

Serenity

A newsletter for our donor families

QUARTER 3 • 2026

2026 Donate Life Legacy Walk

Join Us for an Evening of Hope, Remembrance and Celebration

Midwest Transplant Network invites you and your family to join us for the **2026 Donate Life Legacy Walk**. This special evening brings our community together to honor donor heroes, celebrate the gift of life and connect with others who understand the journey.

Whether you're remembering a loved one, celebrating a transplant recipient or simply supporting the lifesaving power of organ, eye and tissue donation. Donate Life Legacy Walk is a meaningful opportunity to come together and celebrate the gift of life.

Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026 • 5:30–8:30 p.m.
National WWI Museum and Memorial, South Lawn
Kansas City, Missouri

You'll notice we're gathering a little later this year! Due to the **FIFA World Cup™ Fan Fest** taking place at the National WWI Museum and Memorial this summer, Donate Life Legacy Walk has moved to September. We can't wait to celebrate with you this fall.

Registration Is Open

Donate Life Legacy Walk is **free to attend**, but registration is encouraged. Registering is the best way to receive event updates, reminders and important information leading up to the walk. You can:

- Register as an individual.
- Create a team for your family, friends, coworkers or community group.
- Invite others to join your team and walk together in honor of your donor hero or transplant recipient. *(Story continues on page 2)*



To register for the 2026 Donate Life Legacy Walk, scan the QR code to the left or visit:
mwtn.org/legacy-walk

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**MIDWEST
TRANSPLANT
NETWORK**

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Share Your Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation Story

Every connection to donation is a story worth sharing. Whether you're honoring a donor hero, celebrating a transplant recipient, sharing your experience as a living donor or reflecting on how donation has touched your life, we'd love to hear your story.

Submit your story through the form on our website: mwn.org/share-your-story. Selected stories may be featured on Midwest Transplant Network's social media channels before, during and after Donate Life Legacy Walk.

If you're participating in Donate Life Legacy Walk, be sure to tell us **Why I Walk** and what this special evening means to you.

Can't Join Us in Person?

You can still be part of Donate Life Legacy Walk! Follow Midwest Transplant Network on social media throughout the day for photos, stories and live moments from the event.

We'd love for you to share your own memories, photos and messages of support. Be sure your posts are set to **public**, tag Midwest Transplant Network and use **#LegacyWalkMTN** so we can celebrate with you.

Donate Life Legacy Walk T-Shirts

As part of your Donate Life Legacy Walk registration, you will receive a link to order up to **five standard event T-shirts** at no cost. After registering, you'll receive a confirmation email with a direct link to the online store.

Important details:

- **Store Closes:** Wednesday, Aug. 12
- **Included:** Up to five standard event T-shirts per registration
- **Personalization:** Add a loved one's name to the back of your shirt for an additional fee
- **Additional charges apply for:** Customization, shipping, extra shirts and upgraded shirt materials
- **Before submitting your order:** Carefully review your shirt style, size, spelling and customization details. Midwest Transplant Network is not responsible for customization errors after an order is submitted.

Please note: *Shirt colors may vary slightly by garment type, size and dye lot.*



Make It an Evening to Remember

From the moment you arrive, we hope you'll take time to reflect, connect and celebrate the lasting impact of donation.

Be sure to stop by the Welcome Tent to pick up your complimentary commemorative beads and add your message to the "I Walk in Honor" sign. Your bead color reflects your connection to donation and transplantation: green for donor family members, purple for transplant recipients, white for community partners and supporters of donation, blue for those waiting for a lifesaving transplant and orange for living donors. Together, your beads and your message help tell the story of our community and honor the lives forever changed through donation.

Food and Picnics

Come hungry! A variety of local food trucks will be onsite with something for everyone to enjoy. The food truck lineup will be shared on social media and in event emails before Donate Life Legacy Walk. Food truck purchases are self-pay.

