

**For Immediate Release**

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# DONATE LIFE FLOAT TO HONOR LIVING LEGACIES OF 81 ORGAN, EYE AND TISSUE DONORS IN 2014 ROSE PARADE®

# Memorial "Floragraph" Portraits Represent 34 States, Korea and Taiwan;

**Dozens of Families to Apply Finishing Touches to Portraits at Local Events**

**LOS ANGELES, Calif.** – **Oct. 22, 2013** – From Massachusetts to Hawaii and across the Pacific to Korea and Taiwan, the families of 81 organ, eye and tissue donors will complete memorial "[floragraph](http://www.donatelifefloat.org/prod/components/media_center/floragraphs/floragraphs_2013.html)" portraits of their loved ones that will "Light Up the World" as beacons of hope in the 2014 Rose Parade. Each honored individual is remembered by their generosity, compassion, and lives saved and healed through donations after death. The floragraphs will grace the lanterns of light that illuminate 30 float riders – all transplant recipients – and the 12 living donors who will accompany them on foot along the five-mile route seen by more than 40 million viewers nationwide.

"The donors' families and dozens of volunteers will decorate the portraits with grains, flowers, seeds, spices and other organic materials," said Bryan Stewart, chairman of the [Donate Life float](http://www.donatelifefloat.org/prod/components/) committee and vice president of communications at OneLegacy, the nonprofit organ and tissue recovery organization serving the greater Los Angeles area. "For many of their families, this is a unique opportunity to see their loved one shine before millions of people worldwide and to gain special recognition for their gifts of life and hope."

"As we enter our second decade in the Rose Parade, we appreciate how parade viewers honor our floragraph honorees with standing ovations and heartfelt appreciation for their life-saving gifts," said Stewart. "Through these unique creations, we shine a light on the compassion and generosity of all donors – those who have given life in their passing as well as the 110 million who have signed up on their state donor registries."

Only organic materials, such as spices, seeds, and crushed flowers, are used to create floragraphs. Many of the donors' families, guided by expert volunteers from Southern California, will come to Pasadena before Christmas to personally bring their loved ones' images to life. Others will apply the final touches to their floragraphs at special "floragraph finishing events" in their local community.

The youngest honoree, **Annie Rachel Ahern** (Oklahoma City, Okla.), was less than 15 hours old when she became a donor. The oldest, **Christine Springer** (Trumansburg, N.Y.), was 71 after a lifetime filled with family and memories.

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Remarkably, the visage of honoree **Cheryl Lynn Denelli Righter** (Williamstown, Mass.) continues to radiate on the face of Carmen Blandin Tarleton, a former transplant nurse whose ex-husband disfigured her by dousing her with industrial-strength lye. The transplant of Cheryl's face transformed Carmen's life, and three other lives were saved by the donation of her organs. "We are so very proud of my mother's legend," said Cheryl's daughter Marinda.

Of the 81 honored donors, one-third are children ranging in age from newborn to 17. Some, such as **Elijah Cole McGinley** (East End, Ark.) and **Audrey Jade Hope Sullenger** (Reno, Nev.) lived less than a week, yet adults and children alike are alive today thanks to their gifts of organs and tissue. Four of the donors drowned unexpectedly in swimming pools: **Chin-Te Liao** (Taiwan), **Keegan Atley Adkins** (Louisville, Ky.) and **Noah Michael Davis** (Shawnee, Kan.) were six years old, while **Christopher Marshall Walters** (Rancho Murieta, Calif.) was seven. Many, such as 11-year-old **Noah Cole Worthington** (Terre Haute, Ind.) and four-year-old **Kaitlyn Berg** (St. James, Minn.) became donors following fatal car accidents. Kaitlyn's mother Marlene summed it up for the parents of these young angels: "She was a true hero, and her name lives on as a reminder that anyone can be a hero and save lives by being an organ donor."

A number of donors spent a lifetime in service of others. **Mike James** (Bowie, Md.) served in the U.S. Army for many years before joining the police forces in Prince George's County, Md. and Phoenix City, Ala. Among his gifts of tissue and organs following an aneurysm was a liver received by float rider **Amy Tippins** (Norcross, Ga.). **Sean LaPersonerie** (Copiague, N.Y.) served in Iraq in the Third Infantry Division, yet suffered fatal head injuries as a result of a car accident just a year after returning home. After donating Sean's organs, tissue and corneas, his mother Marie helped found "Sean's Gift," which offers hand-knit blankets to comfort donor families. **Jerry L. Spinks** (Carlsbad, N.M.) served 25 years in the U.S. Navy and went on to serve his community for 15 years as a caring member of the West Funeral Home. His family said "yes" to donating his corneas in gratitude for the gift of sight that a family member received many years earlier.

