



NEWS RELEASE

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NJ SHARING NETWORK AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO NEWARK STUDENTS FOR THEIR ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT OF ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

NEW PROVIDENCE, NJ – NJ Sharing Network, the non-profit, federally designated organ procurement organization responsible for the recovery of organs and tissue in the state, has awarded scholarships to two high school graduates from Newark for their passion and dedication to raising awareness of organ and tissue donation. Each student was individually presented with their scholarship award at the NJ Sharing Network’s headquarters in New Providence during a private ceremony in the *Landscape of Life Meditation Garden*.

The 2020-2021 scholarship winners from Newark are (photos attached):

- **Ruqaiyyah Lucas-Caldwell** of Newark (2020 graduate of Newark Academy) received a scholarship from the NJ Sharing Network Foundation. Ruqaiyyah’s pursuit of a career in medicine was inspired by her Uncle David, who passed away in 2016 and gave the gift of life to others through his organ and tissue donation. Her uncle’s gift reminds her daily of what it means to care for others – especially those who are most-vulnerable and in need. Ruqaiyyah plans to attend the University of Pennsylvania in the Fall.
- **Kaiel Maynor** of Newark (2020 graduate of Science Park High School) received a scholarship from the NJ Sharing Network Foundation. Kaiel experienced the gift of life

when her uncle received a life-saving kidney transplant. Kaiel and her family members were overwhelmed with joy to see her uncle back to his lively, bubbly self. Kaiel's experience has inspired her to focus on a career in medicine and her dream is to become a surgeon. She plans to attend Rutgers University – Newark College of Arts and Sciences in the Fall.

The NJ Sharing Network Foundation presented scholarship awards focused on Newark residents to help raise awareness as there are currently 162 Newark residents waiting for a life-saving organ transplant - the highest in the state.

“We are delighted to provide scholarship support to these amazing students who have demonstrated a tremendous commitment to supporting our life-saving mission,” said Joe Roth, president and CEO of NJ Sharing Network. “We know they will continue to be strong leaders in educating others about donation and transplantation as they move forward to begin college in the Fall.”

NJ Sharing Network's scholarship program provides an opportunity to recognize and award graduating high school seniors whose lives have been touched by organ and tissue donation and transplantation. Applicants were measured on academic achievement, community and volunteer efforts, extracurricular activities and advocacy for organ and tissue donation. The application process was completed in June, and applications were reviewed by a committee of NJ Sharing Network Foundation Board members and volunteers.

The scholarship awards were presented as NJ Sharing Network kicks off 2020 #DonationNeedsDiversity, an initiative to empower multicultural communities to become more involved in saving and healing lives through organ and tissue donation. Celebrated in August, National Minority Donor Awareness Month honors the generosity of multicultural donors and their families, while also underscoring the critical need for people from diverse communities to

register as organ and tissue donors. The national initiative usually features an entire month of local, regional and national in-person events and activities.

NJ Sharing Network will be providing tools that supporters can use, such as Facebook photo frames, and encourage community interaction by sharing stories of how organ and tissue donation has improved lives. Additional online posts will encourage supporters to share recipes, favorite songs and photo memories that help celebrate life.

NJ Sharing Network stresses the importance of National Minority Donor Awareness Month and the #DonationNeedsDiversity campaign. Some staggering statistics include:

- 66% of those currently waiting for a life-saving transplant in New Jersey are people of color.
- Almost 35% of the nearly 115,000 people on the national waiting list for a kidney transplant are African-American.
- African-Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics/Latinos are three times more likely than Caucasians to suffer from end-stage renal (kidney) disease.

“Each year in New Jersey, thousands of lives are saved and enhanced through organ and tissue donation and transplantation. Clearly, this is something to celebrate. However, there is an urgent need to raise awareness of organ and tissue donation to help save more lives in our diverse communities of New Jersey,” said Roth. “Although organs are not matched according to race and ethnicity, and people of different races frequently match one another, all individuals waiting for an organ transplant will have a better chance of receiving one if there are large numbers of donors from multicultural communities.”

E. Denise Peoples, hospital and community services coordinator, NJ Sharing Network, is a double-lung transplant recipient and a Newark resident who works throughout the year to promote NJ Sharing Network’s life-saving mission in local schools, faith-based organizations and community associations. “We have all experienced how health issues such as hypertension,

diabetes and kidney failure have impacted those around us – our mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, friends and neighbors. That’s why there is a greater need than ever for transplants among our racial and ethnic minorities. We need the active support of our community members to help educate others and dispel any myths and misinformation about organ and tissue donation,” said Peoples.

For more information about ways to support the #DonationNeedsDiversity campaign, please visit NJSharingNetwork.org/donation-needs-diversity or contact E. Denise Peoples at 973-655-4687 or email dpeoples@nsharingnetwork.org.

For more information about NJ Sharing Network’s scholarship programs, please contact scholarship@nsharingnetwork.org.

About NJ Sharing Network

Dedicated to saving lives through organ and tissue donation, NJ Sharing Network is the non-profit organization responsible for the recovery and placement of donated organs and tissue for the nearly 4,000 New Jersey residents waiting for a life-saving transplant. With headquarters in New Providence, NJ, the organization, selected by *NJBiz* as one of the state’s “Best Places to Work” for the third consecutive year, is also part of the national recovery system, serving the nearly 115,000 people on the national waiting list. To learn more, get involved and register as an organ and tissue donor, visit NJSharingNetwork.org.

About the NJ Sharing Network Foundation

The NJ Sharing Network Foundation is committed to increasing the number of lives saved through innovative transplant research, family support, public awareness and education about the life-saving benefits of organ and tissue donation and transplantation. By making a contribution, you empower our efforts, bringing us a step closer to providing the greatest gift of all... the Gift of Life.