



**YOUNG DRIVERS CAN HELP SAVE A LIFE:
MARK A “D” ON YOUR DRIVER’S LICENSE
AS PART OF DONATE LIFE MONTH**

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PORTLAND, Ore. – Young drivers have a lot of new responsibilities and freedoms in their lives – and they also have an important, life-saving opportunity. Marking the “D” on your Oregon driver’s license, permit or state ID card is an easy, effective way to register your decision to become an organ, eye or tissue donor.

While Oregonians of all ages can mark a “D” on their driver’s license, the emphasis this month – as part of national Donate Life Month – is on younger drivers ages 15 to 29. Statistics show that younger drivers in Oregon are not marking the “D” at as high a rate as other age groups.

Two young women from Oregon, however, have a very personal perspective to share with younger drivers. Niki Zurcher, 31, is a kidney recipient and lives the life she once only dreamed of. She is healthy, working full time, traveling internationally and getting her MBA. Jamie Hiner, 21, has an autoimmune disease and is on the liver transplant waiting list. Both are speaking out to young drivers in Oregon and Southwest Washington, as part of Donate Life Month this April.

Donate Life Northwest (formerly Oregon Donor Program) and Oregon DMV are teaming up this month to tell the story of Niki and Jamie – reminding Oregon drivers to “Get a ‘D’ – save a life.”

“For the first time, the ‘D’ code on the driver’s license is accepted as consent for donation,” said Mary Jane Hunt, executive director of Donate Life Northwest. “This information is readily available at the time of death, eliminating the burden on the family to make what can be a difficult, emotional decision.”

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In the Pacific Northwest, there currently are 2,200 people waiting for lifesaving organ transplants. There are thousands more who suffer from blindness, medical conditions or debilitating injuries that can be treated successfully with donated corneas or tissues.

People can register their wishes to become an organ, eye or tissue donor in three equally important ways: (1) Put a “D” on your driver’s license, permit or ID card, (2) register online at www.donatelifenw.org or (3) request a paper form by calling 1-800-452-1369.

“It’s quick and easy to make your wishes known by getting the ‘D’ placed on your license or ID card at DMV,” said Tom McClellan, administrator of the Oregon DMV. “You can add the ‘D’ any time you renew or replace your license or ID card – not just when you first apply.”

DONOR FACT SHEET

- There are more than 100,000 people in the United States – including 2,200 in the Pacific Northwest – who are waiting for lifesaving organ transplants. In addition, there are about 1 million in the U.S. who suffer from conditions that can be treated successfully with donated corneas or tissue.
- In 2007 Oregon established a state-wide donor registry, which is a secure, confidential database listing everyone who has indicated their decision to become a donor. The database is accessible only to official organ, eye and tissue procurement agencies.
- In 2008, there were nearly 80 million people in the U.S. who were enrolled in state donor registries. There are more than 2 million in Oregon and nearly 3 million in Washington who are registered.
- Donated organs, corneas and tissues save and enhance the lives of recipients many times over. On average three organs are transplanted per donor, and tissue from one donor can improve the lives of 50 people.
- DMV plays a vital role in the donor designation system – about 97 percent of all registered donors record their decision at DMV. As of Dec. 31, 2008, about 50 percent of Oregonians issued a driver’s license/permit or state ID card had marked a “D” on their records. Younger drivers so far have not marked a “D” as often as other age groups (note: until a person turns 18, consent of a parent or legal guardian is required to become a donor):
 - Ages 18-20: nearly 17 percent marked a “D”
 - Ages 21-24: nearly 34 percent marked a “D”
 - Ages 25-29: about 52 percent marked a “D”
 - Ages 50-59: about 58 percent marked a “D”

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