

THE BEST OF DONOR NETWORK WEST

DONOR
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Heal a life through organ, eye and tissue donation

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through organ, eye and tissue donation

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Sana una vida a través de la donación



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Heal a life through organ, eye and tissue donation



DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

DONOR NETWORK WEST

Step into the final month of the year in our communities, where we partnered with our incredible hospital partners, universities, and organizations to push forward the impact of organ, eye, and tissue donation.



Visit our
shareables page here



Best of Donor Network West
Newsletter Library

Happy Holidays



This season, we reflect on the power of purpose—Know Your Why. For donor heroes and their families, that ‘why’ is the gift of life. For transplant recipients, it’s the chance to live fully. For our hospital partners and community, it’s the commitment to hope and healing.

Thank you for living your ‘why’ and making miracles possible every day.

Wishing you peace, joy, and a new year filled with meaning and possibility.

DONOR NETWORK WEST

Damita Barbee goes to Pasadena

Barbee Heads to the Tournament of Roses

This past December 18th, Donor Network West had the privilege of partnering with UCSF Health to celebrate Damita Barbee, an incredible Donate Life Ambassador for 9 years and a double-lung transplant recipient, and to send her off to the Rose Parade in Pasadena in style as a rider on the Donate Life Float.

Damita has been a Donate Life Ambassador with Donor Network West for nine years. As an Ambassador and recipient, she feels a responsibility to share her story to educate the community about organ and tissue donation and to support others facing a diagnosis like hers. Receiving a double-lung transplant has allowed Damita to live her best life in the 11 years it has given her. Damita has traveled to many beautiful places and has spent precious time with her daughters and beloved Mother. Damita remains forever grateful to her Donor and their family for giving her a second chance of life.



If you would like to learn more about Damita's incredible journey to the Rose Parade, along with our other amazing float riders and honorees, please click [here](#):



Rose Parade in Pasadena

Get ready, Donate Life Community, to see our incredible group of donor heroes, their families, and living embodiments of that second chance given, transplant recipients, on the Donate Life Float! This January 1st, on the ABC Rose Parade broadcast at 8:00 AM, tune in to the parade to see your community members and loved ones be honored for their incredible contributions to forwarding the #GiftOfLife

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 McGreevy
Donor Honoree
S.S. GENERAL HOSPITAL



Lauren Martelle
Rider
CPMC



Christian Gomez
Rider
STANFORD



Patrice Sanders
Donor Honoree
CRMC



Andrew Bedard
Donor Honoree
EL CAMINO HEALTH



Treasure Every Moment Together

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.

You are cordially invited



Saturday,
February 14, 2026

The Conservatory at One Sansome
1 Sansome Street San Francisco, CA

Dinner, Dancing, Awards & Live Auction

Contact Foundation@dnwest.org for any questions



Or scan here

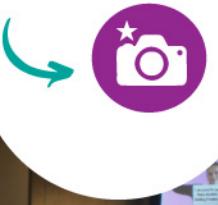
Rose Parade Sendoffs

This December, Donor Network West has traveled throughout our communities across Northern California and Northern Nevada, alongside our hospital partners, to celebrate and send off our Donate Life Float Riders and Honorees. Our transplant recipients and donor families had amazing moments of reminding our local communities of how vital this celebration of life is, how impactful and amazing their donor heroes were, and the need for organ, eye, and tissue donation.



If you would like to learn more about our honoree's incredible journey to the Rose Parade, please click [here](#):

All-Staff Meeting and Holiday Party

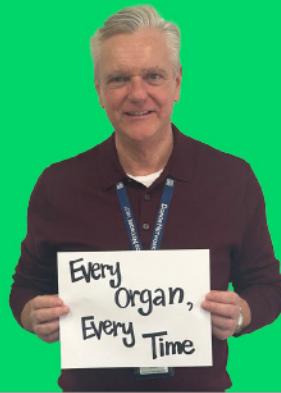


At our All-Staff meeting this December 10th, we had the privilege to have Melanie Curtis give an amazing Keynote, refreshing us for the final push of the year, and the start the new year stronger than ever.

Melanie Curtis is a former investment banker turned stunt-woman world-record pro skydiver, turned keynote speaker, life coach, author, activist and entrepreneur. She has jumped out of an airplane over 12,000 times, competed at the highest levels, and has traveled the globe as a headlining professional athlete coaching thousands of people over the last 30 years.

Our President and CEO, Dr. Janice F. Whaley, sat down with our Manager of Leadership and Organizational Development, Acey Blanco, for our annual December Town Hall. Dr. Whaley answered questions from our in-person and virtual staff about the present and future of Donor Network West, the incredible work we've accomplished so far, and some fun tidbits about her own life accomplishments!

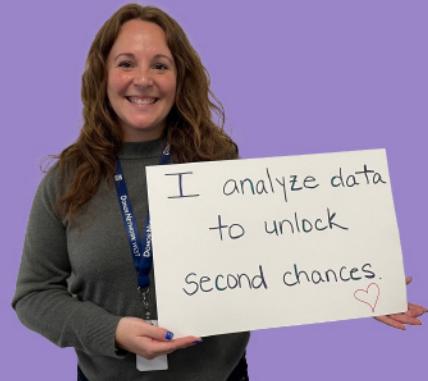




DONOR NETWORK WEST

WE ARE THE MISSION





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PAST EVENTS





Our fantastic staff was honored at the recent All-Staff meeting and Holiday Party, celebrating the incredible contributions that have been made this year, over the course of years, and for some, even decades. Please take a moment to check out our award winners below!

