

# THE LEGACY

A Publication of the Center for Donation and Transplant

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## CDT's Conversion Rate Second Highest in the Country

THE CENTER for Donation & Transplant achieved the second highest conversion rate in the country during a 12 month period of time (July 2006 - June 2007) monitored by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). CDT's conversion rate during this time period was 85.7%, meaning that 85.7% of eligible donors in CDT's area became actual organ donors. During June 2006 through July 2007, there were 56 patients in CDT's area that met the criteria to be considered eligible organ donors. Of those, 47 became actual organ donors. CDT also facilitated donations in that time period from an additional 7 organ donors that did not meet the HHS definition of "eligible death" due to age or medical history. A total of

160 organs were recovered and successfully transplanted or used for research.

There are 58 donor service areas in the United States; each of the 58 organ procurement organizations is responsible for serving a donor service area. From June 2006 - July 2007 only the Upstate New York Transplant Services, the organ procurement organization that serves western New York, achieved a higher conversion rate than CDT. Jeffrey Orlowski, executive director at CDT stated, "The amount of hard work and dedication shown by CDT and hospital staff is clearly reflected in this wonderful achievement. We will continue our

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## CDT Education Day and Appreciation Dinner Set for April 2, 2008

CDT's annual Education Day and Appreciation Dinner will be held on Wednesday, April 2, 2008 at the Holiday Inn in Saratoga Springs, NY. As usual, the event will feature an educational program in the afternoon followed by an appreciation dinner and award ceremony in the evening.

CDT is now accepting nominations from hospital staff for both Nurse of the Year and Health Care Practitioner of the Year. If you feel a colleague of

yours has gone "above and beyond" to facilitate donation cases, support donor families or educate about donation, please nominate them for an award by asking your hospital's CDT liaison for a nomination form, e-mailing a nomination to [lquinn@cdtny.org](mailto:lquinn@cdtny.org), or by calling 262-5606 to request a form. Nominations should include the nominee's name, title, hospital, unit, brief explanation of why he/she is deserving of award, and the nominator's name, title, unit and phone number.

From the Executive Director

By Jeffrey P. Orlowski

**Best wishes to a Dear Friend**

RECENTLY, I had the opportunity to attend a gala dinner in Philadelphia, PA at the National Constitution Center. The dinner was a gathering of donation and transplant professionals from all over the world and the guest of honor was a dear friend of CDT's, Dr. Ken Moritsugu.

Dr. Moritsugu recently retired as Deputy Surgeon General of the United States, a position he had held since 1998. To recount Dr. Moritsugu's far-reaching accomplishments in this position and in his career would require far more space than I am allotted or, for that matter, the entire newsletter can provide; therefore, I will not attempt to do so. What I can and will

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**T**HE United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) has a new professional resource available for transplant coordinators. The information is intended to help transplant staff address the topic of sharing recipient information with interested donor families. The pamphlet also discusses the opportunity for recipients to write letters to the families of their donors. The resource, titled "Acknowledging the Gift: Sharing Information with Donor Families" is available online at the UNOS website at <http://www.unos.org/news/newsDetail.asp?id=947>.

**T**HE Capital Region Spotlight publications ran an article about organ and tissue donation that appeared in eleven of its newspapers in August. The article featured interviews with CDT Executive Director Jeffrey Orlowski as well as liver recipient Paul Silva and Kathy Arduini, who donated her husband's organs.



A Donate Life Organization

**C**DT volunteer and donor father Sam Messina was featured in the Times Union "Caring Community" section in August. The article discussed Sam's volunteerism for the Center for Donation & Transplant as well as several other organizations, including Albany County's STOP-DWI impact panels. Sam and his wife Jan have been volunteers for CDT for the past three years.

## New Faces

**C**DT welcomes Mike Garlough, RN, who started at CDT in August as a part-time organ procurement coordinator in the Binghamton area. In this newly created position, Mike is responsible for hospital development in the three Binghamton hospitals that CDT serves, making rounds in the critical care units, and following up on referrals from the Binghamton area. Mike is currently a nurse in a cardiac step-down unit at Wilson Regional Medical Center.

