



For immediate release
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TALKING TO TEENS

Legacy Donor Foundation Hosts Youth Forum on Organ & Tissue Donation

Baton Rouge, LA, November 2, 2006 – Teenagers stand on the cusp of all kinds of major decisions and life changes. One of those occurs at the Office of Motor Vehicles when a teen gets his or her first driver’s license. Most wouldn’t know how to answer the question, “Do you want to be an organ donor?” when asked at the OMV. **The Baton Rouge Youth Forum on Organ and Tissue Donation**, which is being held on **Thursday, November 2nd at the West Baton Rouge Conference Center, 2750 N. Westport Drive in Port Allen from 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.** will prepare Baton Rouge area teens to make an informed decision while understanding that whatever decision they make they need to include their family in the process.

Currently there are over 93,000 people on the national transplant waiting list while an average of 15 people die each day waiting. Former Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson says that the shortage of organs available for transplant is a “national public health crisis [and that] the resolution of this crisis...is greatly dependent upon the youth of our Nation, and their families, becoming aware of the potential of organ and tissue donors to save or improve lives.”

“The Youth Forum provides us with the opportunity to introduce teens to the life-saving subject of organ donation. We will provide accurate information on organ and tissue donation, encourage discussion about donation among teens and between teens and their families and better equip educators with resources and tools to teach about this important subject,” says Jeanette Slakey, Chairman of the Legacy Donor Foundation. “Spreading the word about saving lives through organ donation includes educating our youth. The need for a transplant is not exclusive to adults with life-threatening illnesses. Organ failure occurs for any number of reasons, to people at any age – even young children”

The free Youth Forum features a father who received a kidney donated by his son; a young man who received a double lung transplant after waiting for only one week; a young woman who at the age of thirteen was planning her own funeral, received a kidney/pancreas transplant five years ago and now back on the waiting list to receive another transplant; representatives from the

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Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency and the Baton Rouge Regional Eye Bank; and Dr. Douglas Slakey, Chairman of Surgery and Co-director of the Center for Abdominal Transplantation, Professor of surgery and Clinical Professor of Urology and Pediatrics at Tulane University Hospital & Clinic.

Sue Miller, one of the speakers at the Youth Forum was on dialysis for one year. After learning that the average waiting list time for a kidney was 3-4 years, a good friend, Antonio Miller decided to be tested to see if his kidney was a match for Ms. Miller. In March 2003 Antonio's kidney was transplanted into Sue. It was a "perfect match." Three years later, they would share not only a kidney, but a wedding as well.

The Legacy Donor Foundation has invited all public, private and parochial high school in the Baton Rouge area to attend so that they will take the information back to their schools and spread the word to others. All participants will receive educational materials funded by Ronald McDonald House Charities. The Foundation expects more than 180 attendees.

Hundreds of people on Louisiana's organ transplant waiting list die every year – not because there is no treatment – but because there are too few organ donors. One donor can save or enhance the lives of more than 50 people. The mission of the Legacy Donor Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, is to prevent the loss of human life due to the lack of available organs by educating the citizens of our state about the critical need for organ and tissue donation. Through public education and awareness activities, the Foundation promotes organ donation and fosters informed family consent.

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