



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Michala Stoker

mstoker@mwtn.org

913-261-7355

Giving Hope and Sharing Life: Kansas and Missouri See Big Increases in Registered Organ Donors

WESTWOOD, KAN. (October 8, 2018) — The number of registered organ and tissue donors in Kansas and Missouri has grown significantly in 2018. So far this year, Kansas has welcomed nearly 80,000 new registered donors; and Missouri has signed up more than 83,000. Leaders at Midwest Transplant Network, the organ procurement organization that serves both states, say this much-needed growth has been largely spurred by the power of the green ribbon.

Launched in April, the goal of the multimedia Green Ribbon Campaign is simple: inspire people to register as an organ donor, either online at ShareLifeMidwest.com or at the DMV when obtaining a new driver's license or ID card.

Both outlets have seen impressive results. Website visits soared from April through August, climbing more than 480 percent over the same period in 2017 and increasing conversion from awareness to registration by more than 16 percent. Campaign materials hit DMV offices in July, coinciding with the busiest summer on record for the offices, which included the largest monthly increase in DMV organ donation registrations in six years.

A primary feature of the campaign has been the Green Ribbon Champions – local leaders and well-known personalities who are passionate about increasing the number of registered organ donors in their communities. Three Green Ribbon Champions have been introduced so far:

- **Jeff Jones, president and CEO of H&R Block**, whose father received a lifesaving living-donor transplant, shared his story to demonstrate the second chance that comes with organ donation.
- **Bryan Busby, chief meteorologist at KMBC 9 News**, who once thought diabetes prohibited him from joining the registry and is now dispelling that and other myths about organ donation.
- **Sophia Dominguez-Heithoff, Miss Teen USA 2017**, whose cousin saved and improved lives as a tissue and organ donor, is raising awareness about the need for more registered organ donors among people of all ages.

Midwest Transplant Network plans to introduce more Green Ribbon Champions over the course of the multiyear campaign to continue delivering the lifesaving message. Watch for the newest champion to be unveiled next month – it's a story you won't want to miss.

"The message behind the green ribbon is resonating, which is wonderful because more registered donors will mean more lives saved and improved," said Jan Finn, RN, MSN, president and chief executive

officer of Midwest Transplant Network. “We are thankful to each and every person who has chosen to give hope and share life by becoming a registered organ donor.”

Despite these successes, the numbers still show room for improvement. National surveys indicate 95 percent of U.S. adults are in favor of organ donation, yet only 58 percent have taken the proper steps to sign up to save a life. Local registration rates are higher—75 percent of adults in Kansas and 76 percent of adults in Missouri are registered—but there remains a critical need for more registered organ donors.

A single donor can potentially save as many as eight lives and improve up to 75 more through organ, eye, and tissue donation. To join the Kansas or Missouri donor registry, visit [ShareLifeMidwest.com](https://www.sharelifemidwest.com).

About Midwest Transplant Network

Midwest Transplant Network (MTN) has been connecting lives through organ donation since 1973. As the federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization (OPO) for Kansas and the western two-thirds of Missouri, MTN provides services, which include organ procurement and surgical tissue and eye recovery, laboratory testing and 24-hour rapid response for referrals from hospital partners. Midwest Transplant Network ranks in the top quartile nationally among OPOs, which reflects the organization’s quality, professionalism and excellence in partnerships throughout the region. For more information, visit [mwtn.org](https://www.mwtn.org).

###