



For Immediate Release

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**'TREASURE LIFE'S JOURNEY' AT 2016 ROSE PARADE®
ABOARD THE 13TH ANNUAL DONATE LIFE FLOAT**

Gift of Life Celebrated by Organ Donors and Recipients—Walking, Riding and Honored *In Memoriam* with Brilliant 'Floragraph' Images

HONOREES INCLUDE DONORS & RECIPIENTS FROM 21 STATES

Multiple Media Availabilities – Calendar Below

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – Dec. 2, 2015 – The 13th annual **Donate Life float in the January 1, 2016 Rose Parade** teaches us all to “**Treasure Life’s Journey**,” the theme of this year’s float. The float will feature 52 men and 44 women whose own journeys have been touched by the incredible gift of organ donation and transplantation.

The float will feature:

- 24 **riders**, who are organ and tissue recipients (or, in a few cases, are family members representing loved ones who were transplant recipients)
- 12 **walkers**, ordinary men and women who made the remarkable but increasingly widespread choice of donating a kidney to a family member or even a stranger
- and 60 “**floragraphs**,” portraits made from flowers depicting deceased donors whose legacies are celebrated by their loved ones.

“The act of organ and tissue donation weaves together a tapestry of donors and recipients, of hope and remembrance, and beloved family and friends who live on through the most miraculous of gifts,” 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 riders, walkers and florograph honorees who will accompany the 13th annual Donate Life float each have an amazing story to tell. With over 123,000 people waiting on the national transplant list today, we hope that these honorees will inspire millions more to register as organ donors.”

The 96 honorees hail from across the country, including men and women of every age, race and origin.

The following are but three of the dozens of stories of connection, hope, and the gift of life:

Float rider **Miguel Santos** of Lancaster, New York, was able to see his first-born son because of a donated cornea he received from an unknown donor less than three months before his son’s birth in December of 1993. A consumer advocate and church deacon, Miguel has dedicated years to helping others decide to donate life—and recently received a second tissue donation to repair his gums after complications from diabetes.

Fact: Over 40,000 patients have their sight restored every year through cornea transplants.

Walker **Nichole Piatt** of Granada Hills, CA made the decision to donate in the middle of profound family upheaval. She had just given birth to her daughter when her mother died—less than one year after her sister was diagnosed with stage four renal failure. After recovering from childbirth and mourning the loss of her mother, she gave one of her kidneys to her sister—and gave her daughter a healthy aunt.

Fact: Eighty percent of people on the national transplant waiting list need kidneys. It is medically impossible to meet this need with kidneys from the very rare opportunity of deceased donation, making living donations even more crucial. More than 6,000 lives are saved each year by living kidney and liver donors.

Floragraph honoree **Major Kelley Chase** was born in Taos, NM and lived in Oklahoma City, OK. A veteran of the United States Air Force, an Oklahoma City police officer, and a husband and father or two, Major Chase decided early on to become an organ donor, signing up for the registry and noting his decision in his will. Through his organ and tissue donation, six lives were saved, and the man whose chest holds Kelley's beating heart, float rider **Ralph Howell** of Edmond, OK, has become "Grandpa Ralph" to Kelley's children.

Fact: An organ donor can save the lives of up to eight people by donating their heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas and small intestines, and enhance the lives of up to 50 people by donating their corneas, skin, bones, heart valves and more.

Other honorees include **Brice Fabing** (floragraph), who made the decision to be a donor only months before he died, providing lifesaving transplants to **Jim Stavis** (rider), whose rare blood type makes him an especially unlikely triple transplant survivor; father and daughter **Ommy and Oceana Irizarry** (floragraph), who were killed by a plane crash, whose wife and mother called donating their tissue in the wake of tragedy "the easiest decision I had to make"; and **Carmen Tarleton** (rider), who lost her sight, her lips and the ability to breathe through her nose when her husband brutally attacked her with industrial strength lye, and became the first successful recipient of a full face transplant from a less-than-complete match. She has also become a friend to her donor's daughter Marinda.

The Donate Life Float began on New Year's Day 2004, prompted by lung recipient **Gary Foxen** (Orange, CA), as a way to show gratitude to the donors who made life-saving transplants like his possible, and to inspire others to become organ, eye, and tissue donors. Today 40 million Rose Parade viewers see the float from the stands in Pasadena, CA and on TV across the world.

Additionally, throughout November and December events are held in cities and towns around the country to **put the finishing touches on floragraph portraits** and to **present dedicated roses to donor families** and community partners that play a role in making donation possible. The float will be available to view by members of the media BY APPOINTMENT while final decoration takes place from December 26 through December 31, and during the judging on December 31, 2015. Following the Rose Parade, the float will be on display at Post Parade: A Showcase of Floats, Victory Park at 2575 Paloma St, Pasadena, CA 91107 from January 1-3, 2016.

For 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 117 million registered donors so that everyone whose life depends on a transplant may receive one. Registrations can be made through state registries, links to which can be found at www.DonateLifeAmerica.org. Further information about the Donate Life float, decorating, and facts about donation and transplantation can be found at www.donatelifefloat.org.

The theme of the 2016 Rose Parade is "Find Your Adventure." The Donate Life float, "Treasure Life's Journey" depicts a caravan scene at a desert oasis. The float celebrates the journey of life and the legacy of adventures by donors and recipients.

The 127th Rose Parade presented by Honda will take place Friday, January 1, 2016, at 8 a.m. (PST) featuring majestic floral floats. For additional information on the Tournament of Roses please visit the official website at www.tournamentofroses.com.

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