**Kevin Patrick Dobson** (Buffalo, N.Y.) spent a lifetime helping, first aiding his mother who suffered from multiple sclerosis, and later serving his community as a New York State Trooper. After being struck at age 43 by a passing car while on duty, Kevin's gift of tissue helped lessen his family's terrible grief. Another whose goal of being a public servant was cut short was **Krysta Hankee** (Germansville, Pa.), who spent her teen years as a leader in community projects and aspired to serve the Commonwealth as governor. Her untimely death at age 22 was made easier because she had registered as a donor when applying for her driver's license.

At age 19, **Paul John Young** (Las Vegas, Nev.) became the youngest paramedic in Nevada. He spent the next 36 years saving lives as a fire captain and paramedic before succumbing to a neurological injury. Another paramedic and ER nurse, **Julio Enrique Buenano** (Cooper City, Fla.), continued to serve by saving four lives through organ donation and helping more than 100 others through tissue and cornea donations. Before donating his organs and tissues, longtime coal miner **Richard Allen Ruble** (Jasper, Ala.) led the reconstruction of over 200 homes after devastating tornadoes swept his state on April 27, 2011.

Some donors had the good fortune to see their lives extended by receiving gifts of life from others. For **Marianne O'Quinn** (Fullerton, Calif.), her brother Bill's living donation of a kidney meant she could continue her career as teacher and vice-principal. She inspired thousands of people through her work as a Donate Life Ambassador before dying after a fall at home and donating her lungs, liver, and corneas.

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For the family of **Todd Eliot Semon** (Norwood, N.J.), who suffered a heart attack at age 38, a donated heart he received 10 years prior meant the chance to return to an active life. His family was happy to donate his tissue after what his daughter Elizabeth called his "13 bonus innings" of life thanks to his donor.

Two floragraphs honor individuals whose lives intersected with blood donation. **Leslie Rene McLendon** (Kansas City, Mo.)served as a community outreach specialist for the Community Blood Center of Kansas City. Since her untimely death last December, the "Leslie Legacy of Love" blood drive was the most successful ever held in the city's African American community. **Dylan Anthony Rotellini** (Fontana, Calif.) understood about the importance of blood donation from his mother, Tammy, who has devoted her career to increasing blood donation in Southern California. "In a time of horrible heartache and grief, we find comfort in knowing another family will have a second chance because of our wonderful son's generosity and love," she said.

Some donor families have channeled their grief to do good works in the name of their loved ones. The family of **Josiah Berger** (Franklin, Tenn.), together with the congregation of Grace Chapel, formed Josiah's House to serve orphaned boys in the Dominican Republic. The family of **Michael-Gene Robert Futch** (Melbourne, Fla.) created the Michael-Gene Kids Basketball Foundation to provide meals, gifts and leagues for underprivileged children.

Today, nearly 120,000 candidates are on the national organ transplant waiting list. Largely due to the rarity of donation opportunities, only about 28,000 organs are transplanted each year. As a result, 18 candidates die each day for lack of a donor. A single organ donor can save the lives of eight people through organ donation, while a single tissue donor can save and heal 50 others through needed heart valves, corneas, skin, bone, and tendons that mend hearts, prevent or cure blindness, heal burns and save limbs.

Since its debut on New Year's Day 2004, the Donate Life Rose Parade float has become the world's most visible campaign to inspire people to become organ, eye, and tissue donors. The campaign began as an idea expressed in a letter by lung recipient Gary Foxen (Orange, Calif.) who wanted to show gratitude to donors who make life-saving transplants possible. Now, in addition to the 40 million viewers who view the Rose Parade in the stands and on TV, hundreds of events are held in cities and towns around the country to put the finishing touches on floragraph portraits and present dedicated roses to donor families and community partners that play a role in making donation possible.

