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FORUM DRIVES YOUTH TO DONATE

Legacy Donor Foundation hosts ninth Youth Forum on Organ and Tissue Donation

New Orleans, LA, April 10, 2008—The Legacy Donor Foundation will host the 4th **New Orleans Youth Forum on Organ and Tissue Donation** on Tuesday, April 22, at the University of New Orleans’ Lindy C. Bogs International Conference Center, 2000 Lakeshore Drive, CERM 245 from 9 a.m. until noon. The Youth Forum will educate high school students and teachers about the importance of organ, eye and tissue donation.

“Children are faced with the question, ‘Do you want to be an organ donor?’ as young as 16-years-old at the Office of Motor Vehicles while applying for their very first driver’s license,” says Jeanette Slakey, executive director of the Legacy Donor Foundation. “It is not only important that they understand the question being asked, but that they also know how to make a well informed decision. Even more importantly is that they talk to their families before making a decision.”

The Legacy Donor Foundation has sponsored a total of nine Youth Forums, all of which aim to increase awareness and provide accurate information on organ donation and transplantation, encourage discussions about donation among teens and their families and better train teachers with the resources and tools to educate students on organ and tissue donation.

“We’ve had so much success at the Youth Forums in the past because the students are curious and *want* to know,” says Slakey. “And, when you can take a topic as real as saving a life, and relate it to what they experience every day, it really hits home.”

Today, over 100,000 names are on the national transplant waitlist. In Louisiana, there are nearly 1,800 names on the list. “April is National Donate Life Month, and it is crucial that educators, students and families understand that organ donation saves lives, and that the life it could save could be theirs or a loved ones.”

The Youth Forum, open to all local high school students and their teachers, will feature Randy Zell, teacher/coach at Isidore Newman School and kidney and transplant recipient; Dr. Sandy Florman, surgeon and medical director of the Tulane Abdominal Transplant Institute and transplant surgeon for Randy Zell; and Cheryl McGhee-Hills, LOPA educator and a two time donor family and one time family recipient.

All participants will receive educational materials to take back to their schools and homes so that they can talk openly with family and peers.

Legacy Donor Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate the public about organ donation and encourage informed family acceptance of the process.

Donate Life Louisiana is a collaboration between LOPA (Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency) and the Legacy Donor Foundation.

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