The total is now up to more than 3.3 million people willing to save lives.

Arizona witnessed an amazing year of donation. In the same June 2017 to May 2018 timeframe, an unprecedented 280 donors saved the lives of 739 people through organ donation. Tissue and cornea donation provide restored sight and mobility to thousands each year. A total of 1,212 tissue donors gave the gift of healing, including 227 heart valve transplants – most of which went to pediatric patients. Additionally, 704 cornea donors restored vision for blind and visually impaired patients.

From January to May 2018, Arizona donors have already saved the lives of more than 300 people through organ donation, which gives us hope to set another record number of lives saved this year.

At DNA, we see some of the immediate effects of these incredible donations, but none of this would be possible without our ongoing partnerships with the donation community, from Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division (ADOT MVD) and medical professionals to our volunteers and media partners. On behalf of DNA, I sincerely thank you for all you do to help us live up to our mission to make the most of life through the gift of organ and tissue donation.



President and CEO of DNA, Tim Brown (r), with NASCAR Xfinity driver and donor son, Joey Gase (l), at Donate Life Day at the Capitol on March 8, 2018.

*“We make the most of
life through the gift
of organ and tissue
donation.”*

VICTORIA ARIAS

A BEAUTIFUL DAY TO SAVE LIVES

Her parents were struck with grief when she passed away in the summer of 2017, but their pride for their daughter grew even stronger after Victoria Arias saved the lives of four people through organ donation.

Victoria was only 18 years old—way too young, and only six weeks away from attending Saint Mary's University, Minnesota, with a full scholarship. In high school, she was part of a youth mariachi group called Los Changuitos Feos de Tucson. In English, that translates to The Ugly Little Monkeys of Tucson.

"She had the voice of an angel," says her father Mike Arias, referring to her final show at the 2017 Tucson International Mariachi Conference where she sang "Qué buena suerte," reducing her music teacher to tears that evening because of her passion for the art of mariachi.

Beyond music, she planned to become a trauma surgeon one day because she wanted to save lives. In fact, her father said her favorite saying was "It's a beautiful day to save lives," which is a quote from one of her must-see TV shows "Grey's Anatomy."

"Victoria was realizing her dream of saving lives sooner rather than later," her father says, referring to the legacy she leaves behind with her generosity.

Her mother, Lorena Arias, said it was a miracle that the 18-year-old was able to donate her heart, kidneys, pancreas, liver and lungs to four different people despite the way she passed away. Lorena had found Victoria unresponsive in their backyard pool one summer morning.

"I have peace in my heart that it was God's choice," says Lorena. "It wasn't the pool's fault. It wasn't her fault. It wasn't our fault. It was just her time to go."

Friends and relatives of the Arias family have since registered themselves as organ and tissue donors to honor Victoria by solidifying their wish to give the gift of life.

Her parents plan to reach out to Victoria's recipients in the near future. They hope to one day meet them, so they can share that they are at peace with her passing after Victoria's heroism and generosity.

**“Victoria
was realizing
her dream of
saving lives
sooner rather
than later.”**

MIKE ARIAS, VICTORIA'S FATHER



ADVANCEMENTS AND EDUCATION

CLINICAL INNOVATIONS

New clinical innovations and updates, along with improved partnerships and dedicated efforts in 2017, helped Donor Network of Arizona (DNA) save and heal more lives than ever before.

In 2017 alone, more than 840 ocular donors gave the gift of sight to 1,066 people. An increase of 56 transplants compared to 2016 can be traced to the relatively new Descemet's membrane endothelial keratoplasty (DMEK) procedure being performed by DNA staff.

Ocular staff members doubled the number of DMEK procedures in 2017 from 2016, with 83 DMEK grafts transplanted. These innovations increased the overall ocular transplant success rate by 23 percent.

DNA recovered 240 heart valves in 2017 – the most recovered in DNA history. This is the most for any organization that works with CryoLife, a biomedical company that specializes in preserving heart valves used for cardiac reconstruction.

Remarkably, 76 percent of heart valves recovered by DNA went to patients under the age of 18, and one third of these were from non-hospital deaths, due to medical examiner referrals.

