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EMBRACING LIFE

When asked to share some of the expressions often uttered by her son, Pochie, Melanie Kennedy immediately said: “I want to hug you, I want to cuddle, I want to squeeze you.”

Pochie is only five but has already faced personal and health challenges that many of us will never have to endure in a lifetime. But he is now thriving and embracing life with a new liver and a new forever family.

Stories like Pochie’s can be told because of the generosity of families like the Copp’s. They only got to hug their baby girl, Carter, for three weeks before they had to say goodbye. She went on to heal lives through the donation of her organs and tissues for medical research and her gifts will continue to transform the lives of many.

In this issue of Life Connections, we highlight two innovative and mutually beneficial partnerships which will help us better serve donor families and transplant center partners. First, the expansion of our successful donor transfer recovery partnership with San Ramon Regional Medical Center this spring will allow us to continue to accommodate a more certain time for the recovery of organs while reducing the overall average case time. Second, the opening of a laboratory at our Clinical Center this fall in partnership with LABS, Inc. will allow a more rapid turnaround infectious disease screening process because blood tests will be run at our facility rather than traveling out of state.

You will also learn of new initiatives that we have been able to put forward thanks to the partnerships with hospitals, coroners and medical examiners, government institutions, community organizations and of course, the continued generosity of donors and their families. They all share our mission of saving lives through organ, eye, and tissue donation.

And for kids like Pochie, the chance to hug as much as he wants.

Cindy Siljestrom
Chief Executive Officer
Donor Network West

DONOR NETWORK WEST EXPANDS OPERATIONS WITH NEW LEADERSHIP ROLES

Donor Network West is expanding its operations by identifying new opportunities and putting systems in place to maximize the life-saving gifts entrusted to us. Last November, Sean Van Slyck was promoted to Chief Operating Officer and Denise Kinder was named Strategic Development Officer. We look forward to building on our tradition of excellence to save and heal more lives through organ and tissue donation.

As the new Chief Operating Officer for Donor Network West, Sean Van Slyck brings a robust career in the organ and tissue donation community. For nearly 20 years in the field of transplantation, Sean has had successful careers at the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) and LifeNet Health prior to joining Donor Network West in 2000. Most recently, as the Vice President of Organ Donation Services, Sean successfully led the clinical team’s efforts for more than two years.

Sean’s long-term commitment and leadership within the donation and transplant community is demonstrated by ongoing engagement with national committees and initiatives with UNOS, AOPO and NATCO (North American Transplant Coordinators Organization). He is most proud of his contributions at UNOS where he served as the OPO Committee Chair as well as a member of the Policy Oversight and the Kidney Committees.

Denise Kinder’s career in organ procurement spans nearly three decades and is well-known in the organ and tissue donation community. Denise began working as a transplant coordinator in 1986 and has served in many roles at Donor Network West, as the new Chief Operating Officer. Her contributions to the donation community extend well beyond the walls of the organization, as she has helped shape donation practices over her tenure in the field. Denise is the recipient of the 2010 AOPO Excellence in Leadership Award; was a member of the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Organ and Transplant Collaborative Expert Panel; Faculty for the HRSA Collaboratives; Co-Director of Transplant Growth and Management Collaborative; and, has served as a member of the UNOS thoracic committee.

As the Strategic Development Officer, she will focus her efforts on continuous performance improvement allowing Donor Network West to save and heal more lives through organ and tissue donation.

Donor Network West welcomes its newest board members and congratulates Michelle Zyromski, Esq. who has been voted new Chair.

Denise Kinder, Police Officer for Donor Network West

Michelle Zyromski, Esq.
Chairperson Partner
Zyromski Konicek LLP
Executive Committee

As the new Chairperson of the OPO Committee, Michelle Zyromski brings a robust career in the legal field. She is a partner at Zyromski Konicek LLP in Albany, California and serves as a member of the UNOS Thoracic Organ Committee. Michelle is a native of Alameda County and has dedicated her career to ensuring that families in our region are able to help save and heal more lives through organ and tissue donation. She is also very proud to serve our community in this role.

Ah the tradition of excellence to save and heal more lives through organ and tissue donation.

