



Media Release



For Immediate Release
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NIAGARA FALLS GOES GREEN TO PROMOTE ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION *International event to mark National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week and National Donate Life Month*

Niagara Falls, ON - On April 21, 1994, two-year-old Stuart Herriott succumbed to head injuries after an accident and his parents consented to organ donation. His heart, liver and both kidneys were transplanted. Sixteen years later, the Herriott family, including Stuart's aunt, Linda Rumble, will be among the many supporters of organ and tissue donation gathering on both sides of the Canada –US boarder today to help raise awareness of the continuing need for organ and tissue donors.

Supporters of Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) in Ontario, and New York Alliance for Donation and Upstate New York Transplant Services are joining together today to raise awareness of the need for more registered organ and tissue donors. They will meet tonight in the middle of the Rainbow Bridge in a green candlelight ceremony to mark National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week (NOTDAW) in Canada and National Donate Life Month in the United States.

“This is an incredibly special event celebrating the gift of life,” says Frank Markel, President and CEO of TGLN. “It’s wonderful to work with our U.S. counterparts and together raise awareness for organ and tissue donation.”

2009 was a record-breaking year in Ontario, resulting in nearly 700 lives saved, and this upward trend in organ and tissue donation has continued in 2010. However, to save and enhance more lives, more Ontarians need to take the step to register their consent to donate.

“Awareness is vital to saving lives. In Ontario we currently have approximately 1,600 residents on organ transplant wait lists. The more we can do to get the message out about organ and tissue donation, the greater our ability to save lives,” explains Christine Clark, a Niagara resident and a member of the Board of Directors for TGLN.

Both the Canadian and American falls will be illuminated green in support of organ and tissue donation from 9:00 – 9:15 p.m. and from 10:00 – 10:15 p.m. At 10:00 p.m., to coincide with the second lighting of the falls, Canadian and American participants wearing green ponchos and holding green glow sticks will form a symbolic green ribbon across the Rainbow Bridge.

“I would like to thank Trillium Gift of Life Network for providing a great way for us to celebrate Donate Life Month,” says Mark J. Simon, President/CEO of Upstate New York Transplant Services. “An event like this where we can join together with our Canadian neighbors in a place known throughout the world will be a tremendous help in increasing donation and transplantation awareness and spreading the message about the importance of giving the Gift of Life.”

"We are thrilled to be joining with our neighbors in Ontario at this international event to highlight April as Donate Life Month in the United States. We urge all New Yorkers to become donors by enrolling in the Donate Life Registry at www.donatelifenys.net," says Ellen Hollander, Executive Director of the New York Alliance for Donation, whose board includes the organ procurement organizations, eye and tissue banks in New York State."

"It doesn't matter how many years have passed since a loved one has given the gift of life. Through organ and tissue donation, family and friends always have a lasting living legacy to remember them by," adds Linda Rumble. "Our little Stu-Buddy at 25 months of age, gave life to four recipients. Tonight, we as a family are celebrating the lives he saved on April 21, 1994. We are also celebrating the lives he continues to save through the organ and tissue donation awareness activities in which our family participates. The lighting of Niagara Falls for National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week is a symbolic way to remember him and to encourage others to speak to their families about their donation wishes," said Rumble, who organized the event.

In Niagara Falls Ontario as of December 31, 2009, 18 per cent of those 16 and older with health cards had registered their consent to donate.

"A green light is the universal symbol to go forward. It is a most appropriate symbol to celebrate the ultimate gift of life through an organ or tissue transplant," says Niagara Falls MPP Kim Craitor. "The lack of organ donations is an international issue. This great event at the Rainbow Bridge symbolizes our universal need to move forward as communities, to promote awareness and bridge the gap between need and availability by encouraging registration as an organ and tissue donor."

To register as an organ and tissue donor, Ontarians can download and complete a consent form available at www.giftoflife.on.ca or visit their local ServiceOntario Health Card Services office.

For more details on Trillium Gift of Life Network please visit our website at www.giftoflife.on.ca or call 416-363-4001 or toll free 1-800-263-2833.

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