"This achievement would not be possible without the commitment to donation that our county medical examiner partners have given to saving and improving lives," says Ryan Nelson, tissue recovery supervisor and medical examiner liaison at DNA.

Other technological advances have also contributed to better outcomes for transplant surgeons and the recipients, such as the LifePort Kidney Transporter. It helps improve kidney function in recipients. The transporter is a state-of-the-art preservation unit that has proven to reduce the risk of delayed function and acute rejection for kidney recipients.

These advances, combined with the work of DNA staff and medical professionals, help save and heal the lives of so many. Inspired by the results of 2017, DNA continues to strive for record-breaking goals in 2018.

TISSUE DONATION IN 2017

840 OCULAR DONORS
gave sight to 1,066 people

83 DMEK GRAFTS
transplanted to recipients

240 HEART VALVES
recovered to save lives



Gear Up: Loading Your Donation Toolbox

It was a conference space like any other for the 2017 Donation Symposium Aug. 24, 2017, but not for long.

The lights dimmed, a video played on screens and actors took to the stage to give attendees a view of the donation process, start to end.

There were tears in the crowd, and even more stunned faces, among the 400 people who watched the story unfold—from car crash to the parents of the donor reading a letter from a recipient.

That set the stage for Donor Network of Arizona's (DNA) "Gear Up: Loading Your Donation Toolbox." It brought people involved in the gift of life together to see beyond their personal contribution.

Much like the reenactment, donation is a carefully executed process. The symposium provided classes, educational experiences and resources to paint a better picture for DNA's donation partners, including nurses, emergency professionals and funeral home workers.

"DNA strives to present the tools for success to these professionals because they play such an important role in the donation process," says Kristine Roberts, professional education coordinator at DNA.

Learning tables represented different roles that DNA plays—each department with its own exhibit of the process. One table, for example, had information on all the ways someone can register as an organ, tissue and cornea donor. There was also a kidney pump and a lung in a box to show some of the advances in organ care before transplantation.

Thousands of people in Arizona are waiting for a call that could mark their second chance at life. It is vital everyone in the donation process is encouraged to challenge their thinking and to know their work truly makes a difference.



Top left: PJ Geraghty (c), vice president of Clinical and Organ Recovery Services, presents an award to Tracy Thomas (l) and Charlene Grove (r) from St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center.

Top right: Marcel Pincine, director of Donor Family and Advocate Services, with the Machiche family, who spoke about donor Celeste Machiche.


Bottom: Actors Andy Bock (l) and Toni Jourdan (r) took to the stage to showcase the entire donation process.



MAKING CONNECTIONS TO MAKE AN IMPACT



COMMUNITY OUTREACH



285k ARIZONANS REGISTERED
*as organ, cornea and tissue donors
for the first time.*

999 VOLUNTEER HOURS
*dedicated to educating others on the
lifesaving message of donation.*



182 EVENTS
*across the state reached
thousands of people.*

June 2017 -
May 2018



THE GIFT OF DONATION

280 **ORGAN DONORS**
*gave a second chance to those
waiting for a lifesaving transplant.*

704 **CORNEA DONORS**
restored sight to others.

1,212 **TISSUE DONORS**
gave the gift of healing.