Michael J. Ferenc, M.D.
Forensic Pathologist
Alameda County Sheriff’s Office
Coroner’s Bureau

Michelle A. Jorden, M.D.
Assistant Medical Examiner
& Neuropathologist
Office of the Medical Examiner
Coroner Santa Clara County

Dr. Chris Freise
Professor of Surgery
Surgical Director of Kidney Transplant
Interim Chief of Transplant Division

Eric L. Williams
Vice President, Solid Organ
Transplant Service Lines &
Operation Planning & Integration
Stanford Hospital & Clinics
A FOREVER FAMILY

AS A MEMBER of the surgical team at one of the busiest pediatric transplant centers in northern California, Melanie Merrill-Kennedy of Napa was reminded daily about the selfless act of giving. Delivering highly personalized quality care to post-transplanted children gave her an enormous sense of personal and professional satisfaction.

As a physician assistant, Melanie was living her career dream. With every case, she witnessed how the life-saving gifts of generous donors were creating bright tomorrows for children and their families. It wasn’t unusual for her to form close bonds with her patients as they recovered from their transplant surgeries. That was also the case when in January of 2012 she began caring for Pochie, a newly-transplanted liver recipient.

Just eight months old, Pochie experienced a number of complications that caused him to be re-admitted to the hospital multiple times throughout a 3-month span. “I would see him back in the unit, and my heart would just break that he was battling yet another health complication. On the other hand, I was also glad to be by his side again. I loved spending time with Pochie, he has this infectious smile that just draws you in,” says Melanie. Pochie was placed in foster care shortly before his liver transplant. One day while his social worker was at the hospital, Melanie pulled her aside and told her that if anything ever changed and Pochie needed a new home to please contact her.

“She asked me if I was still interested in taking care of him. My brain said ‘YES,’ but, of course, I needed to talk it over with my husband first. I had a good feeling that he would be receptive to the idea, because he is adopted... how could he say no?”

Thankfully, Melanie’s husband, Aaron, was on board with the idea of expanding their family with the addition of the little boy who had stolen his wife’s heart. Though they had their hands full with their son Nick, who was just two at the time, the family navigated the foster care and adoption process, while continuing the journey of getting Pochie’s health stabilized.

“There were a few bumps along the way, but, right now, Pochie is thriving,” Melanie said.

Indeed, Pochie (now 5) and older brother, Nick (now 6) keep Melanie and Aaron on their toes. The boys enjoy soccer, Legos, Star Wars action heroes, painting, and lots of imaginary play. Melanie and her family champion the importance of becoming registered organ and tissue donors in their Napa Valley community and throughout the Bay Area.

“I have always had an appreciation for the incredible transformation made possible through organ transplantation, but my worldview really changed once I experienced this first-hand as a mother,” noted Melanie. “Pochie knows that he was really sick as a baby and that he was given the Gift of Life from a child who died. If you talk with him, he verbalizes the fact that because of this gift, he’s able to do what he can do today.”

Donor Network West partners with 44 coroners and medical examiners to connect donors to recipients in northern California and Nevada. The Office of the Medical Examiner-Coroner of Santa Clara County refers cases relating to unattended, unusual, violent or accidental deaths.

“As a Medical Examiner who confronts death daily, knowing that lives can be saved through organ and tissue donation is particularly satisfying in the field of forensic pathology. The coordinated efforts of our office with Donor Network West has allowed for continued success in this mission. These efforts include constant and open communication between both agencies so that we can put protocols in place to efficiently and effortlessly help save lives,” says Dr. Jorden.

NEW REGIONAL MANAGER IN NEVADA

EARLIER THIS year, Donor Network West welcomed Dawn Wilkerson as our Regional Donation Manager in Nevada.

In her role, Dawn manages a multi-disciplinary team and develops regional strategies pertaining to the hospital referral process, hospital relations and education, the authorization process, as well as donation practices. She does this in collaboration with several department directors.

Before joining Donor Network West, Dawn worked at Houston Methodist Hospital, where she served as a liver transplant coordinator for three years. She also worked at the Center for Organ Recovery & Education (CORE), where she spent six years as an organ procurement coordinator.

NATIONAL AWARD FOR SANTA CLARA COUNTY’S MEDICAL EXAMINER

DR. MICHELLE Jorden, an Assistant Medical Examiner and Neuropathologist from the Office of the Medical Examiner-Coroner of Santa Clara County, was recognized in 2016 with a Professional Leadership Award for her outstanding contribution in the field of organ and tissue donation.

