



NEWS RELEASE

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NJ SHARING NETWORK MARKS RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR LIVES SAVED IN 2016

Nearly 5,000 New Jersey Residents

Still Waiting for Life-Saving Transplants

NEW PROVIDENCE, NJ, January 17, 2017 – In celebration of its 30th anniversary, NJ Sharing Network, the non-profit, federally designated organization responsible for the recovery of organs and tissue in the state, is proud to announce that it has achieved another record-breaking year making 613 transplants possible, representing a 16% percent increase from 2015. Tissue donation also broke records for the organization with a 10 percent increase from the previous year.

“NJ Sharing Network exists for one reason – to save lives – and this is the highest number of organs transplanted in the 30-year history of our organization,” said Joe Roth, President and Chief Executive Officer, NJ Sharing Network. “We accomplished this because of the endless commitment of our staff, the excellence of our transplant laboratory, the dedication of our volunteer corps and, most of all, the generosity and compassion of our

donors and donor families who make the decision to give the gift of life by registering as donors and talking about it with their loved ones.”

Jill Szalony, wife and mother of three from Glen Ridge, has been suffering from heart issues since 2009 when doctors in December of 2015 told her that she needed a life-saving heart transplant to survive. She was placed on the waiting list at that time and, in November 2016, received her gift of life – a heart.

“Jill is just one person whose life was saved in 2016. I am proud to know that there are over 600 people spending 2017 with their families because of the work we do at NJ Sharing Network. It is a testament to our staff and the importance of awareness, education and public support of organ and tissue donation,” said Roth.

“When times were tough during my journey, I would turn to NJ Sharing Network. It is a huge community network, which proved to be more like joining a family that supported me every step of the way,” said Szalony. “Registering as an organ and tissue donor was never a question for me – it takes less than a minute – but I never imagined that I would become a recipient. I am eternally grateful to my donor and their family for making the choice to be an organ donor and for giving me the gift of life.”

Gregory Brown understands Jill’s feelings of gratitude from her transplant. In 2016, the Clark resident was waiting for a kidney after ten years with a previous kidney transplant. While waiting and attending dialysis appointments, he maintained a positive outlook, worked full-time and exercised regularly to stay as healthy as possible. In August, he received his transplant.

“Staying positive is in my nature, but it also doesn’t hurt to have the right people around you to lift you up. I am so grateful for the gift of life I have received,” said Brown.

There are currently 5,000 New Jersey residents awaiting a life-saving transplant. Every day, approximately three people are added to the New Jersey waiting list, and last year 97 people died while waiting for a transplant. One third of the people waiting for a kidney transplant have been waiting for more than three years.

Similar to NJ Sharing Network’s 2016 organ and tissue donation record, the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), the organization that manages the nation’s organ

transplant system, reported that the number of organ transplants performed nationally reached a record high for the fourth consecutive year with 33,606 transplants reported. While this milestone reflects lives saved and enhanced, there are still more than 120,000 people nationwide waiting for the gift of life.

Approximately 95 percent of Americans say they support organ donation, yet only about 40 percent are registered donors. To date, more than 2.5 million New Jersey residents have registered as organ and tissue donors. Registration can be done through one of the following ways:

- With the release of iOS 10 in 2016, iPhone users can quickly and easily register in the National Donate Life Registry using the Health app.
- Online at www.NJSharingNetwork.org. (mobile-friendly)
- Visit your local Motor Vehicle Agency

To learn more or get involved, visit www.NJSharingNetwork.org.

About NJ Sharing Network

NJ Sharing Network, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, is a non-profit, federally designated organization responsible for the recovery and placement of donated organs and tissue for New Jersey residents in need of life-saving transplants. NJ Sharing Network partners with Donate Life America, a not-for-profit national alliance that drives communities to increase their numbers of registered donors. NJ Sharing Network honors those who gave, pays tribute to those who received, offers hope to those who continue to wait, and remembers the lives lost while waiting for the gift of life.