SHARING HOPE

739 **LIVES SAVED**
*thanks to the generosity of donors
and their families.*

18,958 **LETTERS MAILED**
*to provide comfort and
correspondence.*

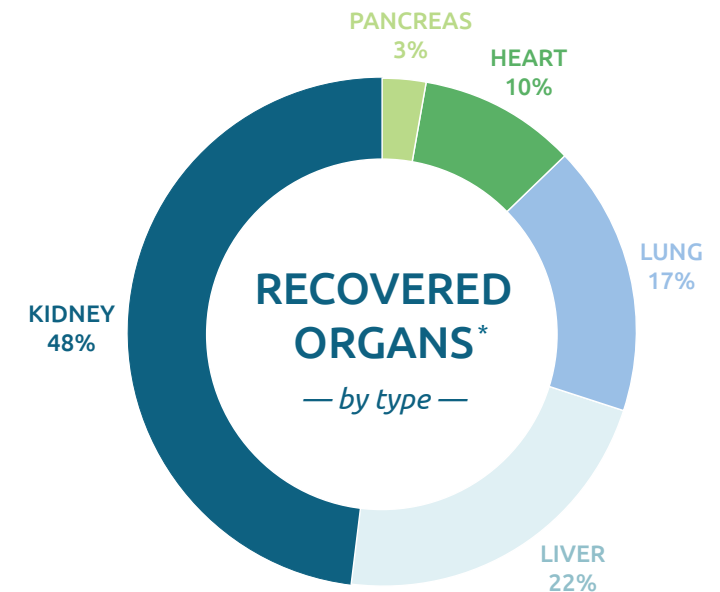
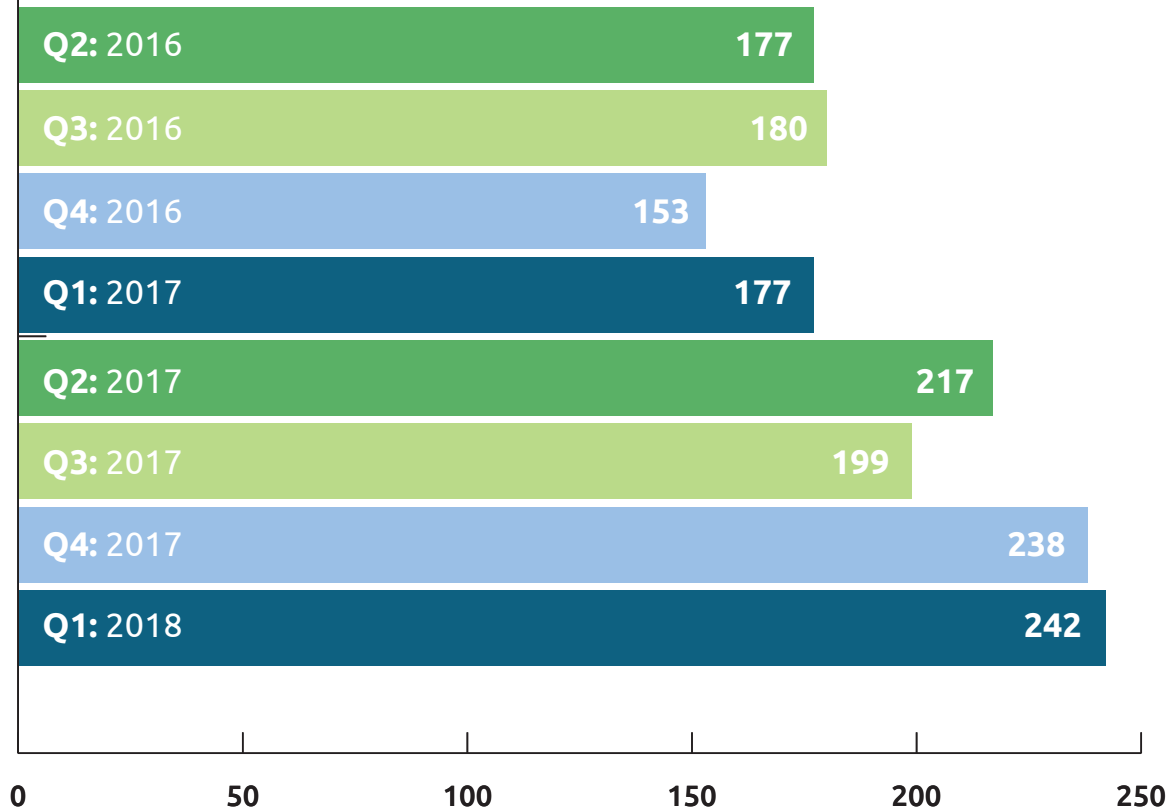
140 **ORGAN DONORS**
*who registered their wishes
gave the gift of life.*



