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Donate Life Float Celebrates 15 Years in the Tournament of Roses

Recognizing the difference that organ, eye and tissue donation can make in the lives of many, 69 honorees representing more than 50 organizations and 26 states will meet in Pasadena on New Year's Day

(LOS ANGELES – December 27, 2017) – Featuring over 14,000 roses and flowers from all around the world, as well as leaves, spices and other organic materials, the 2018 Donate Life Rose Parade Float® is celebrating its 15th anniversary delivering the message of the power of organ, eye and tissue donation.

The first Donate Life Rose Parade Float debuted in 2004, prompted by lung recipient Gary Foxen as a way to show gratitude to the donors who made lifesaving transplants like this possible and to inspire others to become organ, eye, and tissue donors. Fifteen years later millions of Rose Parade viewers will see the float from the stands in Pasadena and on TV across the world on January 1, 2018.

The 2018 Donate Life Float, entitled *The Gift of Time*, depicts a vibrantly colored, tropical backdrop that dates back to the ancient civilizations of Mexico, complete with a monumental Aztec calendar and colorful macaws ready to take flight.

“This year’s theme, *The Gift of Time*, shares the precious gift that organ, eye and tissue donors can give through donation as the ultimate act of selflessness,” said Tom Mone, Chairman of the [Donate Life Float](#) committee and CEO of [OneLegacy](#), the nonprofit organ, eye and tissue recovery organization serving the greater Los Angeles area. “The power of donation helps tens of thousands of people every year get a second chance at life and gain precious time to fulfill their dreams and spend time with loved ones.”

The 2018 Donate Life Float will feature:

- **8 walkers**, including living donors, recipients and organ donation advocates.

- **17 riders** who are organ and tissue recipients as well as organ donation advocates who have dedicated many years to promote the importance of donation.
- **44 floragraphs** that will be part of the Aztec calendar centerpiece. These floral portraits are made from organic materials and represent donors who gave the ultimate gift of time.

Representing 26 states around the country, this diverse group of honorees includes men, women and children of all ages, races and professions. Their own experiences and journeys as donors, recipients and donation advocates help people see the power of “paying it forward” and giving the gift of time through donation, saving and healing lives in the process.

Float Walkers

From a two-time living donor, to a law enforcement advocate who has helped share the importance of donation with peace officers in Southern California, the eight float walkers are a true example of selflessness and community advocacy. They embody the power of giving to others and stress the importance of education and volunteering to help inspire others to save and heal lives through donation.

The 2018 Donate Life float walkers are:

- Elaine Jones from Fontana, CA – two-time living donor
- Jeff Leone from Denver, CO – living donor
- Kelsea McKinley from Republic, MO – tissue recipient
- Holly K. Miyagawa from Hermosa Beach, CA – kidney recipient
- Anna Rayburn from Birmingham, AL – living donor
- Richard Rodriguez from Orange, CA – organ donation advocate
- Suzanne Wheeler from Tulsa, OK – living donor
- Ryanne Wilkes from Destin, FL – living donor

All float walkers have a unique story to tell. **Elaine Jones**, for example, is a two-time living donor who gave one of her kidneys to her uncle and part of her liver to an unknown infant who is now a happy and healthy 8-year-old girl.

Float Riders

This year’s float riders include sports celebrities as well as young tissue and organ recipients who are making strides in school while promoting the importance of organ, eye and tissue donation thanks to the gift of life they received when they were younger.

The 2018 Donate Life float riders are:

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| ● Macy Alexander-Childs from Buffalo, NY | ● Dylan Harvey from Phoenix, AZ |
| ● Peggy Averitt from Yorba Linda, CA | ● Tiffany Ladd from Tulsa, OK |
| ● Amy Camacho from Sparks, NV | ● Adaia “Lupe” Sanchez from Altadena, CA |
| ● Rod Carew from Coto de Caza, CA | ● Jason Schechterle from Phoenix, AZ |
| ● Melissa Carter from Atlanta, GA | ● Hailey Steimel from Cedar Rapids, IA |
| ● Dot Delarosa from San Antonio, TX | ● Michael Strusiak from Basking Ridge, NJ |
| ● Yolanda Harshaw from Little Rock, AR | |

- Bruce Taylor from Newport, OR
- Peter “P.J.” Williams from Cleveland, OH
- Sam Wyche from Pickens, SC
- Robert Ziegler from Valley Village, CA

Among the 17 float riders is former NFL quarterback and coach **Sam Wyche** who received a heart just hours before he was to be placed on hospice and baseball legend **Rod Carew** who received a heart and a kidney from former NFL tight end **Konrad Reuland** (floragraph honoree.)

