

THE BEST OF DONOR NETWORK WEST



FALL RECAP 2025 NEWSLETTER

DONOR NETWORK WEST

Welcome back to the latest edition of the Best of Donor Network West! This end-of-year season hosted an abundance of events that amplified our mission in our communities.

CHAMPIONS OF HOPE AWARDS DONATION CHAMPIONS SYMPOSIUM ROSE PARADE & MORE



Visit our
shareables page here

Best of Donor Network West
Newsletter Library

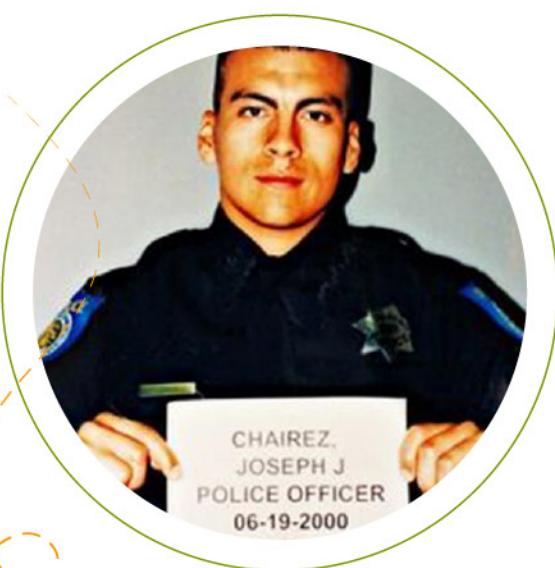
Joe Chairez

Guardian Angel on Duty

Hispanics make up nearly half of the organ transplant wait list, but are among the fewest to sign up to become organ donors. The family of fallen Sacramento Police officer Joseph "Joe" Chairez is working to change that.

Twenty-five years after his death, Chairez's gift of life just keeps on giving through his family and friends.

Jess and Theresa Chairez, two of our beloved Donate Life Ambassadors, ensure that the legacy of their son Joe, along with his donor recipients, never fades.



Listen more about this incredible family's story, here:

Advancements in Giving the Gift of Life

Authors: Aninda Dutta, MSCS, FACHE;

Justin Johnson, RN; Janice F. Whaley, PhD

This past August, our recently promoted (congratulations!) colleague, Senior Vice President of Data and Organizational Strategy, Aninda Dutta, MSCS, also became a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE).

Aninda, alongside Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Justin Johnson, RN, and President and CEO Janice F. Whaley, PhD, had the opportunity to come together to author a phenomenal piece titled 'Advancements in Giving the Gift of Life' for the American College of Healthcare Executives.



**You can find the
full article, here:**

The Donate Life Float Continues On

The 2026 OneLegacy Donate Life Float is coming up quickly as the new year approaches! At Donor Network West, we have the honor and privilege of celebrating the lives of donor heroes in our service area with their family, friends, and loved ones, and to honor transplant recipients who embody what it means to receive the #GiftOfLife.

We'll be in Pasadena for the Rose Parade to celebrate the #GiftOfLife and celebrate our float riders and honorees! Check out the amazing donor heroes and transplant recipients who will be heading down to the Rose Parade to be celebrated!



TUNE IN
THURSDAY
JAN. 1
8:00am PST

DONOR NETWORK WEST

2026 ROSE PARADE

Watch Donor Network West honorees ride down Colorado Boulevard on the Donate Life float to raise awareness about the importance of organ, eye and tissue donation.

Peter Lee
Donor Honoree
NORTHERN NEVADA MEDICAL CENTER

Damita Barbee
Rider
UCSF

Scott McGreavy
Donor Honoree
S.F. GENERAL HOSPITAL

Lauren Martelle
Rider
CPMC

Christian Gomez
Rider
STANFORD

Patrice Sanders
Donor Honoree
CRMC

Andrew Bedard
Donor Honoree
EL CAMINO HEALTH

ROSE PARADE
presented by
HONDA

2026

Available to watch on several platforms
*Please check your local broadcast listings for more information.

Heart of Hope Gala 2026

More than a gala — it's a celebration of love, legacy, and hope.

Join us on February 14, 2026 — National Donor Day and Valentine's Day — for the Heart of Hope Gala, honoring the compassion, innovation, and collaboration that make donation and transplantation possible.