DONATION BY THE NUMBERS

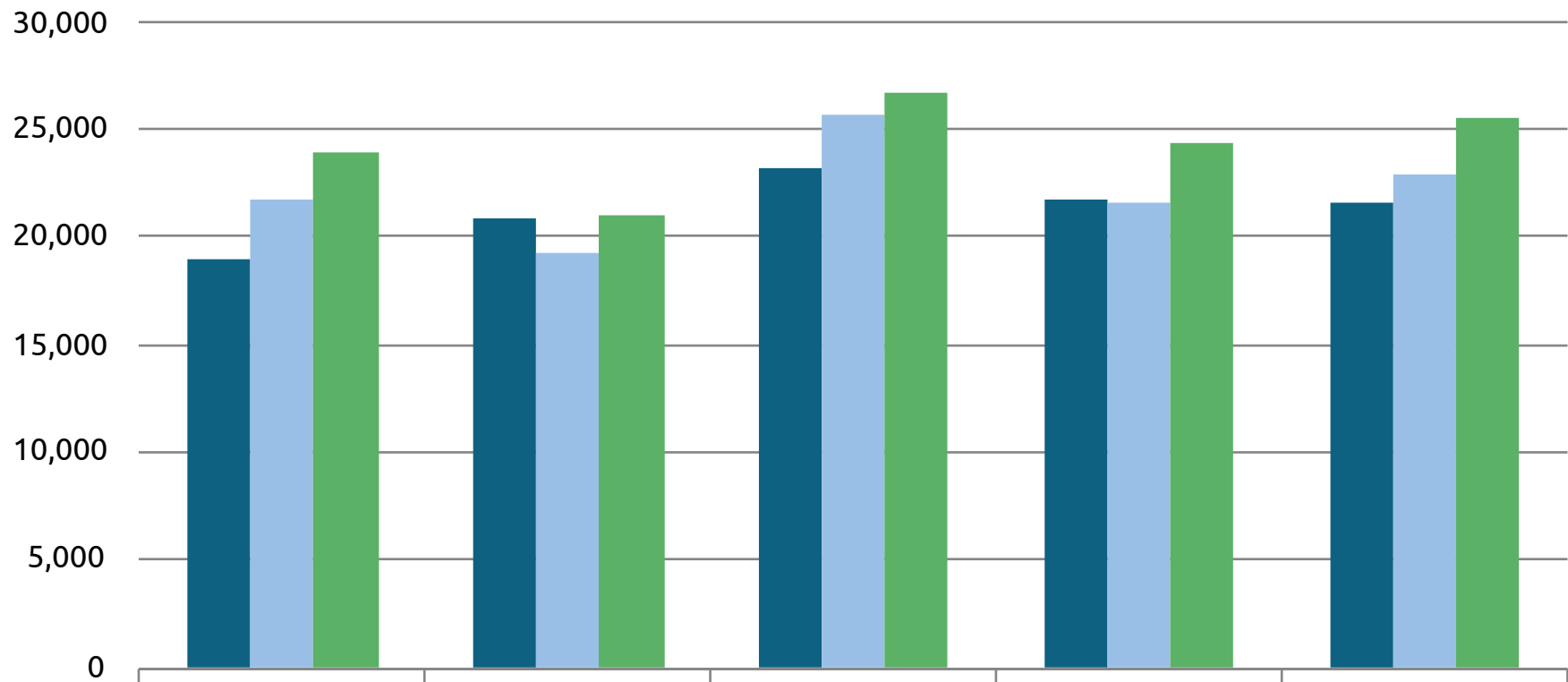
**Reflects data from June 2017 to May 2018*

ORGANS TRANSPLANTED



74% OF ORGANS RECOVERED IN ARIZONA WERE TRANSPLANTED IN ARIZONA*

REGISTRATION COMPARISON



	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY
2016 REGISTRATIONS	18,957	20,801	23,120	21,738	21,536
2017 REGISTRATIONS	21,733	19,251	25,617	21,569	22,926
2018 REGISTRATIONS	23,877	20,927	26,696	24,352	25,532

SAVING LIVES THROUGH COLLABORATION

NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH

April's calendar burst with fun-filled events promoting organ, tissue and cornea donation.

The month of April, also recognized as National Donate Life Month, inspires a statewide registry challenge known as Health Care for Hope. It brought 56 health care organizations onboard to help Donor Network of Arizona (DNA) educate the public and register new lifesaving donors. Each organization held registration events, flag-raising ceremonies and volunteered at local events to register new donors.

The Health Care for Hope Challenge saw more than 1,040 new individuals join the DonateLifeAZ Registry for the first time. St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center came in first place, based on new registrations. And it was the first year DNA and its partners focused on more digital outreach, with each participating organization getting a personalized Donate Life URL to invite employees, friends and family to register in their honor.