The 2014 Donate Life float is built by Phoenix Decorating Company from a design by Dave Pittman and is coordinated by Los Angeles-based **OneLegacy**, the world's largest organ, eye and tissue recovery organization. Each year, the Donate Life float campaign is supported by more than 140 official sponsors from coast to coast, including organ, eye and tissue recovery organizations, tissue processors, hospitals, transplant centers, state donor registries, funeral homes, donor family foundations and affiliated organizations. Joining OneLegacy as top-level benefactors are:

* **American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB)**, which is dedicated to ensuring that human tissues intended for transplantation are safe and free of infectious disease, of uniform high quality, and available in quantities sufficient to meet national needs;
* **Dignity Memorial®** network, North America's largest network of funeral, cremation and cemetery service providers;

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* **Donate Life America**, a nonprofit alliance of national organizations and state teams across the United States committed to increasing organ, eye and tissue donation;
* **Donate Life Run/Walk Committee**, the Orange County-based producer of the nation's largest donation-themed 5K fundraising event;
* **Josiah's House**, a Tennessee-based nonprofit ministering to boys in the Dominican Republic in honor of Josiah Berger;
* **The Order of St. Lazarus**, an international community of Christian men and women devoted to ecumenical spirituality, worldwide charity and chivalric tradition;
* **SightLife**, a nonprofit eye bank focused on eliminating corneal blindness in the United States and worldwide; and
* **TBI/Tissue Banks International**, a nonprofit network of eye and tissue banks and the largest provider of ocular tissue in the world.

The Donate Life Rose Parade Float's family of sponsors urges viewers to help make dreams come true for more than one million people in need of life-saving and healing organ, tissue and cornea transplants. Join America's 113 million registered donors so that everyone whose life and livelihood depends on a transplant can have one. Sign up when renewing your driver's license or by visiting [www.DonateLifeAmerica.org](http://www.DonateLifeAmerica.org). Further information about the Donate Life float can be found at [www.donatelifefloat.org](http://www.donatelifefloat.org).

**About the Pasadena Tournament of Roses®**

The Pasadena Tournament of Roses is a volunteer organization that annually hosts the Rose Parade® presented by Honda, the Rose Bowl Game® presented by VIZIO and a variety of associated events. The Tournament's 935 volunteer members act as ambassadors of the organization within the community and serve on one of 31 committees that ensure the success of the parade and game. Collectively, they contribute upwards of 80,000 hours of manpower each year. The 125th Rose Parade presented by Honda, themed "Dreams Come True," will take place Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2014, followed by the 100th Rose Bowl Game presented by VIZIO. On Jan. 6, 2014, the Tournament also will host the 2014 VIZIO BCS National Championship at the Rose Bowl Stadium. For additional information on the Tournament of Roses please visit the official website at [www.tournamentofroses.com](http://www.tournamentofroses.com).

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(Note to editors: Full list of floragraph honorees by state follows)

**Donate Life Rose Parade® Float**

**2014 Floragraph Honorees – Alphabetical by State**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Donation** | **Date** | **Age** | **Hometown** | **Honored by** |
| Richard Allen Ruble | Organ and Tissue Donor | 1/13/13 | 52 | Jasper, AL | Alabama Organ Center |
| Elijah Cole McGinley | Tissue Donor | 8/8/09 | 5 days | East End, AR | ARORA (Arkansas Regional Organ Recovery Agency) |
| Fernando Rivera | Organ Donor | 5/17/11 | 17 | Phoenix, AZ | Donor Network of Arizona |
| Angel Nathaniel Chacon | Organ Donor | 10/15/12 | 2 mos | Pomona, CA | Dignity Memorial/Oakdale Mortuary |
| Melissa Ditta | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 5/26/12 | 34 | Morgan Hill, CA | California Transplant Donor Network |
| Eitan James Djiji | Organ and Tissue Donor | 8/11/10 | 14 | Los Angeles, CA | Donate Life Float Committee |
| Andrew Endo | Tissue Donor | 4/28/81 | 3 mos | Chatsworth, CA | OneLegacy |
| Carlos Garcia Escobedo | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 3/9/08 | 22 | Van Nuys, CA | OneLegacy |
| Jesus Alejandro Hernandez | Organ Donor | 3/13/04 | 21 | Los Angeles, CA | Donate Life Float Committee |
| Nick Leath | Organ Donor | 10/11/97 | 30 | Fountain Village, CA | OneLegacy |
| Marianne O'Quinn | Organ and Cornea Donor | 6/6/13 | 52 | Fullerton, CA | Donate Life Run/Walk Committee |
| India Kimberly Phillips | Organ and Cornea Donor | 11/3/11 | 4 | Solana Beach, CA | Lifesharing |
| Gilbert Frank Rivera | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 11/14/07 | 20 | East Los Angeles, CA | OneLegacy |
| Dylan Anthony Rotellini | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 3/29/13 | 18 | Fontana, CA | Donate Life Float Committee |
| Jaidyn Kiara Rothermel | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 9/3/11 | 3 | Bakersfield, CA | JJ's Legacy |
| Joshua Christopher San Pedro | Tissue Donor | 7/19/13 | 22 | Alta Loma, CA | Donate Life California |
| Patrick Shillings | Tissue Donor | 10/20/09 | 21 | Los Angeles, CA | Donate Life Float Committee |
| Lareanz Simmons | Organ Donor | 2/23/12 | 14 | Riverside, CA | Riverside Community Hospital |
| Erich Richard Vogel | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 8/6/09 | 41 | Costa Mesa, CA | OneLegacy |
| Christopher Walters | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 6/18/11 | 7 | Rancho Murieta, CA | Sierra Donor Services |
| Lindsey Denae Woodward | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 6/16/11 | 14 | Sunland, CA | OneLegacy |
| Julio Enrique Buenano | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 10/13/10 | 30 | Cooper City, FL | Life Alliance Organ Recovery Agency |
| Michael-Gene Robert Futch | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 11/22/10 | 19 | Melbourne, FL | TransLife |
| Jonathan E. Peter | Cornea Donor | 1/2/13 | 56 | Palm Coast, FL | TBI Orlando |
| Benjamin Bynum | Organ Donor | 4/29/09 | 16 | Lithonia, GA | LifeLink of Georgia |

