

FOTA TRANSPLANT LIFE QUARTERLY



LATEST NEWS FROM FLORIDA ORGAN TRANSPLANT ASSOCIATION

ISSUE: SPRING 2023

Love, Jazz & Soul: A Kidney Donor's Opus

Rochelle Lightfoot and Gwen Amica were fated to meet and consider one another "Life Sisters". They met in 2006, at the wedding of a mutual acquaintance in Boston. They were paired together for their stay, and as the ladies were getting ready for the reception, Rochelle noticed that Gwen had a catheter. Curiously, she asked why she needed the device. Gwen responded that she had to have dialysis a few times a week due to Lupus. As the two ladies continued to converse, they realized meeting each other was more than a mere coincidence, it was providential.

In January 2007, Rochelle successfully donated her kidney to Gwen. It has been 16 years since the surgery, and Rochelle and Gwen have become great friends who continue to live their best lives, right here in South Florida. Rochelle is a singer-songwriter and recording artist. Gwen is a retired revenue officer who loves traveling and spending time with her grandchildren.

In honor of her life sister, Rochelle is partnering with FOTA for her Annual Love, Jazz & Soul concert series. Slated to launch on Father's Day at the Ann Kolb Nature Center, Rochelle is providing us with an incredible opportunity to talk about the importance of organ donation, including living donation, and the miracle of transplantation. In addition, a portion of the proceeds from the summer series will benefit patient services. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit <https://lovejazzsoul.com/>.



Lace Up Those Sneakers for FOTA's Hybrid 2023 Wild Transplant Adventure Fun Run/Walk

Are you ready?! Get set...GO to Zoo Miami on **Saturday, April 29th from 7:30-11am** for a day of fitness, fun and celebrating the gift of life with your South Florida transplant community.



How does it work? You can join us in the morning at Zoo Miami to **race through the park before it opens to the public** and celebrate in our private event field. **Or, you may choose to walk anywhere** (on a treadmill, around your neighborhood or any course of your choice) on that Saturday to join us from afar.

Participants can fundraise for special prizes, and if you raise \$100 in support from friends/family, we automatically refund your registration and you walk/run for FREE!

All participants will receive an official t-shirt, and medal. Those who attend the in-person event at Zoo Miami will enjoy a festival with food, activities, raffle, auction, music, photo booth and a few surprises.

Register online at <https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/Miami/FOTARuns>. See you there!

Executive Director's Message



Dear Friends,

Happy National Donate Life Month! This is always a special time of year where we can shine a spotlight and bring awareness to the importance of organ donation. In addition to our recent Kids Needing Kidneys Build-a-Bear event, and our upcoming Hybrid Fun Run/Walk event at Zoo Miami on Saturday, April 29th (are you registered?), Lissette Linares, FOTA Vice President, recently led a discussion with the Rotary Club of Coconut Grove about organ donation.

Lissette joined the Rotarians earlier this year and has brought FOTA and her passion for transplant to the forefront of the group. She talked about her inspiration, her dad, Luis Linares, a longtime kidney recipient, while busting organ donation myths, and providing facts, stats and overall information about becoming an organ/tissue donor. The Rotary is celebrating transplant by donating proceeds from their upcoming Happy Hour to FOTA! Thank you, Rotary Club of Coconut Grove, and thank you, Lissette, for your leadership.

Do you know of a company or group who is looking for local organizations, like ours, to partner alongside to showcase their commitment to the community? We are open to working alongside companies for National Donate Life Month and the other 11 months too! Please send them my way by either calling me at 954.667.8781 or by email at venez40@bellsouth.net.

Here's to a wonderful April and beyond—Happy Blue/Green Day! Happy Donate Life Month! Happy Transplant Day...every day!

Be well,

John Venezia
Executive Director



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

Direct: 954.667.8781
www.floridaorgantransplant.org

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Now is a great time to consider joining the FOTA Family!

When you become a member, you stand in solidarity with the nearly 5,000 Floridians awaiting a lifesaving transplant and the thousands who have survived transplant and need help along the way.

Annual membership provides the ongoing support to keep patient programs and activities running in earnest.