The national award, which is given annually by the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO), recognizes medical examiners who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, innovative practices and success in making a positive impact on the field of donation and transplantation. The award was presented to Dr. Jorden last September during the National Association of Medical Examiners’ Annual Meeting.

“Every donation is a generous gift that requires time-sensitive communication and coordination. Dr. Jorden has gone above and beyond in working with our staff to put processes in place to make donation possible, even on challenging cases. Without her direct involvement there would be no opportunity to give the gift of life to those in need,” says Jaclyn Manzanaedo, Manager of Donation Partner Development of Donor Network West.

“I would see him back in the unit, and my heart would just break that he was battling yet another health complication. On the other hand, I was also glad to be by his side again. I loved spending time with Pochie, he has this infectious smile that just draws you in." - Melanie Merrill-Kennedy

“The coordinated efforts of our office with Donor Network West has allowed for continued success in this mission.” - Dr. Michelle Jorden

*Photo by Aurora Heitman of Pearly Hens Photography; used by permission.
Have a Little Heart on your Driver License?
GET SPECIAL OFFERS!
During April & May 2017

HAVE A LITTLE HEART
TOGETHER WE CAN IMPROVE THE ODDS
FOR THOSE WHO AWAIT LIFE-SAVING
ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATIONS

Register at DonorNetworkWEST.org or the DMV.

THANK YOU
To these businesses for promoting organ and tissue donation.
They were expecting. The baby girl who stole a piece
of 2016. For parents, Aline and Josh
CARTER VIRGINIA
of 2016. For parents, Aline and Josh

The reduction in travel time of the blood samples means
Donor Network West currently sends blood
samples to the LABS, Inc. facility in Denver,
Colorado. The donation process hinges on the critical
laboratory results and providing them in a faster manner
allows for more timely matching of donor organs
to waiting recipients.

Starting in the fall of 2017, LABS, Inc. will open their lab-
oratory at Donor Network West’s Clinical Center in San
Ramon, California, where they will conduct the expedited
blood screenings more efficiently than the current process.
The reduction in travel time of the blood samples means

Our mission calls us to honor and respect the donors and
families that we serve. Waiting for test results can be emo-
tionally tolling for families that are making their final arrange-
ments while grieving the loss of a loved one. Our partnership
with LABS, Inc. will help relieve some of the recovery timing
concerns for these families and allows us to maximize
the life-saving gifts that are entrusted to us,” says Cindy
Siljestrom, Chief Executive
Officer of Donor Network West
LABS, Inc., headquartered
in Centennial, Colorado
with a satellite laboratory in
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,
provides laboratory services
specialized for transplanta-
tion and biomedical applica-
tions.

“Our partnership with Donor Network West starts with our
mission of enabling our customers’ safe and timely decisions
delivering the highest quality, most accurate laboratory
services. What better way to do that than by embedding
our laboratory facilities directly into Donor Network West’s
Clinical Center. In this way we hope to develop an innovative
business model for the future that will serve not only our
laboratory facilities directly into Donor Network West’s
Clinical Center. In this way we hope to develop an innovative
business model for the future that will serve not only our
lab customers, but those patients, families and communities that
our customers serve,” says Dr. Gregory D. Clark, President
and Chief Executive Officer of LABS, Inc.

While nothing will ever mend the per-
manent scar that comes with the loss
of a child, the Copps draw strength
from knowing that Carter’s life is
making an impact on science. They
hope spreading awareness on the
value of newborn donations can be
one of Carter’s legacies. Though brief,
her life was filled with love and dignity,
purpose and meaning. A month after Carter’s death, a whole
exome genetic sequence analysis
revealed she had inherited a very rare,
debilitating recessive condition called
adenylatecytosine lyase deficiency.
With just over 80 known cases in
medical history (a child has a 1 in 400
million chance of being born with the condition), it is not part of any prenatal
screening test.

Aline and Josh had a bench made for
Carter and placed at the top of Hawk
Hill in Mill Valley, overlooking the San
Francisco Bay. They go there often to
remember her. Engraved on the bench
are the words from a favorite story
they read to her each night: “Wherever
you are, our love will find you.

“We were clinging to any thread of hope, but
if there was not going to be any for Carter, we
thought we could give hope to others.”
- Josh Copp

They chose July 14th as the day to
say goodbye, wanting time for her to
meet close family and friends. During
Carter’s last days, Aline and Josh held
her as much as they could, read her
books, changed her diaper, bathed her
and loved her. She died in their arms
shortly after withdrawing support. “It
was the darkest day of our lives,” says
Aline.