AWARDS

AWARD NAME

Everyday Hero Award
Everyday Hero Award
Everyday Hero Award
Icon Award
Icon Award
Innovation Award
Innovation Award
Key Contributor Award
Key Contributor Award
Phyllis Weber Award
Team Impact Award
Team Impact Award

EMPLOYEE NAME/TEAM

Carla Meza
Chip Fernandez
Kent Neller
Catherine Tavares
Mark Borer
Kelly Harris
Kimberly Hendricks
Geoff McCollough
Stephanie Bussell
Dustin Smith
Organ Allocation Team
Donor Information Team



Innovation Award: Honors employees who have made significant and lasting contributions to DNWest to advance our mission of saving and healing lives through organ donation for transplantation and research. This employee challenges the status quo and develops innovative solutions that enable positive change within our organization.

Icon Award: Recognizes an employee who has shown exceptional leadership, and an outstanding record of professional achievements, contributions and service to DNWest and our industry.

Phyllis Weber Award: Recognizes employees who have furthered the cause of donation internally and externally. They embody Phyllis' passion for donation and transplantation.

Key Contributor Award: Recognizes a DNWest employee who supports DNWest programs for outstanding contributions in fulfilling our mission of saving and healing lives through organ and tissue donation for transplantation and research.

Team Impact Award: Recognizes a team that has made a significant contribution to the work and mission of DNWest. The team who receives this award should be able to demonstrate how their work impacted and supported DNWest's mission.

Everyday Hero Award: Presented to an employee who always goes above and beyond in their everyday work to help DNWest achieve its mission of saving and healing lives through organ and tissue

PAST EVENTS



SJSU Football Partnership

On November 29th, Donor Network West had the privilege of joining the San Jose State Football Spartans to honor one of our incredible kidney and bone transplant recipients and Donate Life Ambassadors, Sonya Wilson, who was accompanied by our Executive Director of the Donor Network West Foundation and 3x Super Bowl Champion, William Bubba Paris, and Director of Donor Operations, Dustin Smith.

Sonya's story was an incredible inspiration to an amazing San Jose community, and an excellent reminder of how far the gift of life can go. Bubba Paris had an opportunity to speak the #GiftOfLife with a community he's lived in for over 10 years, and Dustin rang the #VictoryBell for San Jose State to support our Spartans!



Check out the highlights
from this amazing day, here:

Holiday Card Art Contest

Congratulations to the winners in our 2025 Holiday Card Art Contest! Way to Go!

It's been a privilege to have you display your incredible talents to our entire staff, the donation service area from Northern California and Northern Nevada, and the entire Donate Life Community. You've inspired many.



OVERALL WINNER:
Charlotte H. | John Muir Middle School
Prize Money: \$250



AGE GROUP: 13 & UNDER WINNER
Joanna N. | Dallas Ranch Middle School
Prize Money: \$200



SOCIAL MEDIA WINNER
Youngseo K. | Isaac Newton Graham Middle School
Prize Money: \$100



AGE GROUP: 14 - 18 WINNER
Jazilla Y. | Sanger West High School
Prize Money: \$200

Rose Parade Sendoffs Hitting Airways

Honoring an organ donor

By Nollyanne Delacruz | East Bay Times

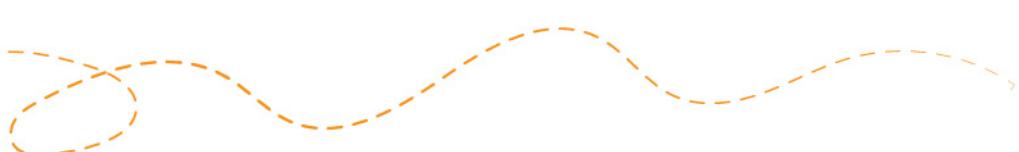
The float is sponsored by the nonprofit Donor Network West and represents U.S. organ donors, living donors and transplant recipients to inspire Rose Parade viewers to become registered organ donors. More than 20,000 Californians are on the organ transplant waiting list.



Beloved local nurse to be honored as part of 2026 Rose Parade float

By Elisa Navarro | KFSN-TV (Fresno, CA)

Friends and family members of the late Patrice Sanders gathered for a very special announcement by Donor Network West. A portrait, known as a "floragraph," will be displayed on the 2026 Donate Life float at the 137th Rose Parade honoring Sanders.



Spanish-language story: Watsonville youth to attend Rose Parade to highlight the importance of organ donation

By Flavio Lacayo | KSTS-TV (San Jose, CA)

This is Spanish-language article, covering the story of Christian Gomez, a two-time liver transplant recipient.



Liver Transplant Recipient Receives Rose Parade Send Off

By Jennifer Modenessi-Gurule | sutterhealth.org

Lauren Martelle is one of three organ recipients selected by Donor Network West as a 2026 Rose Parade honoree. Martelle and her fellow honorees will ride the Donate Life float in the 137th annual Rose Parade in Pasadena on Jan. 1, 2026.



Antioch Women To Be Honored In Rose Parade

KRON-TV (San Francisco, CA)

Antioch woman Damita Barbee will be in Pasadena for this year's Rose Parade. She is a double lung transplant recipient, and she's among a group of people chosen to ride on the OneLegacy Donate Life float. Back in 2010, she was diagnosed with the disease that affects the lungs, and four years later, just days before her birthday, she learned a match had been found. Damita serves as a volunteer with Donor Network West, helping educate people about the importance of organ, eye, and tissue donation.





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@mydnwest

There are plenty of events and celebrations that we're privileged to be a part of! The best way to stay updated on everything we have going on is to follow us on social media @MyDNWest across all platforms! Our Instagram is a fantastic place to start, or maybe you enjoy Facebook. Either way, we're everywhere, and we'll see you there!