Floragraph Honorees

Every year Donate Life honors those who have given the ultimate gift of life and time to others. This year’s honorees range from a days-old infant to adult donors who donated their organs, eyes and tissue as well as sports celebrities from the NFL and NASCAR racing.

The 2018 Donate Life Float floragraph honorees are:

- Alexandra J. Barnes from New York, NY
- Luke David Bautista from Wall, NJ
- Jeffery E. Bayless from Anchorage, AK
- Andrew Campbell from Portland, ME
- Bryan Clauson from Noblesville, IN
- Jared Colon from Hillsborough, NJ
- Brooke Dawkins from Orlando, FL
- Olivia Lauryn Didway from Republic, MO
- Pablo A. Dizon from Duarte, CA
- Eric Driskell from Stillwell, KS
- Austin Elder from Orlando, FL
- Jennifer Enright from Dana Point, CA
- Kaitlyn Ferrante from Coral Springs, FL
- Reinaldo García from Newark, NJ
- Angela Yvonne Griggs from Detroit, MI
- Paul Gomez from Alhambra, CA
- Glen Patrick Haenelt from Bakersfield, CA
- Aidan Hooper from Edmond, OK
- Anna Lynn Klein from Cypress, TX
- Parker Lang from Bothell, WA
- John Lefferts from Springfield, IL
- Logan Leone from Las Vegas, NV
- Andrew Lienemann from Waukegan, IA
- Joseph Lizana, Jr., from Gardena, CA
- Grace Lovegrove from Roanoke, VA
- Eddie Mason from Los Angeles, CA
- Benjamin Meier from Lancaster, CA
- Jason Murphy from Reynoldsburg, OH
- Christian Shay Nelson from Lafayette, LA
- Melissa Owen from Little Rock, AR
- Landon Palmer from Council Bluffs, IA
- Malaikye Payne from Azusa, CA
- Matthew Lee Pettegrew from Highland, CA
- Alyssa Potratz from Chicago, IL
- Konrad Reuland from Mission Viejo, CA
- Robert Ray Rivera from Whittier, CA
- Ruth Ann Seurer from Prior Lake, MN
- Savannah Faith Sides from Jasper, AL
- Sara Stelzer from Moorpark, CA
- Claire Sundgren from Fairbanks, AK
- Kelly Drew Theriot from Breaux Bridge, LA
- Angelo Torres from Norwalk, CA
- Giovanni Valle from Riverside, CA
- Bonnie Walker from El Cajon, CA

One of the 44 floragraph honorees is **Konrad Reuland**, who donated his heart and kidney to **Rod Carew**. Reuland was a former NFL tight end for the Baltimore Ravens, and his family has joined efforts with Carew to promote the importance of donation.

Youth Participants

The four exceptional young float riders/walkers on this year’s Donate Life Float are:

- **Macy Alexander-Childs** (float rider), a 10-year-old who received a small bowel transplant when she was an infant.
- **Kelsea McKinley** (float walker), a 15-year-old high school student who received donated tissue to straighten her back after suffering from scoliosis.
- **P.J. Williams** (float rider), a 17-year-old high school student who received a bone donation that saved his leg after suffering from sarcoma.
- **Dylan Harvey** (float rider), a 19-year-old who received donated tissue to repair his left arm after a motorcycle accident.

For more information on the Donate Life Float and all of the riders, walkers and floragraph honorees, please visit www.donatelifefloat.org.

All Donate Life Float [sponsors](#) encourage parade viewers to join the nation's more than 130 million registered donors so that everyone whose life depends on a transplant may receive one. Register today to become an organ, eye or tissue donor by visiting DonateLifeAmerica.org.

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Facts about organ and tissue donation:

There are nearly 116,000 people currently listed on the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) national list as they wait for a lifesaving organ donation. About 82 percent of people on the national transplant waiting list are in need of a kidney. It is medically impossible to meet this need with deceased donations, making living donations even more crucial.

More than 1.75 million lifesaving and healing tissue transplants are performed each year in the United States, offering patients a new chance at healthy, productive and normal lives. You are likely to have a neighbor, friend or even a family member who has received a tissue transplant.

An organ donor can save the lives of up to eight people by donating their heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas and small intestines and can enhance the lives of up to 75 by donating their corneas, skin, bones, heart valves and more.