



## Patient Programs Expansion in 2020

Following a tour of all five South Florida transplant hospitals to visit with the social work teams, the FOTA Board of Directors agreed unanimously to expand patient programs in 2020. The existing program includes emergency support grants that are requested by the social workers once all other avenues have been pursued to assist a patient. Just last year, FOTA provided nearly \$20,000 in funding to help transplant families in need.

Beginning now in 2020, FOTA will roll out a gift card program, so that social workers may provide immediate small-batch funding for basic necessities like groceries, or medicine. These \$50 gift cards will allow FOTA to provide an even greater impact when a helping hand is needed most.



## Lace Up Your Sneakers for the FOTA Transplant Wild Adventure

On your mark. Get set...and GO to FOTA's website, [www.floridaorgantransplant.org](http://www.floridaorgantransplant.org), to sign up for the upcoming 3rd Annual FOTA Wild Transplant Adventure Fun Run/Walk, slated for Saturday, April 25th from 7:30-11:00am at Zoo Miami.

Early bird pricing is \$25 to register through Friday, January 31st and regular pre-registration pricing is \$35 (\$50 at the door).

Participants can fundraise for special prizes like FOTA swag, Zoo memberships and more. The grand prize for the top fundraiser is a South Florida staycation with hotel stay, dinner for two and his/hers massage.

Plus, if you fundraise \$100 in support from friends/family, you may choose to refund your registration and walk/run for FREE!

Join us for an adventure as you run (or walk) through the Zoo and end your journey at the Safari Celebration with music, lite bites, informational booths, performances, speakers, raffles and more! And to keep our "eye of the tiger" on the purpose, this fundraiser is set in April for National Donate Life Month—it's the perfect time to come together and celebrate the gift of life together. See you there!

## Executive Director's Message



Dear Friends,

Happy 2020! This new year comes with renewed hope of good health and prosperity to all in the transplant community. We are just wrapping up the fall events: the 2nd Annual Adam Straub Memorial Golf Tournament and the Annual Holiday Celebration of Life, which you can read more about in this edition. We pay tribute to Bill Straub, Sr, a gentleman who poured his heart and soul to support the transplant community, after his son, Adam, gave the gift of life over 20 years ago. Learn more about the Transplant Games that are coming up this summer in the Meadowlands, and events right in our backyard.

As always, you will find transplant support group information and membership information to join the FOTA family—transplant is a unique journey, to be sure. We belong to a special tribe, and FOTA's goal is to become a central hub of resources and fellowship for the transplant community.

Wishing you 12 months of happiness, 52 weeks of fun, 365 days of laughter, 8760 hours of good luck, 525600 mins of joy, 31536000 seconds of good health!

Cheers,

*John Venezia*  
John Venezia  
Executive Director

### THANK YOU

to all of our recent new/renewed members as of December 15th:

Marta & Carlos Blanco	Ilene Hamilton	Ronnie Peace
Mirta & Gilbert Chediak	James Konschnik	Jose Romero
Susan Chediak	Louis Levin	Barbara & Reiner Schwebel
Caren Donovan	Lissette Linares	Phyllis & Scott Shamis
Iona Dumitru	Ziomahara Linares	Adrienne Steiner
Lisa Ermine	William & Sharon MacFarlane	Melissa & David Wetzel
Jeffrey George	John Marangos	
Allan Gottesman	Amadeo Marino	



### FOTA Board of Directors

**Marcy Weinberg, PhD**  
President

**Betty Ann Straub-Ruotolo**  
Vice President

**Elizabeth S. Harris**  
Treasurer

**James Cohen**  
Secretary

**Elizabeth Ruotolo**  
Board Director

**John Venezia**  
Executive Director

### CONNECT WITH US

Florida Organ Transplant Association  
934 N University Drive, #451  
Coral Springs, FL 33071

Direct: 954.282.9808  
[www.floridaorgantransplant.org](http://www.floridaorgantransplant.org)

[f /florgantransplant.org](https://www.facebook.com/florgantransplant.org)  
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## JOIN THE FOTA FAMILY

Whether you are a transplant recipient, living donor, organ donor family, or just beginning your pre-transplant journey, you have a place with us at Florida Organ Transplant Association (FOTA). And the first step is to join the membership.

By becoming an annual member, you are investing in the mission and supporting transplant families every day. We work tirelessly alongside the social work departments at all South Florida transplant hospitals to offer emergency support and resources to families in need. Membership begins at \$25—please check out which level serves you best:

#### \$25: Individual Member

- One (1) complimentary member admission to annual Holiday Celebration of Life.
- Invitations to upcoming FOTA events and seminars.
- Subscription to quarterly newsletter.
- Monthly email with upcoming transplant support group information, and resources for the transplant community.