THANK YOU to all of our recent new/renewed members as of 6/1/22-4/1/23

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Marjorie Aloni | Lafuntain Crenshaw | Gwen Jefferson | Sarah Miller | Cindy Snyder |
| Marta & Carlos Blanco | John Curry | Sandra Katulka | Jorge Morales | Alice Soskin |
| Alec Blotnick | Joanne Don | Mary Lou Lattimer | Carla Murgas | Adrienne Steiner |
| Thomas Bonsall | Caren Donovan | Vivian Lerner | Nilda Perez | Adan Vasquez |
| Eileen Manno-Caballero | Mike Engstrom | Lissette Linares | Trib & Jasmin Persaud | Janet & David Weinstein |
| Susan Caplan | Marilyn Foley | Paul Louis | Barbara Pippinger | Mary Wetzel |
| Welcome to Caregiving | Mindy Gross | Sharon MacFarlane | Doug Preble | Melissa & David Wetzel |
| Susan Chediak | Ilene Hamilton | John Marangos | June Ranofsky | Peggy Zarandona |
| Gilbert Chediak | Summer Forde & Justine Harpaul | Brenda Martinez | Jose Romero | Ed Zukerman |
| Mirta & Gilbert Chediak | Liz Harris | Alese Master | Gilda Saul | |
| Bertram Cikigil | Sage Hoffman | Owen McClave | Reiner & Barbara Schwebel | |
| Dr. Patricia Squillace Cleary | Carol Hoffman | Mike & Michelle McLaughlin | Phyllis & Scott Shamis | |

To join the FOTA Family, visit us at: <https://www.floridaorgantransplant.org/become-a-member>



OUR GOAL

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

Kidney Transplant Connectors: A Perfect Match

On the Valentine's edition of FOTA's quarterly online forum Transplant Topics, in conjunction with Sanofi and their Kidney Transplant Connectors program, we met Alana and Reggie, a wife and husband duo who shared their recipient and donor story respectively. February 14th is National Donor Day, so it was a perfect moment to listen in on this inspirational couple. They shared their transplant and living donor story, provided education about the path to transplant, the day of their two surgeries, and life now with one kidney (Reggie) and four kidneys (Alana).

Not only was their talk insightful, but Chef Alana also elaborated about her non-profit, Nurture by Nature, which came to be as a result of changes in lifestyle post-transplant. Over the holiday season she collaborated with Kindness for Kidneys International and prepared roughly 800 meals to feed local dialysis patients in Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia. There is nothing these two can't do—they are a perfect match! Thank you, Sanofi, for your partnership.



Holiday Party: A Joyful Return

To go back to Signature Grand this past December for the Annual Holiday Celebration of Life Luncheon was incredible—friends from around South Florida and beyond reunited in this first major patient-gear event since before the pandemic. The venue was beautiful, the crowd was joyful, and the Celebration of Life ceremony was heartwarming. The crowd enjoyed a performance by the Beachside Montessori Village “Top Notes” Choir, lunch, 360° photo booth, donated by FOTA Member Louis Levin, raffles, auction, and visits by Santa and Tommy the Transplant Tiger to boot! Check out photos online by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/florgantransplant.org>.



2022 Was An Incredible Year of Growth for Patient Services

In 2022, the FOTA community served 634 families, a year-over-year increase of 37%! Patient Services supports patient-gear educational gatherings such as the monthly virtual support group and quarterly Transplant Topics, in-kind holiday and end-of-year support, and our Emergency Grants Program.

The FOTA Emergency Grants Program is our flagship patient services program, where social workers from all South Florida transplant hospitals may nominate patients or their families who need a one-time support grant to cover basic necessities such as housing, transportation, medicine and/or food. Within 24-hours of the submission FOTA can turnaround payment and provide this integral bridge support.

2022 Emergency Grants Stats:

- 62 South Florida transplant families received a one-time emergency grant
- Average grant size is \$468
- 52% Of patients supported were female
- 84% Of grants were distributed through Broward-based hospitals
- \$10,670 Helped to keep transplant families in their homes

If you would like to support this initiative, please consider making a donation by visiting our website, www.floridaorgantransplant.org.

Support Donate Life Florida (DLF), the state's organ, eye and tissue donor registry, by pre-purchasing a Donate Life Florida specialty license plate for your vehicle.

Florida's legislature has authorized the DLF specialty license plate to promote donation education and donor registration. This license plate will be a moving billboard to educate the public about the importance of donation. However, before the license plate can be produced and distributed, 3,000 license plates must be pre-sold.

You can purchase your pre-sale specialty plate in person at any tax collector office in Florida, or from home online by visiting: www.donateliflorida.org/licenseplate

The pre-sale cost per plate is \$33. Help save lives while you drive and purchase your plate today!



Learn more at www.DonateLifeFlorida.org

SCAN ME

UPCOMING CALENDAR

| | | |
|-------|----|------------------------------------|
| APRIL | 27 | FOTA Monthly Virtual Support Group |
| APRIL | 29 | FOTA Hybrid Fun Run/Walk |
| MAY | 25 | FOTA Monthly Virtual Support Group |
| JUNE | 10 | Marina Day |
| JUNE | 18 | Love, Jazz & Soul Concert |
| JUNE | 22 | FOTA Monthly Virtual Support Group |



FLORIDA ORGAN TRANSPLANT ASSOCIATION
 Helping Organ Donor and Transplant Families

934 N. University Dr., #451, Coral Springs, FL 33071
www.floridaorgantransplant.org

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Join over 12 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.

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)



934 N. University Dr., #451, Coral Springs, FL 33071
954-667-8781

www.floridaorgantransplant.org
 f /florgantransplant.org t floridaorgantra