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**Donate Life Rose Parade® Float**

**2014 Floragraph Honorees – Alphabetical by State (cont'd)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Donation** | **Date** | **Age** | **Hometown** | **Honored by** |
| Christian Chamberlain | Organ and Cornea Donor | 9/13/03 | 7 | Atlanta, GA | Donate Life Float Committee |
| Kameron Shigeo Lanaki Steinhoff | Organ Donor | 5/18/11 | 21 | Ewa Beach, HI | Mendez National Institute of Transplantation |
| Garrett M. Brockway | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 2/28/13 | 10 | Burlington, IA | Iowa Donor Network |
| Theodore "Teddy" Blaine Deterding | Organ and Cornea Donor | 8/4/00 | 11 | White Heath, IL | Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network |
| Noah C. Worthington | Organ Donor | 5/7/11 | 11 | Terre Haute, IN | Indiana Organ Procurement Organization (IOPO) |
| Noah Michael Davis | Organ and Cornea Donor | 7/5/12 | 6 | Shawnee, KS | Midwest Transplant Network |
| Rex A. Tickles | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 10/20/12 | 63 | Linwood, KS | Donate Life Float Committee |
| Keegan Atley Adkins | Organ Donor | 6/26/11 | 6 | Louisville, KY | Bridge to Life, Ltd. |
| Jeff Ballard | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 11/13/98 | 37 | Mt. Sterling, KY | Kentucky Organ Donor Affiliates |
| Robyn Doiron | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 10/3/04 | 34 | Houma, LA | Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency |
| Travis James Rhodes | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 8/6/03 | 33 | Morgan City, LA | Donate Life Float Committee |
| Christopher Thomas Duffy | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 8/29/00 | 35 | Braintree, MA | TBI Boston |
| Cheryl Lynn Denelli Righter | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 2/14/13 | 57 | Williamstown, MA | New England Organ Bank |
| Keegan Scott Clinger | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 5/13/11 | 21 | Upper Sandusky, OH | Living Legacy Foundation of Maryland |
| Dr. Michael Edelstein | Cornea Donor | 2/27/12 | 66 | Cockeysville, MD | TBI Baltimore |
| Mike James | Organ and Tissue Donor | 2/19/93 | 47 | Bowie, MD | Order of St. Lazarus |
| Terence Kennedy | Cornea Donor | 8/12/11 | 73 | Timonium, MD | TBI Baltimore |
| Daisy A. Lobos | Organ Donor | 11/21/00 | 17 | Lanham, MD | Washington Regional Transplant Community |
| Teresa Lynn Cassavoy | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 3/21/13 | 39 | Grand Blanc, MI | Gift of Life Michigan |
| Kaitlyn Berg | Organ Donor | 10/13/01 | 4 | St. James, MN | LifeSource |
| Rita Cihak | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 8/12/13 | 31 | Jackson, MN | Bacterin International |
| Darwin Mathwig | Cornea Donor | 7/4/10 | 58 | Arlington, MN | Minnesota Lions Eye Bank |
| Anthony "AJ" Salisbury | Cornea Donor | 1/26/09 | 24 | Maple Grove, MN | Minnesota Lions Eye Bank |
| Leslie R. McLendon | Organ Donor | 12/20/12 | 45 | Kansas City, MO | Midwest Transplant Network |
| John Talbot | Organ Donor | 8/28/92 | 2 | St. Louis, MO | Donate Life Float Committee |

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**Donate Life Rose Parade® Float**