Prefer to bring your own meal? Picnics are welcome, and you're encouraged to bring your own water.

Please note that alcohol is not permitted on the event grounds.

Parking

Several free and paid parking options are available near the National WWI Museum and Memorial. Parking maps and arrival information will be posted on the event website before Donate Life Legacy Walk to help make your arrival as smooth as possible.

Accessibility

The south lawn offers a comfortable gathering space with convenient access from nearby parking. While portions of the lawn include a gentle slope, most families find the area easy to navigate.

Golf carts will be available throughout the evening for guests who need assistance getting around the event grounds.

Weather

Donate Life Legacy Walk is a rain-or-shine event. If severe weather requires schedule changes or cancellation, updates will be shared on Midwest Transplant Network's social media channels and emailed to registered participants on the day of the event.

Questions?

Visit mwtn.org or email legacywalk@mwtn.org if you have questions about the 2026 Donate Life Legacy Walk.

We hope you'll join us for this unforgettable evening as we honor donor heroes, celebrate lives changed through donation and remind one another that every legacy continues to make a difference. 🌱

Beyond the Second Year: Understanding Long-Term Grief

For donor families, grief does not end after the first year or after the public moments of remembrance have passed. In the beginning, support often surrounds the early milestones, holidays and anniversaries. Over time, however, many families notice that life around them seems to return to normal while their grief continues to evolve and unfold.

The years beyond the second anniversary of a loss can be unexpectedly tender. The initial shock may have softened, but the permanence of the loss can become more real. Families may begin to feel not only the absence of their loved one today, but also the birthdays, traditions, milestones and everyday moments they will continue to miss.

Long-term grief often looks different than early grief. Instead of constant waves of sadness, grief may appear unexpectedly through a favorite song, a family tradition, a familiar place or an ordinary moment that suddenly carries deep meaning. These moments are normal. They do not mean someone has gone backward or is grieving incorrectly.

Support can also become harder to find as time passes. Friends and loved ones may assume the grieving person has "moved on" or no longer needs check-ins. But love does not follow a schedule, and grief does not have an expiration date. Continuing to miss someone deeply is a reflection of the bond that remains.

As the grief journey continues, it may help to give yourself permission to honor what still matters: say your loved one's name, mark meaningful dates in a way that feels right, ask for support even if time has passed and allow both sorrow and joy to be present. Healing does not require forgetting. It often means learning how to carry love forward.

Many families find that grief becomes less about letting go and more about staying connected in meaningful ways. They may share stories, continue traditions, attend remembrance events, volunteer or carry their loved one's values into everyday life. These acts of remembrance can create space for both connection and healing.

It is also important to remember that grief can coexist with joy. It is possible to laugh, celebrate and experience new moments of hope while still carrying sadness and longing. Happiness does not mean forgetting. It means the love remains, even as life continues.

If you are navigating grief beyond the second year, be gentle with yourself. Your journey may not look like anyone else's, and that is okay. Some anniversaries may feel lighter, while others may bring unexpected emotions. You are allowed to grieve in your own way and at your own pace.

The second year is not the end of grief. For many donor families, it is part of a lifelong process of carrying love, memory and legacy forward. You are not alone, and your loved one's impact continues to matter. 🌱

Mission

Saving lives by honoring the gift of donation with dignity and compassion

Vision

Leading organ and tissue donation through excellence, quality and partnerships

Contact Us

For more information or questions, call **913-262-1668** or visit **mwtn.org**

To receive Serenity via email or to unsubscribe, please send your request to **aftercare@mwtn.org**.

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Save the Date: Hope for the Holidays

Midwest Transplant Network is excited to host the annual Hope for the Holidays in Kansas City and Wichita.

The Kansas City event is Tuesday, Dec. 1, at Union Station. The Wichita event is Tuesday, Dec. 8, at Exploration Place.

We will share details about registration and more in the fall 2026 edition of Serenity. 