#### \$75: Family Membership (2 Adults and up to 3 Children at the same address)

- Complimentary admission to annual Holiday Celebration of Life for a family of 5 (2 adults and up to 3 children, at the same address).
- Invitations to upcoming FOTA events and seminars.
- Subscription to quarterly newsletter.
- Monthly email with upcoming transplant support group information, and resources for the transplant community.

#### \$150: FOTA Professionals

- Complimentary admission to annual Holiday Celebration of Life for a family of 5 (2 adults and up to 3 children, at the same address).
- Invitations to upcoming FOTA events and seminars.
- Subscription to quarterly newsletter.
- Monthly email with upcoming transplant support group information, and resources for the transplant community.
- Listing in the monthly email with your company name and website (if applicable).

#### \$250: Celebration of Life Membership

- Complimentary admission to annual Holiday Celebration of Life for a family of 5 (2 adults and up to 3 children, at the same address) with reserved seating.
- Invitations to upcoming FOTA events and seminars.
- Subscription to quarterly newsletter, with company listing and website (if applicable).
- Monthly email with upcoming transplant support group information, and resources for the transplant community.
- Listing in the monthly email with your company name and website (if applicable).
- Recognition in FOTA's online Annual Donor recognition page.

#### \$500: The FOTA Society

- The opportunity to restrict your membership specifically toward our mission work of patient services, education or research.
- Complimentary admission to annual Holiday Celebration of Life for a family of 5 (2 adults and up to 3 children, at the same address) with reserved seating.
- Invitations to upcoming FOTA events and seminars.
- Subscription to quarterly newsletter, with company listing and website (if applicable).
- Monthly email with upcoming transplant support group information, and resources for the transplant community.
- Listing in the monthly email with your company name and website (if applicable).
- Recognition in FOTA's online Annual Donor recognition page.

To sign up, please visit [www.floridaorgantransplant.org](http://www.floridaorgantransplant.org) or return the enclosed envelope.



*is to become a central hub of resources and fellowship for the transplant community*

## Transplant Support Group Information

All groups are open forums to express your ideas and concerns about transplant issues. Meet with transplant recipients, pre-transplant patients, donor families, medical staff, families & guest speakers involved in the transplant experience.

**Broward Health/South Florida Transplant Center** - Meets the 1st Thursday of every month from 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM at 1625 SE 3rd Avenue, Suite #721, Fort Lauderdale, 33316. For more information, please contact South Florida Transplant Center Support Team at 954-831-2763 or email at [LiverTransplant@browardhealth.org](mailto:LiverTransplant@browardhealth.org).

**Cleveland Clinic Hospital (Weston) Transplant** - Meets the 3rd Thursday of every month 1:00 PM- 2:30 PM at 2950 Cleveland Clinic Blvd., Weston, FL 33331, 3rd Floor Conference Room (Clinic Building) For more information, please contact Randi Swersky at 954-659-6750.

**Memorial Transplant Institute Adult and VAD Transplant** - Meets 2nd Wednesday of the month at 11:00 AM at the Memorial Regional Hospital's Medical Office Center at 1150 N 35th Ave, Suite #390, Hollywood 33021. For more information, please contact Janet Delgado, LCSW (Direct) 954-265-6810 (Main) 954-265-7465 or via email at [Jadelgado@mhs.net](mailto:Jadelgado@mhs.net).

**Miami Transplant Institute** - Meets every 3rd Monday of the month from 2:00 PM-3:00 PM at the Highland Professional Building 1801 NW 9th Avenue, 7th Floor Conference Room, Miami 33136. For more information, please contact MTI Group Support Phone: 305-355-5000 email: [MTI-TransplantSupportGroup@jhsiami.com](mailto:MTI-TransplantSupportGroup@jhsiami.com)

## Transplant Games: Team Florida Update



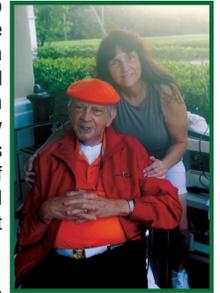
Check out Team Florida's official uniforms! These were sent to print last month. Thank you, Steve Binder, for this wonderfully retro design!

Florida's Team Managers are: Denise Simpson ([denisesimpsonTM@gmail.com](mailto:denisesimpsonTM@gmail.com)), Josie Flores-Centrella ([josieflores16@gmail.com](mailto:josieflores16@gmail.com)) and Adrian Monsalve ([monsalve.adrian@gmail.com](mailto:monsalve.adrian@gmail.com)).