**2014 Floragraph Honorees – Alphabetical by State (cont'd)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Donation** | **Date** | **Age** | **Hometown** | **Honored by** |
| Zachary Wildhaber | Organ and Tissue Donor | 2/16/12 | 17 | Beaufort, MO | Mid-America Transplant Services |
| Bryce Ian Autry | Organ and Cornea Donor | 3/30/12 | 6 | Bozeman, MT | SightLife |
| Michael Drozd | Tissue Donor | Aug 2008 | 46 | Mahwah, NJ | NJ Sharing Network Foundation |
| Ena "Po-Po" Lue | Organ and Tissue Donor | 1/23/10 | 68 | Mahwah, NJ | Bridge to Life, Ltd. |
| Todd Semon | Tissue Donor | 11/28/12 | 60 | Norwood, NJ | Dignity Memorial/Gutterman-Musicant Jewish Funeral Directors |
| Jerry L. Spinks | Cornea Donor | 6/3/13 | 63 | Carlsbad, NM | TBI/New Mexico Lions Eye Bank |
| Audrey Jade Hope Sullenger | Organ Donor | 5/7/11 | 6 days | Reno, NV | California Transplant Donor Network |
| Paul John Young | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 9/22/12 | 55 | Las Vegas, NV | Dignity Memorial |
| Kevin Patrick Dobson | Tissue Donor | 3/26/11 | 43 | Buffalo, NY | CryoLife, Inc. |
| Sean LaPersonerie | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 1/7/12 | 24 | Copiaugue, NY | Dignity Memorial |
| Howard S. "Howie" Smith, M.D. | Organ and Cornea Donor | 5/8/13 | 56 | Delmar, NY | Center for Donation & Transplant |
| Christine K. Springer | Organ Donor | 12/2/07 | 71 | Trumansburg, NY | Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network |
| Robert Sills | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 2/27/10 | 65 | Thornville, OH | Lifeline of Ohio |
| Annie Rachel Ahern | Organ Donor | 6/26/13 | New-born | Oklahoma City, OK | LifeShare Transplant Donor Services of Oklahoma |
| Jantz H. Kinzer Jr. | Organ Donor | 10/25/09 | 2 | Oklahoma City, OK | LifeShare Transplant Donor Services of Oklahoma |
| Tyson Lee Schreiber | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 2/12/12 | 19 | Alsea, OR | Donate Life Northwest |
| Jay Bennevell Banion | Organ Donor | 3/21/11 | 21 | Harleysville, PA | Donate Life Float Committee |
| Kevin Ellis Boyles | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 4/30/97 | 22 | Point Pleasant, WV | CORE |
| Krysta Hankee | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 9/25/07 | 22 | Germansville, PA | Gift of Life Donor Program |
| Joseph Keith Wallace | Organ and Tissue Donor | 8/2/12 | 25 | Manning, SC | Bridge to Life, Ltd. |
| Josiah David Berger | Organ, Tissue & Cornea Donor | 8/14/09 | 19 | Franklin, TN | Josiah's House |
| Cory Scott Horton | Organ and Tissue Donor | 5/12/05 | 35 | Cordova, TN | Mid-South Transplant Foundation, Inc. |
| Adam Fletcher Lively | Organ and Tissue Donor | 1/20/98 | 22 | Kingsport, TN | Tennessee Donor Services |
| Andrea Rae Dominguez | Organ Donor | 2/22/05 | 22 | El Paso, TX | Sallop Insurance Agency |
| Jorge A. Fernandez | Tissue Donor | 11/13/11 | 32 | San Antonio, TX | American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB) |

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**Donate Life Rose Parade® Float**

**2014 Floragraph Honorees – Alphabetical by State (cont'd)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Donation** | **Date** | **Age** | **Hometown** | **Honored by** |
| Patricia Streich-McConnell | Organ Donor | 11/18/12 | 34 | St. George, UT | Joseph Helfgot Foundation |
| John Akers, Jr. | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 4/9/09 | 27 | Rocky Mount, VA | Ryan Viator's Legacy |
| Joshua Thomas Waleryszak | Organ Donor | 8/23/93 | 12 | Seattle, WA | Dignity Memorial/Forest Lawn Funeral Home & Cemetery |
| Evan J. Hauk | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 7/6/11 | 13 | Lancaster, WI | RTI Donor Services |
| Yo-Sam Choi | Organ and Cornea Donor | 1/3/08 | 35 | Seoul, Korea | Korean Organ Donor Program |
| Chin-Te Liao | Tissue and Cornea Donor | 7/25/03 | 6 | Xiluo Township, Yunlin County, Taiwan (R.O.C.) | Tzu Chi Medical Foundation |