On April 22, 2018, more than 1,000 people attended Donate Life Day at the Diamondbacks. Before crowds cheered the D-backs playing against the San Diego Padres, they clapped for donor families and recipients on the field.

Among the people honored was heart recipient Brett Wallick. His gift of life pumps a love of baseball through his veins as a player and a coach for the Sunrise High School baseball team. Coincidentally, after his transplant, he discovered his donor also loved to play baseball and had won two high school state championships. As a nod to his lifesaving donor and the importance of baseball, Wallick also helped with the changing of the bases at the top of the third inning.

"I always say my heart beats for my donor every day," Wallick says.
"Everything I do, I make sure I'm doing it for my donor and his family."



Left: One of dozens of pinwheels representing organ and tissue donors on display at Banner – University Medical Center Phoenix for National Donate Life Month.

Right: Brett Wallick changed the bases at the D-backs game April 22, adding another baseball chapter to his donation story.



PARTNERSHIPS THAT SAVE LIVES: ADOT MVD

Ninety-eight percent of Arizonans who register do so by checking the box when applying for or renewing a driver's license or state ID.

In October 2017, Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division (ADOT MVD) added a link to the DonateLifeAZ Registry on the vehicle registration renewal page on ServiceArizona.com. This change offered a new way for Arizonans to register as organ, tissue and cornea donors. It resulted in more than 2,800 completed donor registrations in just the first two months.

That was one of the many ways ADOT MVD embraced a successful partnership with Donor Network of Arizona (DNA) over the last year.

"In 2017, we saw our partnership with ADOT MVD continue to grow and make an incredible impact in Arizona," says Claudia Flaherty, MVD specialist with DNA, "and we've seen a tremendous increase in our registry due to this new way to sign up as a donor."

DNA also celebrated the annual ADOT MVD Saves Lives Month in August 2017 to express appreciation for the connection the two organizations share through donation.

On April 13, 2018, ADOT MVD employees recognized National Donate Life Month by celebrating Blue and Green Day. Employees dressed up in either blue or green and competed in teams to see who could decorate their office spaces the best with Donate Life's signature colors.

The division also hosted a Donate Life flag-raising ceremony in April to honor the gift of life. U.S. Air Force veteran and liver recipient Matthew Owen thanked ADOT MVD employees for the work they do to invite all Arizonans to save and heal lives, adding he and many other people may not be here today if it weren't for that possibility.

"We are grateful for our continued partnership with ADOT MVD," says Flaherty.



Left: Attendees close their eyes in prayers for donors, their families and recipients at the Blue & Green Day flag-raising ceremony at the ADOT MVD administration office April 13, 2018.

Right: ADOT MVD employees at the Southeast Mesa office rock their donation colors for Blue & Green Day.

10,000+

DONOR REGISTRATIONS

from the link on the vehicle registration renewal page on ServiceArizona.com

October 2017 - May 2018

CELEBRATING OUR DONOR HEROES

Families embraced, clasping pictures of their loved ones and holding windchimes that echoed through Steele Indian School Park.

Marcel Pincince, director of Donor Family and Advocate Services at Donor Network of Arizona (DNA), spoke deeply to the donor families about the power of their love ones' donations and how the windchimes symbolized their generosity.

It was a reminder to the people surrounded by the tranquil tones to embrace each moment that led them to the first Celebration of Life event. Families totaling almost 1,000 people came together Sept. 17, 2017, to honor their late relatives who became organ, tissue and cornea donors.

The families decorated wind chimes at the event to later serve as a reminder of their child, sibling, parent or otherwise, each time they ring in the breeze. Katie Benton, DNA public relations supervisor—and donor daughter—shared how the event was an incredible opportunity to reflect on family members who leave behind a legacy of generosity with their willingness to give the gift of life.

"This event means a lot to my family. It's a time when we get to talk about my mom, talk about my son's nana, and it's important we invite every single family here to do the same," Benton says.

Many said they took comfort in dedicating time to reflect on the legacies of these heroes. Isabel Dominguez attended to honor her brother, George Louis Bernal III, who passed away 18 years ago in a car crash. She said her family works to keep her brother's memory alive every day, and they're comforted by knowing they are not alone on that journey.