Stay in the know with Team Florida! To be added to the Team Florida listserv, please email: [TeamFloridaTransplantGames@gmail.com](mailto:TeamFloridaTransplantGames@gmail.com). Also, check the Team Florida Facebook page for inspiring stories, team updates and more: <https://www.facebook.com/teamfloridatgagames/>.

## A Tribute: Bill Straub, Sr.

My name is Betty Ann Straub-Ruotolo and I am a Board Director with an amazing group of people who comprise the Florida Organ Transplant Association. I was invited to join the Board several years ago because my brother, Adam Straub, died in May of 1998 and was an organ donor. My dad, Bill Straub Sr., discovered the game of golf after he was diagnosed with head, neck and tongue cancer in 1991. Golf was a way for him to battle the depression and refocus during the fight of cancer. Then when his son, and my brother, died suddenly at 43 years old, he found a way to cope with Adam's death and help spread awareness about the critical need for organ donors. He founded the Annual Adam Straub Memorial Golf Tournament and worked hard to raise money for patient services, education/awareness, and the very special yearly Transplant Games. To date, we have raised over \$800,000 to benefit the transplant community.



Sadly, my Dad, Bill Straub Sr., just three months shy of his 90th birthday, passed away in his sleep last month. His beautiful wife and "the love of his life" along with our entire family are heartbroken. My Dad was a warrior, a survivor, a man who generously and lovingly gave so much to family, friends, and people in need that he sometimes didn't even know.

He never complained about what he was dealing with in his struggle with the return of stage 4 renal cell cancer and having to live the last seven years with a feeding tube. He never complained...actually, he joked about it. My Dad was the most brilliant person I have ever known, and he would tell you the same thing if he had the chance. HA!

He was an amazing husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather. He will be missed by his family and the wonderful friends who loved him, though he never had to work hard at making friends because everyone gravitated to his presence wherever he was. His passion for the transplant and donor community was never ending and even after his death he has left instructions for his company to continue financial support to FOTA. Bill Straub, Sr. is my hero.

With heartfelt thanks to our sponsors, donors and volunteers,  
Betty Ann Straub-Ruotolo and the Straub Family



## A Thanksgiving Blessing

When FOTA President, Marcy Weinberg, asked the famous Hollywood Delaware Chicken Farm & Seafood Market staff to help transplant families in need, they answered the call and provided FOTA with ten (10) \$25 gift cards for Thanksgiving meals. THANK YOU for your support!

For more information about this establishment, please visit:  
<https://www.delawarechicken.net/>.



# EVENTS CORNER

## 2ND ANNUAL ADAM STRAUB MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

**RECAP** Saturday, October 26th | Delray Beach Golf Club, Delray Beach

FOTA successfully completed the 2nd Annual Adam Straub Memorial Golf Tournament this past October with over \$26,000 raised! This is thanks, in part, to a huge increase in player participation from the inaugural tournament—overall, we were up 55%. We had amazing volunteers, led by event chairperson Betty-Ann Straub-Ruotolo, who worked tirelessly to make the day fun and organized...the weather even cooperated!

Tommi Yljoki, the Delray Beach Golf Club Director and head pro, along with his staff took great care to ensure the logistics were set, including the hole-in-one prizes like the big \$25,000 CASH Hole-In-One. No one won this time, though one golfer was within 6 feet of gold. Golfers participated in additional prizes including electronics, golf equipment and more.

This year was particularly powerful as Bill Straub, Sr. was in attendance. This golf tournament was his creation over 20 years ago to preserve the memory of his son, Adam. At 89 years of age, Bill attended, joked with golfers and was surprised to receive a video message from 2-time heart transplant recipient and pro golfer, Erik Compton. Erik relayed his appreciation to Bill for all of his work throughout the years and to congratulate him and the entire volunteer golf crew on a job well done.

The 2nd Annual Adam Straub Memorial Golf Tournament could not have been a success without the following sponsors: American Media, BDO USA LLC, Capital Inventory, Alfredo Cepero, Victoria DiMatteo, Steve and Sandy Dunnigan, Ray Faloon, Kevin and Regina Foti, David Grady, Larry Halle/Keiser University, Deborah Kopf Johnson, Nik Richie Lamas, Lynn University, Dennis McKiernan, Dr. and Mrs. Bill Peters, Al and Mary Jane Straub, Bill & Louise Straub, US Marine Corp Toys for Tots, Mary Weinberg, PhD, Wetzels & Associates, and Candy Wilson.