Prior to saying goodbye to Carter,
the Copps brought up donation and
were put in touch with Donor Network
West. They learned that although
Carter was too small to donate for
transplant, she could donate her
organs and tissues to support powerful
medical research focusing on treat-
mants, cures and scientific advances
to heal lives. The Copps had no idea
that newborn tissue has regenerative
properties and that samples are so
rare, some researchers wait years for
a single donation. Carter went on to
give 11 samples to 5 different research-
ers, including her brain, lungs, heart,
skin, ascending and descending aorta,
thymus, spleen, bone marrow, blood,
and liver.

DONOR NETWORK West and LABS, Inc., announced
the future opening of a CLIA certified dedicated labora-
tory in northern California specializing in rapid turnaround
(STAT) infectious disease screening and serology testing
used to determine the suitability of potential
organ and tissue donors. This partnership will help
donor families by reduc-
ing their waiting time at hospitals while continuing to provide the highest
quality donor testing to
our transplant partners

Donor Network West

TO EXPERIENCE HAPPINESS
CARTER’S SHORT STAY IN THIS WORLD MAKES A UNIVERSE OF DIFFERENCE

The Copps described the events that
followed as “living in a nightmare”.

CARTER VIRGINIA Copp was born
three days after the summer solstice of 2016. For parents, Aline and Josh
Copp of Mill Valley, CA, her arrival on
June 23rd not only marked the be-
ginning of summer, but also the start of a
trekkery filled with the greatest joy and
greatest heartbreak. She was their first
baby – the baby girl who stole a piece
of their hearts the day they found out
they were expecting.

The hopeful atmosphere in the deliv-
ey room turned anxious as soon as
Carter was born. She barely moved or
cried out, and was immediately taken
to the neonatal intensive care unit
at California Pacific Medical Center
(CPMC), where the medical team
worked to intubate and stabilize her.
Aline and Josh quickly grew concerned
that whatever was ailing Carter might
not be treatable. That evening, the
neonatologist told them that, in addition
to not being able to breathe or eat,
Carter seemed to be experiencing
seizures, and that more tests needed
to be performed. Josh then asked
a question he will never forget: “Is
it possible she might not make it?”. The
answer was a devastating “yes”.

The Copps described the events that
followed as “living in a nightmare”. The
worst news came a week later,
when an MRI revealed that her brain
had not developed past 25 weeks of
gestation, placing it on the lissenceph-
aly spectrum. Her brain was essentially
smooth and did not develop enough
to function normally. They were told
that Carter could be kept alive for a
short while, but that her body would
ultimately fail her.

Once they realized that there was no
path forward for Carter without pain,
that she would never be able to expe-
rience happiness, they were forced to
make the hardest decision imaginable.
They had to let her go.

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THIS YEAR marks the 20th anniversary of Donate Life Day, a partnership between Donor Network West and the three-time World Series Champion San Francisco Giants. The special game, made possible by the San Francisco Giants Community Fund, highlights the healing power of organ and tissue donation among fans of the baseball team.

Every summer, AT&T Park in San Francisco welcomes Donor Network West staff and Donate Life Ambassadors who pass out trading cards with messages on donation at the gates. Fans also have the opportunity to learn more about organ and tissue donation and to register as donors at Donor Network West’s dedicated booth, located at the ballpark’s Clubhouse. Since this partnership started, more than 250,000 trading cards have been given out and thousands have registered as organ and tissue donors at the ballpark.

Over the years, some of the event’s most special moments have been experienced by the transplant recipients or donor family members chosen to throw the first pitch, sing the national anthem, or serve as Junior Announcers, Balldudes, or Play Ball Kid. Their stories have been featured in dozens of media stories that inspire thousands of people to register as organ and tissue donors each year and share that decision with their families.

“The Giants’ continued commitment to encourage fans to register as organ and tissue donors provides hope to the thousands in need of life-saving transplants in our service area,” says Cindy Siljestrom, Chief Executive Officer of Donor Network West. “It shows that heroes can be found on and off the field.”

In addition to providing Donor Network West with an opportunity to highlight donation on the baseball field, the Giants Community Fund show their support by presenting a check to Donor Network West right before the game. The donated funds help promote donation through community and professional education initiatives.