## "Organ Donor" Now Displayed On Front of New York Driver's License

**N**EW YORKERS receiving a new driver's license or state identification card or renewing a license can now indicate their designation to be an organ donor on the front of their license. The change in the license resulted from a package of seven bills designed to increase organ donation that the New York State Legislature passed in the summer of 2006.



"Organ Donor" clearly printed in red on the front of the license, and a letter will be sent to their home confirming their registration.

Those who do not need to renew or apply for a license can still join the

New York State Organ and

Tissue Donor Registry by enrolling directly at [www.cdtny.org](http://www.cdtny.org) or by calling CDT at 1-800-256-7811 and requesting a registry card to fill out. The registry is a confidential database maintained by the New York State

Department of Health that allows New

Yorkers to record their wishes regarding organ and tissue donation. It can be accessed by healthcare professionals when it is necessary to check if a patient communicated their intent to donate. With close to 100,000 people currently waiting for a life-saving organ transplant in the United States, CDT strongly encourages New Yorkers to make the decision to save lives through donation and enroll in the state registry.

New Yorkers who are at least 18 years old can enroll in the state's donor registry at the DMV while applying for or renewing a license or non-driver's state identification card. Checking the appropriate box on the application/renewal form allows the DMV to send the driver's information to the New York State Department of Health for enrollment in the New York State Organ and Tissue Donor Registry. Enrollees will then receive a license or state identification card with the words

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**24-Hour Information  
(800) 256-7811**

## We Want to Hear From You!

If you are a member of an affiliated hospital who would like to advertise an upcoming event or submit an article to the Legacy, contact Lauren Quinn at (800) 256-7811 or via e-mail at [lquinn@cdtny.org](mailto:lquinn@cdtny.org).

The Legacy is published on a quarterly basis and covers the health care community that CDT serves in northern and eastern New York, and western Vermont.

# CDT and Hospitals Honored at National Organ Donation Congress

THE CENTER for Donation and Transplant (CDT) received a total of seven awards on October 10, 2007 from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for CDT's performance in a series of initiatives set forth by HHS to increase organ donation and transplantation. The awards were presented at the 3rd Annual National Learning Congress on Organ Donation and Transplantation in Nashville, Tennessee.

CDT is one of only 22 organ procurement organizations (OPOs) in the country that was honored for achieving a 75% conversion rate for a continuous

12 month period in its entire service area, which consists of 46 hospitals in 30 counties in New York and Vermont. The conversion rate is the percentage of patients that become actual organ donors out of all potential organ donors at a hospital. It is estimated that achieving a nationwide conversion rate of 75% would save thousands more lives through organ transplantation. Currently, the national conversion rate is estimated to be 63 percent.

CDT also shared four Donation Medals of Honor with hospitals in its service area that achieved individual conversion rates of 75% or

higher within a continuous 12 month period. The recognized hospitals include Albany Medical Center, St. Peter's Hospital, St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Utica and Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington, Vermont.

CDT received an additional two awards for its success in recovering transplantable organs and increasing organ donation in its area. The center is one of four OPOs in the country that met or exceeded the HHS goal to recover and transplant an average of 2.5 organs from extended criteria donors; these are donors that are older and/or had a history of illness or medical issues. CDT also received an award for increasing its total number of organ donors by providing more families with an opportunity to donate after cardiac death.



**Staff members from CDT and Albany Medical Center, Fletcher Allen Health Care, St. Peter's Hospital and St. Elizabeth Medical Center pose with James Burdick, M.D., and Elizabeth M. Duke, Ph.D., of the Division of Transplantation and the Health Resources and Services Administration at the Medal of Honor Ceremony.**

## Executive Director, from page 1

recount is Dr. Moritsugu's unique and stellar contribution to donation and transplantation, for which he was honored that recent evening in Philadelphia.

Beginning in 1994, Dr. Moritsugu has been an active participant in the National Donor Recognition Ceremonies held annually in Washington, D.C. Beyond his kind and healing work with donor families, he has also been involved in promoting donation nationally in many forums. Dr. Moritsugu has been a guest speaker at numerous national conventions and at several of the Collaborative meetings, where his boundless enthusiasm for compassionately providing families the opportunity to donate has touched so many transplant professionals and their work. He has also served the transplant com-

munity as a member of numerous Boards and Advisory Boards including UNOS.

