



**NEWS**  
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**Special Flyover at 2018 Tournament of Roses Parade to Honor Air Force Hero and Organ Donor Who Continued to Save Lives Even After Death**

***Major Benjamin “Chex” Meier to be Honored by Flyover From His Squadron and Floragraph on Donate Life Float Highlighting the Power of Organ and Tissue Donation***

(LOS ANGELES – December 28, 2017) – The traditional flyover marking the start of the annual Tournament of Roses Parade will have a special meaning January 1 as it will honor an Air Force hero who found a way, even in death, to perform one last heroic act of kindness. The flyover will honor Major Benjamin “Chex” Meier, an Air Force pilot who flew combat missions over Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya and in doing so saved the lives of dozens of ground troops while under fire himself. Upon his death in 2015, and per his wishes, Major Meier donated his heart, lungs, liver and kidneys in order to save the lives of five more people.

In his honor and memory, the flyover will be conducted by his Air Force squadron in the exact plane Major Meier flew on many of his missions, an F-35 Lightning II from 31<sup>st</sup> Test and Evaluation Squadron from Edwards Air Force Base, California.

In a moving tribute the F-35 on the left of the B-2 Stealth Bomber from the 509<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, will represent all donors who have given the gift of life while the F-35 on the right will symbolize all who have received the gift of life.

Major Meier is survived by his wife, two young sons, two sisters and their families, and his parents. As part of celebrating his life and actions, Air Force officials joined with Major Meier’s family earlier this month in a ceremony at Edwards AFB where his squadron finished decorating a floragraph of the major, which will be displayed on the Donate Life Rose Parade Float® in the parade. His is one of 44 floragraphs on the float, which honor those who have

selflessly donated their organs to give others a second chance at life. The float will also feature riders and walkers who are the thankful recipients of organ, tissue and eye transplantation.

*(More)*

## **Donate Life Float/Flyover**

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Now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, the Donate Life Rose Parade Float is part of a national effort to deliver the simple, lifesaving message that donation saves and heals lives. A single organ donor can save the lives of up to eight people and improve the lives of as many as 75 more by donating their corneas and tissue. This year's float, *The Gift of Time*, celebrates the kindness of people throughout the world who are making a positive difference in the lives of others by becoming an organ, eye and tissue donor.

The Donate Life Rose Parade Float is produced by OneLegacy and is made possible thanks to over 50 sponsoring donation, transplant, healthcare, and family care organizations and individuals who help make donation and transplant possible across the country. Currently there are more than 116,000 people around the country each year in need of organ, eye or tissue transplants. For more information on becoming an organ, eye or tissue donor, go to [DonateLife.net](http://DonateLife.net).

## **About Donate Life America**

Donate Life America (DLA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization leading its national partners and Donate Life State Teams to increase the number of donated organs, eyes and tissue available to save and heal lives. DLA manages and promotes *Donate Life*<sup>SM</sup>, the national brand for the cause of donation; motivates the public to register as organ, eye and tissue donors; provides education about living donation; manages the National Donate Life Registry at [RegisterMe.org](http://RegisterMe.org); and develops and executes effective multi-media campaigns to promote donation.