“We are proud to stand hand in hand with Donor Network West, celebrating 20 years of their life-saving work through Donate Life Day.”

- Sue Petersen
IN THE last four years, the Pacific campus of California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) in San Francisco has become an instrumental partner of Donor Network West by adjusting their internal procedures to help save lives through donation after circulatory death (DCD).

A DCD donor has sustained a non-survivable injury and may be near death, but does not meet formal brain death criteria. In these cases, the family independent of the hospital or organ procurement organization staff decides to withdraw mechanical support from their loved one. When the patient’s heart stops beating, the organs are recovered in the operating room.

CPMC, a Sutter Health affiliate and one of five transplant centers in Donor Network West’s service area, has recognized the need to help grieving families that wish to donate their loved ones organs but due to adverse circumstances, donation may not be possible. Generally, these donors come from hospitals that cannot accommodate DCD donations. In these cases, CPMC’s Pacific campus accepts the donors, makes operating rooms available for the recovery of organs, and ensures that staff has the necessary time to follow through with donation in the shortest timeframe possible. Since this system was put into place, 11 donors have been transferred to CPMC and 19 organs have been successfully recovered and transplanted.

“Sutter Health is honored to partner with Donor Network West and help families at a difficult time fulfill their wish of donating the organs of a loved one.” - Jeff Gerard

Gevrey Valldeperas, Donor Network West’s Donation Program Consultant for CPMC, says that the relationship with this hospital has become an example of what a partnership should look like. “Everyone is on the same page as to what needs to happen to help facilitate this family-driven process. The fact that CPMC has aligned their internal practices with our mission of saving lives speaks volumes about their commitment to donation,” she noted.

DCD donation has increased significantly in the last decade. Data from the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) shows that DCD donors accounted for roughly 17% of all deceased organ donors nationally in 2016. That is up from 8% in 2006. Of all the organ donors in Donor Network West’s service area in 2016, 13% were DCD cases, up from 5% in 2006.

“It’s important to uphold the wishes of donor families who support donation. Our partnership with CPMC allows us to provide a great service to them and enables us to save and heal more lives,” says Sean Van Slyck, Chief Operating Officer of Donor Network West.

2016 Award Criteria:
Referral rate, Timeliness of referral, Recovery rate, Referrals made, Number of donors
NEVADA STUDENTS may soon learn more about how they can help heal lives through organ and tissue donation if state legislators vote to approve Senate Bill 112. The bill, sponsored by Senators Julia Ratti and Ben Kieckhefer, is under consideration at the 79th Nevada Legislative Session. It proposes an update to Nevada Revised Statute 389.021 regarding curriculum in public schools pertaining to health.

The proposed legislation would require teens to learn about donation at school, including an overview about which organs and tissues can be donated and how to join the state donor registry. Similar legislation has been adopted in other states.

"The vast majority of registered donors make the decision to donate at the DMV, and providing timely and accurate information on the subject allows students of driving age to make the most informed decision when the option to register as organ and tissue donors is presented to them," said Senator Ratti. "I am proud to be able to sponsor Senate Bill 112 to increase the availability of organ and tissue donations in Nevada and to enhance the curriculum in our schools with a topic that will generate curiosity and real-world learning opportunities," noted Senator Ratti. "It’s been a real pleasure to work with Donor Network West and other advocates to advance this important bill."

Senator Kieckhefer indicated that this bill could help close the gap between those in need and those willing to share the gift of life. "Increased awareness of organ and tissue donation allows students of driving age to make the most informed decision when the option to register as organ and tissue donors is presented to them. The hope is that SB112 will make its way through the legislative process and be signed into law this spring. Thanks to the support of Senators Ratti and Kieckhefer, testimony from organ and tissue recipients and donor families has been shared with the education committee of the Nevada Legislature for their consideration. In addition to Donate Life Ambassadors sharing their personal stories about how donation touched their lives, Renno Mayor Hillary Scheve, a kidney recipient, related her own story about how organ donation saved her life. She also played a touching donation video, prompting tears from committee members and audience supporters alike.

In addition to the education committee meeting testimony, Donate Life Day in Nevada took place on April 5, providing an opportunity to promote the bill and share its importance with lawmakers. That day, Governor Brian Sandoval issued a proclamation declaring April as Donate Life month in the state.

