



Reflections

New England Organ Bank

A Donate Life Organization



A bi-annual newsletter to honor organ and tissue donors and their families
Summer/Fall 2016

To Honor My Beloved Husband

Written by: Marguerite Burne, Donor Wife

Dick was born and raised in Chelmsford, MA. He was drafted after attending Bentley College in Boston.

When he returned, he married, had twin daughters and later another daughter was born.

In 1981 his wife died of ovarian cancer at the age of 46.

For three years he dreamed of living in the mountains of New Hampshire. He retired early, at 52, and found his dream land in Wentworth, NH. He had a mountain of his own and a brook to swim in with his dog, Dusty.

Alone, he prepared his land and began to build his dream home; a log cabin.

A very concerned lady began stopping by to check on him. She was on her way to her wild blueberry patch. After picking 60 quarts and leaving many baskets of blueberries with him, he finally asked her on a date.

Eighteen months later, we were married!

Dick loved the mountains and forests with all his heart and he achieved 34 of the 4000 footers!

He wasn't a guy to talk a lot, especially about himself. He quietly built his home, garage, chicken coop, rose garden, seven flower beds and a vegetable garden. He expressed his values through his actions: loyalty, faithfulness, respect, devotion to family and community, his love of nature, birds and me.

Dick always saw the best in everyone and he gave the best of himself. He had God-given talents and gifts.

He loved his children, step children, grandchildren, step grandchildren and especially his yellow lab.

He was a loving caregiver to all and it showed in all he did.

Witness his decision to be a tissue donor.

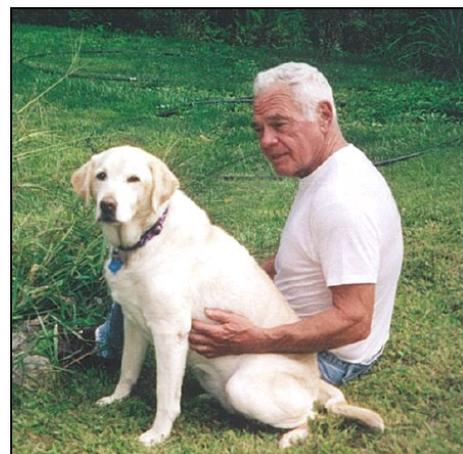
He was loved by all who were fortunate to know him.

He is gravely and deeply missed by me, Sierra (our yellow lab) and Blue (his Maine Coon cat).

We find comfort in knowing he is in Heaven.



Marguerite and Dick at home in Wentworth, NH.



Dick and Sundance, 2006

Donate Life Transplant Games: Cleveland, Ohio 2016

In June of 2016, transplant recipients and living donors gathered in Cleveland, Ohio to join in the 14th biennial Donate Life Transplant Games. Launched in 1990, this national sporting event invites all living donors and organ, eye and tissue recipients to participate in various events of all ability levels with the spotlight on the strength and optimism created by the gift of donation. It is a celebration of the success of transplantation and a time to honor the lasting legacy of all donors. The Games provide hope to those who continue to wait for a transplant and promote donor registration by raising awareness through the athlete's life stories.

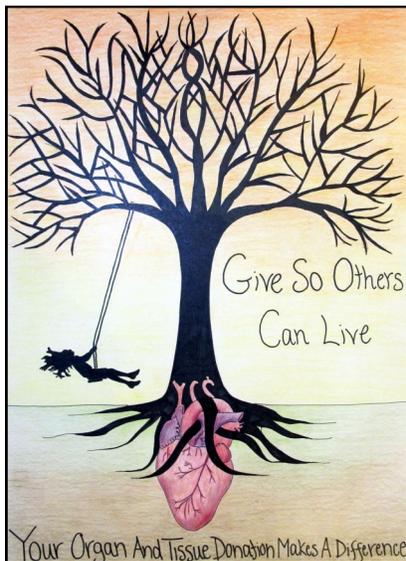


This year the Games held more than 74 events in 21 different sports. Team New England was proud to have 31 athletes compete. The team was joined by family, friends and supporters and represented the largest New England contingent ever sent to the Games. Events that NE team members participated in included: swimming, volleyball, golf, bocce, cornhole, badminton, darts, track & field, trivia and Texas Hold'em poker. We took home an amazing total of 52 gold, silver and bronze medals and won the Team Spirit Award! New England Organ Bank is the proud primary sponsor of our athletes and pleased to help them share their stories and illustrate the life-saving benefits of organ, eye and tissue donation. Outside of the competitive events, Team New England was able to participate in a moving opening ceremony and in an evening of remembrance for all donors. During this solemn but celebratory event transplant recipients were able to pay tribute to those who gave life-saving and life-enhancing gifts. Many donor families were present throughout the Games to share in the experience. Through many smiles and tears, our Team found common bonds of joy and hope. We look forward to the next Donate Life Transplant Games in 2018. The location has not been finalized but we are certain that Team New England will have grown in size and strength and will be ready to take on that next challenge! To learn more please visit: www.transplantgamesofamerica.org (you can find Team New England under the TEAMS tab)