[Click here to nomination, purchase tickets, or explore sponsorship opportunities:](#)

The Donation Champion Symposium

Donor Network West had the privilege of hosting our hospital partners' dedicated medical professionals for our *Donation Champions Symposium - Making a Difference*.



The space we shared with our partners this past Thursday was a day full of learning, engagement, and incredible conversations, ultimately leading to more efficient processes and greater outcomes, because excellence is born in great collaboration. Our hospital partners and our organization understand the mission, always. Save and heal lives through organ, eye, and tissue donation.



Learn more about how you can get involved with saving and healing lives, here:



DNWest Leadership Summit

Donor Network West had the privilege of hosting our outstanding leaders at our annual Leadership Summit! Our multi-day summit provides a space for our leaders to learn with and from each other, to sharpen their skills, and take home new tools that will aid their ongoing success in fulfilling the mission of saving and healing lives with their teams.

Please take a moment to hear from one of the Summit Leaders, Acey Blanco, Manager of Leadership and Organizational Development for Donor Network West, about his time planning and conducting this year's summit.



Are you ready to help change and save lives?
Learn more about careers at Donor Network West, here:

DNWest New Building

Our New Home to Save More Lives

This fall season, Donor Network West received the keys to our new building! Please take a moment to read a passage from our President and CEO, Dr. Janice F. Whaley, about this remarkable achievement!

I had the honor of receiving the keys to our new building—the future home of Donor Network West and a significant step toward realizing our dream of an in-house Donor Recovery Care Center.

This isn't just a building. It's a symbol of who we are: a team driven by growth, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to donor families and the lives we save every day.

This milestone belongs to you. Your dedication and excellence have positioned us as a leader in our field, earning the trust of our community, partners, and the industry as a whole. Early in 2026, we'll move into this new space—and with it, we'll open doors to even greater impact in organ, eye, and tissue donation.

Take pride in what this represents: the strength of our mission, the unity of our team, and the bright future ahead.

A special thank you to Dean Shepardson, Robynn Van Patten, Justin Johnson, and our Governing Board of Directors for their leadership in making this possible.

This is a moment to celebrate—and to dream bigger. I invite you to share your excitement and ideas as we prepare for this next chapter. The best is yet to come.



The National Donor Sabbath

This recent National Donor Sabbath, Donor Network West had the privilege of hosting 'Final Acts of Faith: Honoring Traditions, Saving Lives' at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church.

We had faith leaders and funeral professionals come together top discuss the concerns and misconceptions about organ donation as it pertains to a multitude of religions sects, and express their appreciation for organ donation as an ultimate sign of love, giving, and sacrifice, whether it be as a living donor, or your wishes to save lives being fulfilled by a decision you can make today.



You can learn more about organ donation and transplantation as it pertains to faith and religion, [here](#):

Donor Network West - The Best of Sierra Nevada

At the heart of our work at Donor Network West is the belief that every person has the power to give life. This isn't just a slogan—it's a lived reality. Every day, our organization honors the generosity of donors and their families while offering hope to those waiting for a second chance at life. Donor Network West is directly involved in the life-saving process. From coordinating with hospitals and transplant centers to supporting grieving families and educating the public, we are hands-on at every step of the donation and transplantation journey. This deep integration into both the medical and emotional aspects of donation places us in an incredible position to serve our communities. It's not just about raising awareness—it's about saving and honoring lives.

This year marks the third edition of Best of Sierra Nevada, and the excitement has grown tremendously. The 2025 contest saw over 108,000 votes cast across all businesses — a 93% increase year-over-year, and I am CERTAIN that we were a strong percentage of those votes, way to go!

Huge wins like this are why we not only push so hard to accomplish our mission, but we ensure that our donation service area and all walks of life that we come across know and understand the imperative work that Donor Network West and our partners accomplish on a daily basis. The votes that you put in daily this summer since we announced our nomination are what made this victory possible!