In all of this, when Dr. Moritsugu speaks, he speaks from his own experience as both a donor husband and a donor father. Over the years, Dr. Moritsugu has spoken at several CDT Donor Family Recognition programs. Each time, he has moved us to tears and to laughter, to deep thought and to renewed enthusiasm for our work. Each time we have parted company with him looking forward to our next encounter.

And so, all of us here at the Center for Donation & Transplant want to wish our friend, Dr. Ken Moritsugu, the very best in his retirement and in all of his endeavors!

## CDT's 2008 Float Rider Announced

**C**DT IS PROUD to announce that heart recipient Alvin Grant will ride the Donate Life Float on behalf of CDT in the 2008 Rose Parade. Grant, a 21 year-old college student, received a heart transplant at Albany Medical Center in 2005. He has since returned to school and has become an active advocate for donation awareness. Grant and a guest will fly out to Pasadena with a CDT staff member at the end of December for a weekend of press coverage, receptions, and celebration before the 119th Rose Parade on January 1, 2008. His personal story from the Donate Life float's website is shared below.

In the fall of 2004, Alvin Grant, now 21, started his freshman year at Wagner College on Staten Island, NY. He began to feel unusually tired for no apparent reason. He also started to lose weight, while everyday tasks like walking to class felt like a chore.

Alvin managed to finish his first semester before heading to Albany Medical Center, where he was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy and put on a drug therapy. But his condition worsened and he returned to the hospital instead of school in January. After much consideration and discussion with friends and family, Alvin was placed on the transplant waiting list in February 2005.

"After my decision, the only thing to do was to wait," said Alvin. "I didn't know whether it would be a month or even a year or two before a donor

would be found. I passed the time by reading books, drawing, and talking and playing board games with my friends and family when they visited me in the hospital. I also spent time educating myself on all the facts about heart transplantation, and the benefits as well as the challenges it imposed. But eventually, this routine became tiresome; I wanted to get back to my regular life."

Luckily, Alvin didn't have long to wait. On the night of April 15, 2005, Alvin got "the call" from a nurse practitioner, saying that a suitable donor had been found.

"When I awoke from surgery, I knew the operation had been a success," said Alvin. "I had a long road ahead of me, but I was just so thankful for everyone who was instrumental in getting me to this point. This included the nursing staff, the transplant team, friends and family, and of course the donor, who so graciously decided to donate his/her organs and saved my life.

"Since that day, I have striven to retain the life that I had. I'm currently finishing college and preparing for a career as a graphic designer. I am thrilled to be chosen by the Center for Donation & Transplant to ride the Donate Life float in honor of donors and recipients. Hopefully, by sharing my story and being a float rider, I can educate people on the importance of donation and how making the decision to donate can save lives."



**Float rider Alvin Grant.**

The 2008 float is titled *Life Takes Flight* and will feature organ, tissue and blood recipients from across the country. The float will also feature eight organ and tissue donor family members who will walk alongside the float and hold lines connected to floragraphs of their loved ones. The identities of all 24 riders and 8 donor family members were revealed this fall and can be viewed at the Donate Life Float website at [www.donatelifefloat.org](http://www.donatelifefloat.org). 2008 will mark the fifth appearance of the Donate Life Float in the Rose Parade, and the second year that CDT sponsored a rider to appear on the float.

## Bassett Healthcare: A Leader in Donation After Cardiac Death

### Hospital facilitates two donors after cardiac death in one week

IN AUGUST, the Center for Donation & Transplant received a call from Bassett Healthcare in Cooperstown, referring a patient as a potential organ donor. This is not an everyday occurrence for the community hospital; due to a small potential for organ donation; Bassett Healthcare generally refers one or two potential organ donors a year. In this case, the patient's family asked about the option of organ donation after deciding to provide comfort care measures to their loved one. Because the patient had not suffered brain death, he was considered a potential candidate for organ donation after cardiac death.