Donate Life Volunteer Community News



Caitlyn Wells—First Place, ME



Maya Boyers—First Place, VT



Matthew Ciullo—First Place, RI

To learn more about volunteer opportunities throughout New England please contact:

Jennifer Cray, Volunteer Manager at:
volunteerservices@neob.org
 (617) 571-9582

This past school year (2015/2016) New England Organ Bank's volunteer manager, Jenn Cray helped to launch three new poster contests for high school students in Maine, Vermont and Rhode Island. Students were asked to make a poster for organ and tissue donation awareness. Through the expression of their creativity and talent students had the opportunity to learn about donation. Knowing the facts may help them make an informed decision when they apply for their first driver's license at their local DMV (where they will be asked if they want to register as an organ and tissue donor).

Prizes were awarded to the students with the winning posters. A teacher award was also given to the educator who had the most students submit posters.

The response was excellent and we received many creative posters. It was clear that students took the time to learn more by reading the information we had provided and self-researching online. A judging was held for each state which included officials from the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, Dept. of Public Health, local transplant hospital representatives and staff/volunteers of New England Organ Bank. It is our hope that the students enjoyed designing their posters while learning about the positive aspects of organ and tissue donation. We expect the contest to grow each year as more schools participate!

Maine Winners:

Caitlyn Wells, Brunswick High School - 1st Place
 Monica Caruso, Freeport High School - 2nd Place
 Beverly Anderson, Freeport High School - 3rd Place
 Isabel Masison, Freeport High School - Honorable Mention
 Ms. Kimberly Medsker-Mahalie, Teacher Award, Freeport HS

Vermont Winners:

Maya Boyers, Essex High School - 1st Place
 Alexis Donna, Essex High School - 2nd Place
 Aimee Gardner, Blue Mountain Union HS - 3rd Place
 Kai White, Montpelier High School - Honorable Mention
 (Received the Nicholas Bogie Award prize by donor spouse, Carrie Bogie - in memory of her husband jNick)
 Ms. Barbara Austin-Hutchins, Teacher Award, Montpelier HS

Rhode Island Winners:

Matthew Ciullo, Mount St. Charles Academy - 1st Place
 Pacer Carpenter, West Warwick High School - 2nd Place
 Maia Young-Ondrasek, Beacon Charter High School for the Arts - 3rd Place
 Mrs. Tracy LeFort, Teacher Award, West Warwick High School

Beautiful Biggie—A Mother’s Heartfelt Journal Entry

Written by: Kathleen Fortier, Donor Mother

Those dark days in July were the most traumatic days of my life. Losing you was and still is so incredibly hard, excruciating, painful, heart-wrenching...all those things times a million.

It was like a bad storm I wasn’t prepared for. It made landfall and all my levees broke. It took every last ounce of strength I had—just to stay above water.

They say grief comes in waves. As I learn to float, the waves will eventually come with less force.

A year ago, I’m lucky I survived and stayed above water—now periodically a wave will pull me under but I keep swimming.

At times, I’m barely breathing but somehow I’m managing to stay afloat.

GRIEF—it’s not about the passage or amount of time—it’s about the continued day to day feelings and being in pain in a thousand different ways. I’m not healing—I’m learning to live with the constant grief. It’s now a part of who I am.

I’m constantly thinking about you and re-living particular moments that are forever frozen in my memory. I often just sit and cry...missing you, longing for your voice, your touch, your laugh and to hear that one precious word I will never hear again... Mommy.

But there is one time of the day that is my favorite. This is the most beautiful part of my day. It’s in these few seconds that time stands still. It’s that moment when I first wake up—my eyes not yet even open. It’s a new day and you are upstairs sleeping soundly in your bed—all nice and warm and tucked in from the night before. You are just starting to stir and waking from your slumber. The birds are singing and the sunlight shines through my window as I open my eyes... then reality hits me hard—like a punch to my gut.



Ashley E. Fortier

I realize that you are not upstairs. You are not all warm in your bed.

I will not hear your footsteps as you get out of bed and start your day.

I will not make breakfast and help you get ready for the day.

No, I will start this day as I have for the past 640 days-gathering every last ounce of strength I have to get out of bed and to go on with my day without you.

July 2014 – my life was forever changed. It will never be the same again and it will never be okay that this happened.

I love you Ashley with all that’s left of my heart. My love for you and Karley is the strongest force that I have. My grief exists because I love you so much...