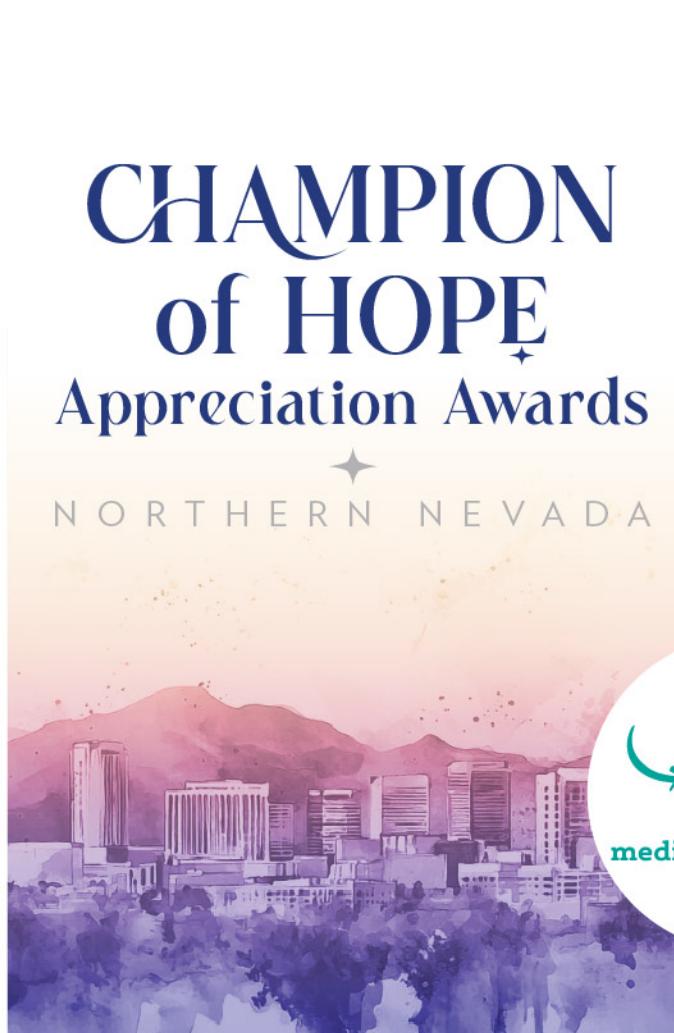
Check us out in their digital magazine and the other organizations and persons named 'Best of Sierra Nevada' in 2025, here on page 67 in the 'Services' section (also see who we beat out for Best Non-Profit)

Champions of Hope Appreciation Awards

This past Thursday, Donor Network West had the privilege of hosting our Northern Nevada hospital partners, medical professionals, and colleagues for our Champions of Hope Appreciation Awards!

Ten honorees were given the appreciation and flowers they deserve for the hope that they bring to the Northern Nevada region.

Each Nevadan on the transplant list, many of whom may seek care at your hospitals, is hoping for the call that they have a match, which can only happen through donation. Ultimately, those donations—and the lives saved and healed by them—would not be possible without each of you present and supporting from afar.



In Memorium: Teresa J. Shafer

Teresa was not only a pioneer and national leader—she was a woman with a tremendous heart, a mentor to many, and a steadfast advocate for the gift of life. As a consultant at Donor Network West, Teresa played a pivotal role in supporting our clinical teams with donation policies, processes, and procedures.

On behalf of Donor Network West, we send our deepest condolences to the Shafer and Akagi families.



Please take a moment to read her full memoriam:

Check Out Our Memories

The Donor Network West Foundation hosted two Run/Walks this past September, welcoming nearly 1,500 attendees across both inspiring events.

The donor heroes of our extraordinary communities were honored by their families, who have an everlasting love for their heroes who have saved countless lives in our communities, alongside a multitude of our incredible sponsors, hospital partners, organ donor advocates, and more. The Incredible transplant recipients at our Run/Walks represented those lives saved, and how the heroism of their respective donor heroes carries forth through them and their actions.



Check out all of the incredible moments in our media gallery, [here](#):



Día de los Muertos

This year for Dia De Los Muertos, Donor Network West had the privilege of honoring the loved ones of our friends and family through ofrendas placed throughout our community, and even here at Suite 500 at Bishop Ranch.

At our Bishop Ranch ofrenda, we honored Teresa J. Shafer, RN, MSN, CPTC., who recently passed this past October, and donor heroes within our region.



Noelia Canfara

This Spanish-language news story features Luis Mayen, Donor Network West's Vice President of External Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, who spoke with Univision Sacramento about the importance of organ donation in the Hispanic community. Kidney recipient and organ donation advocate, Noelia Canfara, also shared her inspiring story to help encourage others to learn more about joining the organ donor registry.



Champions of Hope Award

Several local hospital workers were honored tonight at the Champion of Hope Appreciation Awards hosted by Donor Network West. The event celebrated 10 hospital staff and four hospitals who played a large role in saving and healing lives through organ, eye, and tissue donation. Organizers say the winners were selected for their exceptional leadership, dedication, and compassion.