Donor Network West was joined by its sister organ and tissue procurement organization, Sierra Donor Services, to engage Nevada lawmakers about the bill and its importance to public education and public health. Donor mother, Nancy Ponte (left), and kidney/pancreas recipient, Amy Camacho, spoke at the Education Committee hearing.

DONOR NETWORK West and the City of San Francisco announced a new community health education partnership to bring organ and tissue donation education to high school students. The initiative, backed by Mayor Ed Lee and implemented by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) and the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), was announced at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital on April 21st during National Donate Life Month.

"Knowledge is where change begins and where culture shifts start, and our youth play a big part in this," says Cindy Siljestrom, Chief Executive Officer, Donor Network West. "Classroom conversations brought home spark discussions, and in this case save lives. The launch of this initiative highlights San Francisco’s commitment to building a culture of donation. At the same time, it meets the shared goal of all partners to encourage conversations within our diverse and multicultural families and communities."

As part of the initiative, Donor Network West will collaborate with the SFDPH to provide Health Education and Professional Development Teams with resources to begin implementing organ and tissue donation information into programming for high school health and science classes. They will also provide in-service education to SFUSD Safety and Wellness staff. Additionally, high schools will receive organ and tissue donation education materials for posting in school Wellness Centers, reaching 60% of students. The educational initiative will also extend beyond high schools to reach the city’s diverse community health clinics.

By joining forces with San Francisco schools and Donor Network West, we can improve education and awareness about the importance of organ and tissue donation," said Barbara Garcia, San Francisco Director of Health. "We know that disparities in organ transplantation particularly affect Asians, African Americans, Latinos and American Indians. Reaching the youth in those communities is an important step to increasing donations that save lives."

"By joining forces with San Francisco schools and Donor Network West, we can improve education and awareness about the importance of organ and tissue donation. "

- Barbara Garcia

In celebration of the initiative launch, and in honor of National Blue and Green Day during National Donate Life Month, the iconic City Hall building in San Francisco was lit up in blue and green on April 21 as a symbol of the city’s support of organ, eye and tissue donation. Transplant recipients, donor families, hospital partners and community members were invited to celebrate the moment of lighting around sunset.
THE AMEZCUA family of Fresno traveled to Pasadena, CA to honor and remember their son Sebastian at the Tournament of Roses Parade, which took place January 2nd. Sebastian died at the age of nine from the injuries he sustained in a 2007 car crash that his father, German, mother, Jessi, and brother Emmanuel survived. Along with the sadness that his death brought, came hope, as he saved three lives through organ donation.

A floral portrait of Sebastian adorned one of the sails of the Donate Life Float, a Polynesian catamaran design. Sebastian was one of 60 florographs placed on the float in honor of organ, eye, and tissue donors from across the United States. The Rose Parade is watched by an estimated 700,000 spectators in Pasadena and seen by over 63 million television viewers worldwide. Since Sebastian was announced as a floragraph honoree last October, his story has been featured in over 30 media stories locally and nationally.

For the Amezcuas, this was an experience they will cherish forever. “This was a very special way to honor and share our son’s story. Having a father tell us that thanks to one of the interviews we gave, he no longer feels guilty for being alive as an organ recipient is priceless,” says German.

The Donate Life Float is the centerpiece of a national effort of more than 50 Donate Life organizations to reach a broad audience with the message that organ, eye, and tissue donation saves and heal lives. This year’s entry, Teammates in Life, reflected the parade’s theme “Echoes of Success” by reminding us that no one succeeds alone; we all thrive by working together and pulling in the same direction. The float took the Theme Trophy for excellence in presenting the parade’s theme.

“ This was a very special way to honor and share our son’s story.”
- German Amezcua

FEELING ALIVE

FOR SOMEONE who has endured breast cancer twice, Debbie Torrey keeps a positive outlook.

She has a special reason to. The donated skin grafts that she received following a mastectomy aided with the reconstruction process and allowed her to feel secure, special, and alive. She is a survivor.

Debbie is thankful to her donor and the donor family for their generous gift of tissue. Because of this gift, she can spend time with her grandchildren and continue to tend to her garden, which are two of her favorite activities.

“You and your family member will remain in my thoughts with appreciation, generosity, and kindness,” wrote Debbie in a note to her donor family.

