

# MVD Connection



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A newsletter published by Donate Life Arizona

## MVD Employees Do More than Register New Donors



The families of Bonnie Palomo (left) and Randi Ruiz (right), living donor and recipient, share a special bond and participate in the annual Arizona Kidney Walk together.

**I** was not an MVD employee when I donated my kidney," says Bonnie Palomo, regional manager for MVD field offices in the east region. "But our family has always advocated for being a registered donor. I started with MVD in April 2021, which is recognized globally as Donate Life Month, so the heightened awareness around this initiative immediately made me feel at home."

Bonnie's donation story starts when her father-in-law, Gilbert Palomo, was placed on the organ transplant waiting list. Gilbert suffered many years with diabetes, and by 2007 his kidney function dropped to 11%. Hoping to avoid dialysis, his family explored living donation. Bonnie joined in as the family tested, but neither she nor any other family members were a match.

Bonnie's affection for Gilbert ran deep because of her husband, Albert Palomo. Gilbert, technically Albert's stepfather, nurtured, loved and raised Albert as his own son. The bond was so great that Bonnie agreed only to take her husband's last name if it were Palomo. Though very ill, Gilbert's spirits remained high as he witnessed Albert legally change his last name to Palomo and then marry Bonnie who did the same.

Fortunately for all, a colleague of Gilbert's wife volunteered to undergo all the necessary testing. In 2007, she donated one of her kidneys to Gilbert. That same year, Bonnie and Albert bumped into their co-worker, Randi Ruiz. Only 29 years old, newlywed and a mother of one, Ruiz was facing renal failure. It pained Bonnie to watch her co-worker struggle with treatments and complications over the next year. When doctors placed Ruiz on the organ transplant waiting list, Bonnie told Albert she wanted to pay forward the selfless act that saved Gilbert's life.

Not long after, the transplant center at Mayo Clinic Hospital called Bonnie with test results. Ruiz was present when the phone rang. Bonnie was a match. The two women embraced with tears streaming down their cheeks.

"I was relieved and humbled to my core," says Bonnie. "It became real in that moment."

Bonnie donated one of her kidneys to Ruiz in 2009. The donation made it possible for Ruiz and her husband to live a normal life again. They welcomed a baby girl into the world and with a grateful nod to the donated kidney, they nicknamed her "bean."

"MVD touches so many lives every single day," says Bonnie. "And I am proud to be part of an organization that supports and promotes organ donation and helps educate our customers on the benefits and rewards of saving lives by being a registered organ donor."

Bean is now 11, old enough to understand the special relationship between her mother and Bonnie. The two families remain extremely close and celebrate donation by participating in the annual Arizona Kidney Walk with a transplant support group called Recycled Parts.

# Your work makes a difference

4,256,009

Arizonans on the DonateLifeAZ Registry as of Jan. 25, 2022

## So, they checked the box. Now what?

More than 4.2 million people have joined the DonateLifeAZ Registry as organ, eye and tissue donors. Most of them joined through an ADOT MVD or ATP transaction. After they check that box, the rest of the work is behind the scenes, which leaves many to wonder, "What exactly happens after that?"

### THE REGISTRATION PROCESS AFTER AN ARIZONAN CHECKS THE BOX:

- 1 The client checks the box on their DL/ID application. Their decision is then 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 Every day, 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, such as a change in address, 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, eye and tissue donation.
- 6 DNA checks the registry status of a person after they pass away to determine if the person had signed up to save and heal lives as an organ, eye and tissue donor.



## A story of second chances

**In case you missed it:** A Surprise, Arizona COVID-19 patient needed a double-lung transplant. Watch the inspiring story and their message to health care heroes [here](#).

## Test your donation knowledge and win a prize!

[Click here](#) to get started

*Hint: All answers can be found in this newsletter!*

Missed a few questions? That's alright! Reload the quiz and try again.



Win a clear  
tote bag!