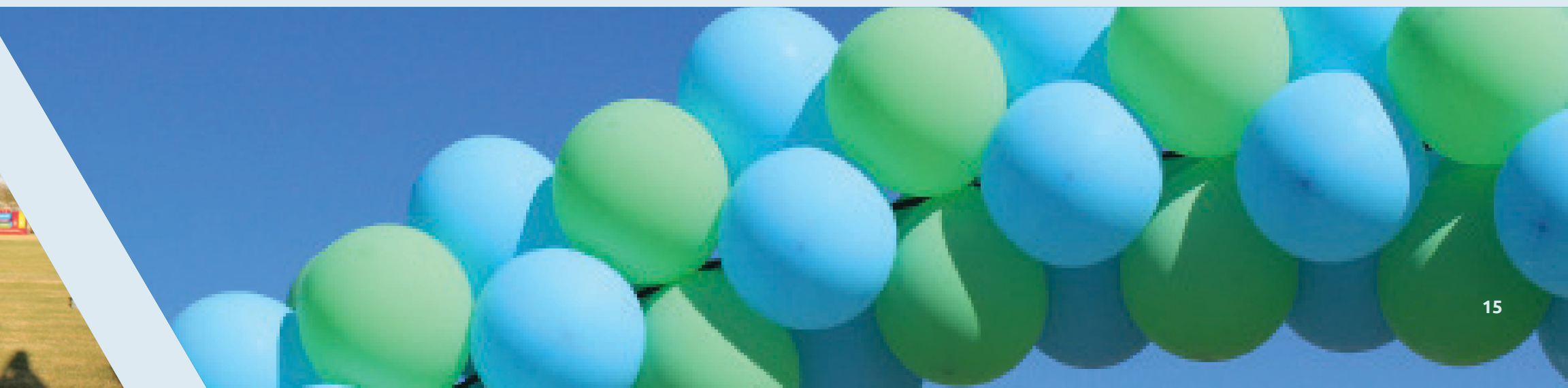
"You meet all these people and you know it took a tragic event for them to be there, but you're a family," Dominguez says.

Bottom: Families at the Celebration of Life ceremony hold pictures and windchimes to honor their heroes.

Top left: The family of George Louis Bernal III attended the ceremony to keep his legacy alive 18 years after he passed away and became a donor.

Top right: A closer look at the windchimes the donor families were invited to have to symbolize their loved ones' gifts of life.





IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE HOPE

THE GIFT OF LIFE GIVES BACK

Donate Life Arizona registered people as donors at different events across the state over the last year.

Highlights include Phoenix Pride Festival, National Council of La Raza National Conference, Phoenix International Raceway Fall Race, Glendale Glitters, Arizona Asian Festival and Jewish Community Music Festival.

Volunteers reached new and larger populations than ever before, signing up roughly 4,000 Arizonans. More than 160 active volunteers participate in activities such as sharing their stories with graduating nurses, talking to staff at hospitals, or advocating for Donate Life Arizona with local media outlets. Volunteers such as Karen Matulis often have first-hand experience with donation.

"There was nothing more we could do for our son Christopher. We then discovered there were lives he could save," says Matulis. Christopher Jagodzinski had registered himself before he passed away at 18 years old from a sudden stroke. "Life for me became much better when I decided to

join the family of Donate Life by becoming an active volunteer. Now, 13 years later, I am able to give back what Donate Life Arizona was able to give to me."

Matulis attended the new volunteer workshop launched in March 2018, which helps fresh recruits and veterans learn together in one six-hour session to discuss the latest information regarding organ, tissue and cornea donation, to bounce ideas off each other, to practice setting up registration tables, and to share personal stories of donation.

"We could never reach the number of people we do without the dedication of our volunteers," says Ashley Siegel, community relations coordinator, who leads the volunteers.

Interested in becoming a volunteer? Contact volunteers@dnaz.org!



Left: The D-backs invited Karen Matulis, a Donate Life volunteer in Arizona and Wisconsin, and her family to the field to honor her son's gifts.

Right: Donate Life Arizona volunteers registered 131 new donors at the 2018 Phoenix Pride Festival.