SUCCESSFUL DONOR TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP WITH SAN RAMON REGIONAL TO BE EXPANDED

THE ORGAN recovery collaboration between Donor Network West and San Ramon Regional Medical Center will enter its second phase in 2017. Under the partnership, announced in February of 2016, organ donors are being transferred to the hospital’s Ambulatory Surgery Center as a way to accommodate a more certain time frame for donor families for the recovery of organs.

In 2016, 161 organs were recovered from 49 donors who were transferred to San Ramon Regional from 30 hospitals in Donor Network West’s service area. Starting this spring, donors will also be transported to the hospitals intensive care unit for donor evaluation and to the Ambulatory Surgery Center for organ recovery. The hospital is located across the street from Donor Network West’s headquarters.

Organ recovery has traditionally been performed at community hospitals, utilizing the hospitals resources. Many times, the requested time frame from donor families is difficult to accommodate within the busy hospital setting. Along with decreasing wait times for donor families in the ICU, transferring organ donors to San Ramon Regional improves the logistical challenges of transporting staff and surgeons across the region and maximizes resources so more lives can be saved.

“Honoring and respecting the donors and families we serve is at the core of our mission. This change in practice has helped relieve some of the organ recovery timing stress for these families and allow for better planning during a very difficult time,” says Nikole Neidlinger, Chief Medical Officer of Donor Network West.

By the end of 2016, Donor Network West saw a significant reduction in the overall average case time for brain dead donors transferred to San Ramon Regional. Year-to-date data reveals that we are on pace to surpass 100 organs donors transferred to the hospital in 2017.

Photo caption: Leadership teams from San Ramon Regional and Donor Network West celebrated a year of partnership at a special lunch in January. Sean Van Slyke, Donor Network West COO; Vicki Hara, Regional’s Dir. of Education; Mary Ann Codeglia, Regional’s Administrative Dir. of Clinical Quality; Beenu Chadha, Regional’s CFO; Cindy Siljestrom, Donor Network West CEO; Kim Yates, Regional’s Dir. of Surgery; Joe Lopez-Cepeda, Regional’s CNO; Vicky Wynn, Regional’s Dir. of Critical Care Services, Sandra Mejia, Donor Network West CFO

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In 2016, Donor Network West recovered 959 organs from 291 donors. In addition, 2,310 people said “yes” to tissue donation resulting in 90,598 lives saved and improved. Our selfless donors and giving families, partner hospitals, coroners, and funeral homes were instrumental in making this possible.

**DONOR NETWORK WEST DONATION SERVICE AREA PARTNERS**

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**IN 2016,**

291 DONORS PROVIDED

959 ORGANS FOR TRANSPLANTATION

2,310 TISSUE DONORS

IMPROVED

90,598 LIVES
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**Life Connections**

**Partner**

- Life Connections page 22

**DONOR**

- DonorNetworkWEST.org

**Register to be an Organ & Tissue Donor**

- Facility has no potential for donation.
- *Not a participating tissue donation partner.*
- **Other sources include referrals from families, funeral homes and hospice organizations.**

**Tissue Donors:**

- The number of donors from whom a transplantable tissue was recovered.

**Organ Referrals:**

- The number of times a hospital contacted Donor Network West due to a patient with a non-survivable illness or an injury.

**Potential Organ Donors:**

- All referrals determined to have potential for organ donation.

**Organ Donors:**

- The number of donors from whom a transplantable organ was recovered.

**Organs Transplanted:**

- How many organs were transplanted, reflects that several organs can come from a single donor.
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 04 / STRENGTH IN NUMBERS
The Attributes of Partnership: Working Together to Save More Lives
Strengthening partnerships mean more opportunities to save lives.
Join us to learn more.
Oakland Convention Center / 550 10th St, Oakland, CA 94607
CE’s available. For more information: events@dnwest.org

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26 / DONATE LIFE DAY
With the three-time World Series Champion San Francisco Giants
Celebrating 20 years of saving and healing lives together, Donor Network West will
partner with the Giants for a day to highlight organ and tissue donation as a way
to heal lives. Tickets: sanfrancisco.giants.mlb.com

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 / DONATE LIFE 5K, 10K & KIDS DASH
Enjoy a beautiful setting and show your support for organ and tissue donation. All
participants will receive a commemorative shirt, a finisher’s medal, and more.
Heather Farm, Walnut Creek, CA
Register today: 5k.dnwest.org