When organ donation was first introduced, all organs were recovered by donation after cardiac death. When donation after brain death became an option, surgeons were able to recover more organs per donor and as a result, most organ procurement organizations stopped pursuing donation after cardiac death. However, due to the increasing number of patients waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, the donation community renewed interest in donation after cardiac death as an opportunity to increase the availability of organs for transplant. In January 2007, the Joint Commission revised their standards for organ donation to include language that requires hospitals to have DCD protocol in place. Most hospitals in CDT's area have revised their policies to address opportunities for donation after cardiac death.

Prior to this referral, Bassett Healthcare had not had any patients fit the criteria for donation after cardiac death, so facilitating this type of organ recovery was a new experience for the hospital staff. The family of this patient graciously consented to organ donation, and thanks to the hard work and support from the Bassett Healthcare staff, both kidneys and the liver were recovered and successfully transplanted.

Exactly seven days later, CDT received another referral from Bassett Healthcare, and the patient was again a candidate for donation after cardiac death. CDT approached the family about the

option of donation after they decided to withdraw care. Once again, in accordance with the family's wishes, CDT and Bassett Healthcare facilitated the recovery and both kidneys and the liver were able to be transplanted. The hospital staff believes that early preparation and education about DCD was of tremendous help during an actual case. Anne Piscopo, RN, a nurse in the intensive care unit at Bassett Healthcare stated, "This was a great experience for our ICU. We don't have [the potential for] a lot of donors, and this was a big deal for us." Donna Anderson, RN, BSN, ICU Nurse Manager, added, "We're doing the right thing by referring patients promptly and offering the family the option of



**Staff from Bassett Healthcare in Cooperstown enjoy a lunch hosted by CDT in appreciation of their support on recent DCD cases.**

donation. We're always so relieved when the patient is able to donate, since the family has had some good come out of their loss."

That this community hospital facilitated two organ donations within one week is made more significant by the fact that organ donation after cardiac death is a relatively rare occurrence. CDT's goal is for DCD donors to comprise 10% of their total number of donors for the year, which would equate to about five more donors every year. There has been a total of seven donors after cardiac death in CDT's region in 2007 (through November 8th), including the two cases at Bassett Healthcare.

Bassett Healthcare's achievement serves as an example that all hospitals can play a vital role in efforts to increase organ donation. "Every hospital has an opportunity to help save the lives the others by properly identifying and referring potential donors, allowing us to give every family we can the option of donation," said Jeffrey Orlowski, executive director of CDT. "Six individuals are alive today because of the generosity of the families that donated and the commitment of the Bassett Healthcare team to honor the wishes of the donors."

## Racing for Awareness - A Family Affair

**T**HE EDMUNDS family, with son Matthew listed for a kidney transplant at Albany Medical Center, decided to help raise awareness of organ donation by participating in the 30th Annual Boilermaker Race in Utica, NY. The race, the largest 15K in the nation, attracts thousands of participants and spectators every July. The Edmunds asked family and friends, both runners and race-watchers, to wear Donate Life t-shirts to remind the public of the importance of donation. Nearly fifty people sported the shirts in Matthew's honor during the race and at the post-race parties.