MEDIA SNAPSHOT

Media partners bolstered Donate Life Arizona's efforts to make the most of life through organ, cornea and tissue donation.

This successful promotion in 2017 helped set a new record for lives saved, organs transplanted and new registrations, which continues into 2018.

Several events highlighted these outstanding partnerships. That includes Donate Life Day at the Capitol March 8, 2018, during which every major local TV news outlet, and one radio station, shared the stories of dozens of Arizona donors and their recipients.

Donate Life Arizona's sponsored NASCAR Xfinity driver Joey Gase brought the heart of donation to this year's Capitol event by displaying his car in front of the Senate building. He surprised Patty Wisner—staff member at the legislature and mother of donor Brett Wisner who saved five lives—with the grand reveal of Brett's picture on the bumper of his racecar, which he drove in a race at Phoenix International Raceway two days later. Patty and her family also received a replica

bumper to keep and watched the race from the pit on race day.

Another milestone with media occurred in the fall of 2017 when Done Vida Arizona partnered with Univisión Arizona. The station donated two hours of airtime Oct. 4, 2017, for a phonebank that started at 5 p.m. Bilingual DNA employees answered calls from viewers who had questions related to donation in the Hispanic community.

Because of the local and national media's support for sharing the gift of life with 52 published stories involving Donate Life Arizona, Done Vida Arizona or Donor Network of Arizona published between May 2017 and April 2018, we continue to educate the public to help them make a decision to register as organ, tissue and cornea donors.



Left: Donor son and NASCAR Xfinity driver, Joey Gase, sported the picture of donor Brett Wisner on his car.

Top Right: Univisión Arizona broadcasted a live two-hour phone bank to answer questions and register new donors.

Bottom right: Patty Wisner, donor mom, shared her story with the media for Donate Life Day at the Capitol.

ROBERT PEAK

A NEW GIFT OF LIFE

It's been a year since his double-lung transplant surgery, and Robert Peak already takes advantage of the new breath of life he was given.

"My new gift of life doesn't resemble my pre-transplant existence in the least," Peak says, explaining how he had to use a wheelchair for a while. On an oxygen machine, and in respiratory failure, he couldn't work, travel or even climb the stairs in his home.

It started back in November 2015 with a mystery elbow wound that sent him to the hospital several times for different procedures to try to treat his elbow. It didn't work, and the injury turned into cellulitis, MRSA and sepsis. The doctors prescribed him strong antibiotics for the infections, but he says they led to lung scarring and two diagnoses. Peak, a registered nurse overseeing patients at a hospital, became a patient himself with end-stage pulmonary disease.

"I was then listed for a bilateral lung transplant," says Peak, which was the result of his illnesses. "I was on the organ transplant waiting list for one day shy of three months."

Last summer, he finally got the call that a matching donor was found. "It was quite the wild ride," he says.

But the rollercoaster of mixed emotions brought him to a whole new way of living, which he does to honor his donor and to make sure the gift he received wasn't given in vain.

"Following my recovery phase post-transplant, I am now able to walk several miles and climb stairs," he says. Peak is now off oxygen and other equipment with the exception of a cane at times, but that isn't holding him back. In fact, he started training for a 5K that benefits lung disease research. Peak says he plans to walk the 5K in honor of his donor, the donor's family and the transplant team who are all responsible for saving his life.

Donation and the precious gift of life have touched his soul in so many ways, and the domino effect of generosity continues. Since his transplant, he and his wife, Lisa, signed up to be volunteers with Donor Network of Arizona, and Peak is now a Lung Foundation Transplant mentor as well.

**“My new
gift of life
doesn’t
resemble my
pre-transplant
existence in
the least.”**

ROBERT PEAK, LUNG RECIPIENT



“OUR SON’S SELFLESS DECISION TURNED OUR
HEARTBREAK INTO SOMETHING POSITIVE.”

- DONOR MOTHER

Contributors:

Tim Brown
Robbie Glazner
Sara Pace Jones

Writers and Editors:

Irasema Celis
Alexa Citro
Kris Patterson
Miranda Reddy
Olivia Richards
Nico Santos
Jordan Tower

Register as an organ, cornea and tissue
donor at DonateLifeAZ.org