## THE SEASON OF GRATITUDE SHOWCASED AT HOLIDAY CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Saturday, December 7th | Signature Grand, Davie

Since 2013, FOTA hosts a holiday function to bring together the transplant community for an afternoon of fun, festivities and fellowship to ring in the holiday season. This year's Holiday Celebration of Life at Signature Grand brought together over 200 transplant patients and families, living donors, organ donor families, the medical staff and the community at large for a jam-packed afternoon of food, raffles, entertainment and, of course, the Celebration of Life ceremony.

The doors opened to the Beachside Montessori Village 'Top Notes' choir welcoming our guests. Kenny Walker, Master of Ceremonies, kept the program going alongside DJ's for the Cause who provided the soundtrack for the day. Elvis stopped by to sing us "Blue Christmas" and Santa & Mrs. Claus brought gifts aplenty for our kiddos, and even participated in the photo booth, so families could get a photo with jolly 'ol St. Nick. Tommy the Tiger and Florida Panther friend Viktor E. Rat provided mascot fun and the Florida Panthers ROAR Corps stopped in to dance with the crowd. There was face painting for the kids and community partners in attendance include Life Alliance Organ Recovery Agency.

The activities were great fun, but the real purpose for our gathering is the Celebration of Life ceremony—a loving tribute where transplant recipients place an ornament onto the evergreen tree in memory of their organ donor. The lights are turned down and the tree takes center stage as recipients make their way to adorn her, embrace one another, and remember.

This year we renamed the Volunteer of the Year award in honor of Executive Director and two-time kidney recipient, John Venezia, and showcased his unwavering support and volunteerism over the past 30 years. Thank you, John, for your steadfast service of others!

A big note of thanks to all supporters who made this year's event possible: Anonymous, Broward Health, Cleveland Clinic, Memorial Health System and Joe DiMaggio's Children's Hospital, South Florida Small Business Accounting, and Veloxis.



## New Year, New You...

### WITH ESSENTIALS SPA

**JANUARY 2020: ESSENTIALS SPA PROMOTION TO BENEFIT FOTA**



When booking your appointment for ANY Essentials Spa of Davie services between January 1-31st, use the code FOTA and they will donate 25% of the cost of services to our organization.

Essentials Spa of Davie is a family-owned spa that you will definitely love. Owners Kristi & Keith Laguna have been in business for over five years, and their professional staff deliver top-notch therapeutic treatments and a broad range of massage, waxing and facial treatments at affordable rates, with no memberships or contracts required.

50-Minute European massage, facial or foot massage is only \$39.95.  
Book your appointment today, and make sure to mention FOTA!

**Essentials Spa of Davie** | 954.765.65412  
4401 S Flamingo Road | Davie, FL 33330  
essentialsofdavie@gmail.com  
www.essentialsofdavie.com

**Hours of Operation:**  
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday | 10:00 am to 8:00 pm  
Closed Thursday  
Friday, Saturday | 10:00 am to 8:00 pm  
Sunday 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

## UPCOMING CALENDAR

JAN	'20	Essentials Spa Promotion to Benefit FOTA
APRIL	'20	National Donate Life Month
APRIL	5	Build-a-Bear Day
APRIL	25	3rd Annual FOTA Transplant Wild Adventure Fun Run/Walk
JUNE	13	Marina Day



**FLORIDA ORGAN TRANSPLANT ASSOCIATION**  
 Helping Organ Donor and Transplant Families

934 N. University Dr., #451, Coral Springs, FL 33071  
[www.floridaorgantransplant.org](http://www.floridaorgantransplant.org)

## Join over 10 Million Floridians to give the Gift of Life

A single organ/tissue donor can save the lives of more than 50 people. For more information and to sign up, please visit [www.donatelifeflorida.org](http://www.donatelifeflorida.org).

While a signed donor card and a driver's license with an "organ donor" designation are legal documents, your family will ultimately give consent when the time has come. It is important to share your decision to donate life with your family. Once you've made the decision to become an organ/tissue donor, please share this card with your family and start the conversation today!



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (next of kin)  
 I have made the important decision to sign up to become an organ/tissue donor. Although I have \_\_\_\_\_ signed an organ donor card and/or \_\_\_\_\_ signed up through my state's registry, and it's legally binding, the medical team may ask your for permission at the time of my passing to proceed with this gift. Please honor my wishes and allow me the chance to make a difference in up to 50 lives by becoming an organ tissue/ donor.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I signed up to donate everything I can  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I signed up with donation limitations that include \_\_\_\_\_  
 Let's talk! With love, \_\_\_\_\_  
 (donor signature)



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