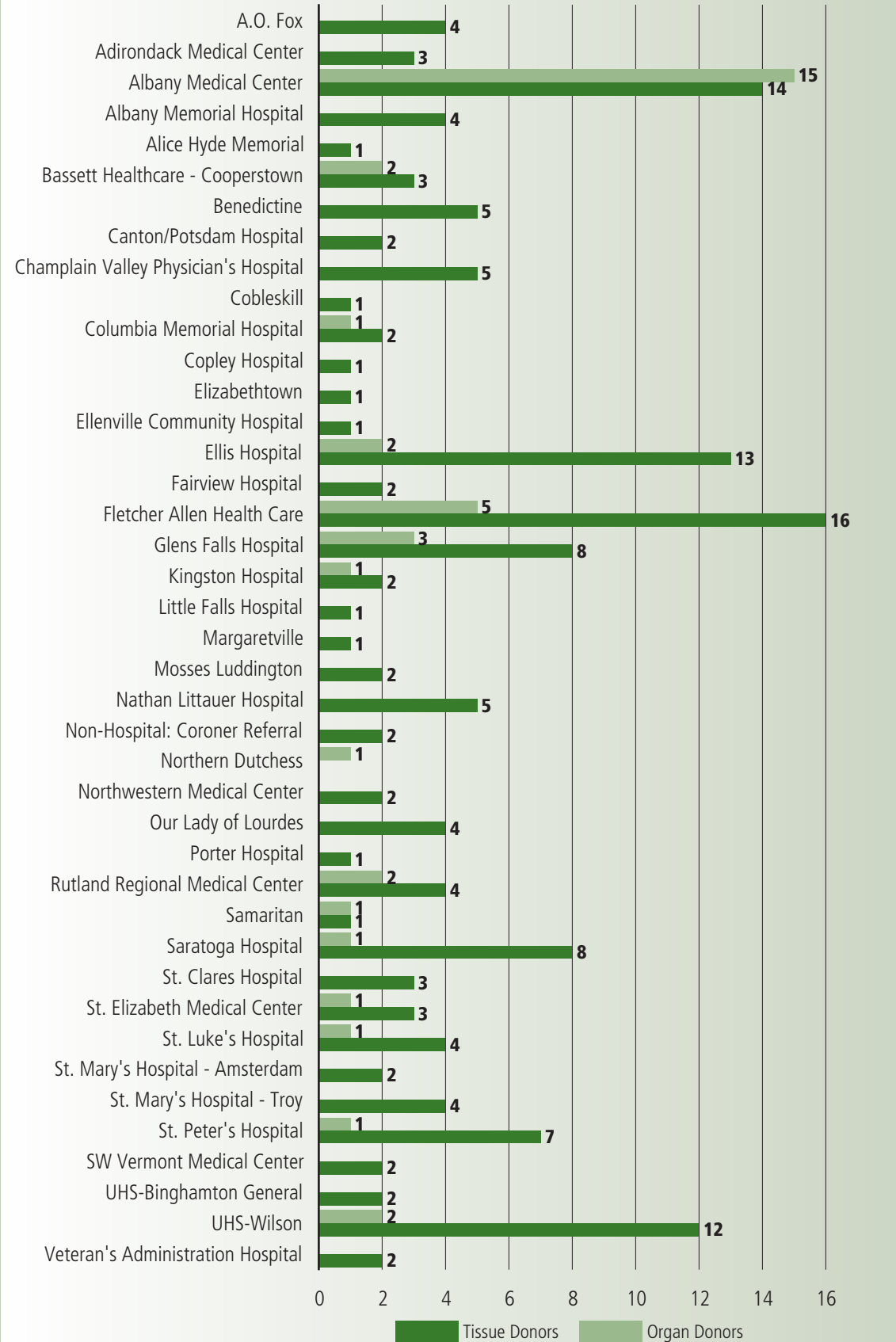


**Top, Runner Christine Friedel, Matthew's aunt, gets support from the crowd during the race. Above, From left Don, Jennifer, and Sarah Edmunds (Matthew's parents and sister) and friend Casi Desarro.**

## Donor Activity by Hospital

January 1 through October 31, 2007

160 total tissue donors, 39 total organ donors



## Contact CDT if you would like to:

- **ENROLL** in the New York State Organ and Tissue Registry
- **OBTAIN INFORMATION** or donor cards
- **REQUEST SPEAKERS** for schools, civic organizations or health fairs
- **BECOME A VOLUNTEER** and help raise awareness of donation!

Call or write to:  
The Center for Donation and Transplant  
218 Great Oaks Boulevard, Albany, New York  
12203

Or visit  
[www.cdtny.org](http://www.cdtny.org)



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218 Great Oaks Boulevard, Albany, New York 12203  
Phone 518 262-5606, Fax 518 262-5427  
P2301



## Upcoming Events and Important Dates

**November 2 - January 25, 2008** .....“12 Weeks of Giving Campaign” –  
Workplaces team with organ procurement organizations  
to encourage employees to join donor registries.

**January 1** .....2008 Rose Parade, featuring Donate Life float & CDT float rider

**February 14** .....Saturn Donor Day

**Please contact CDT at 518-262-5606 for further information about upcoming events.**