Mommy loves you to the moon and back. Always. Always.

NH/VT Donor Family Ceremony

A Recognition Event to Honor the Real Heroes of Donation

On April 3, 2016 donor families from New Hampshire and Vermont gathered at the Fireside Inn located in West Lebanon, NH to remember the lives of their loved ones.

The event, titled ‘A Celebration of Heroes’, was an opportunity for the Aftercare department of New England Organ Bank to recognize & honor donors from those states who gave the gift of donation in 2013, 2014 and part of 2015.

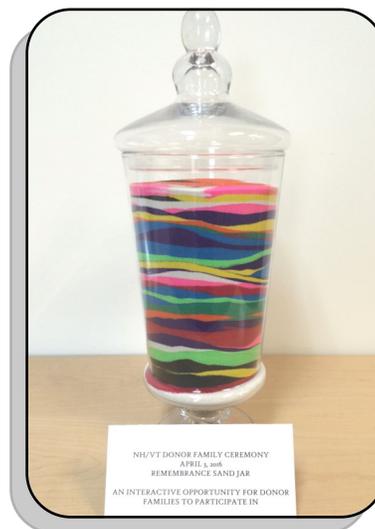
These amazing individuals gave life-saving and life-enhancing gifts through cornea, organ & tissue donation to help those in need.

To begin the afternoon we heard from Dr. David Axelrod from the Department of Transplantation Surgery at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. Dr. Axelrod spoke about the impact of organ transplantation on the lives of his patients and their families. We were all reminded that the gift of donation not only touches the life of a recipient but also all those who love and care for that individual.

Next, we had a heart recipient and a donor’s wife light a series of candles that represented our grief, courage, memories, love and hope as we move through our losses.

Following the candle lighting, our organ and tissue recipient speakers shared their stories, telling our guests what had happened in their lives that had led up to the need for an organ or tissue transplant. These individuals spoke of their deep gratitude for receiving such a life-changing gift from a perfect stranger. Each person was overwhelmed by this humanistic act of selfless generosity

The donor families then had the opportunity to participate in our Remembrance Sand Ceremony. Upon their arrival to the gathering each family was able to choose a glass filled with colored sand. Families chose colors that reflected a favorite of their loved one or held meaning in some way to them.



During the Sand Ceremony, one person from each family carried their sand to the front of the ballroom and said their loved one’s name and relationship aloud. After stating the name, the sand was poured into a large glass vessel.

The intertwining sand layers were a reminder of the importance we all hold in helping others. Each donor has left this world a better place through their compassionate gifts of health and hope. Each individual a beacon of light shining their beam into another person’s darkness.

After families finished filling the sand vessel a remembrance video was shown. Each family was given the opportunity to submit a photo of their loved one from which we were able to create an emotionally meaningful pictorial tribute.

The ceremony came to a close with an interfaith benediction. Many families took the time to take a photograph standing near the Sand Ceremony vessel before they left.

Throughout the event our guests enjoyed the live performance of classical guitarist, Aaron Larget-Caplan who provided a touching accompaniment.

It was a beautiful and heartfelt day of remembrance for all in attendance. A moment to consider the lasting legacy of donation.

New England Organ Bank
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HERE I AM: Official theme song of 2016 Donate Life Transplant Games

Musical artist Anne E. DeChant was approached by the coordinators of the Transplant Games of America (TGA) and asked if she could write a song that would be emblematic of the spirit of the Games. She spent days reading stories online about recipients, donors and donor families. "One thing always came up in every story, and that was GRATEFULNESS," recalls Anne E.

In fact, the first line of the song was inspired by the TGA community. Anne E. asked those participating in the Games what it is they are thinking when they are about to compete. She received a flood of responses, and what she heard over and over was that recipients were always thinking about their donors.

Anne E. DeChant is a Nashville recording artist originally from Cleveland. She has experienced loss on a personal level, where an organ transplant might have saved the life of her dear friend's sister. When Anne performs this song, she is thinking of this young woman.

To find out more about Anne E. DeChant and download "Here I Am" please go to:

www.annedechant.com

Lyrics for: HERE I AM

Here I am on the edge of something beautiful
It's a leap of faith but I am sure
I am not alone
Yes I know you're right with me
I feel you in each breath I'm breathing
Being here is like coming home

**Here I am with a second chance
Here I am joining in the dance
Here I am living life out loud
Because of you yes I can
Thanks to your love, here I am**

Here I am I know you never dreamed of losing me
Even though I'm gone I hope that you can see
I am living on
Your loss was someone else's gain
But you gave life in spite of your pain
In that darkest hour you stayed strong so

CHORUS

Everybody stand up
Everybody hold hands
Everybody sing out
HERE I AM

CHORUS