

2026

Donate Life Month

TOOLKIT



New York State

WELCOME TO

Donate Life Month

April is National Donate Life Month. We're thrilled to partner with you on this critically important annual observance. With approximately 8,000 New Yorkers waiting for organ transplants and 300 losing their lives annually due to due shortages, your participation is crucial. Despite New York's high need for donors, only 52 percent of residents are registered – well below the national average of 64 percent.



2026 DONATE LIFE MONTH THEME: Leave A Legacy

This year's theme uses trees as a symbol of life and connection. Just like trees grow and support each other in a forest, donation connects people – donors, recipients, and their families. Like a tree that grows and stands for generations, a donor's gift leaves a lasting legacy of hope and life.

MAKE NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH Tree-Mendous

Donate Life NYS gives you powerful tools to help your customers leave a lasting legacy. Inside, discover ways to celebrate Donate Life Month, be inspired by a Story of Hope, and spark creative fundraising and activities that save lives.

You Woodn't BELIEVE OUR ONLINE RESOURCES



Don't leaf yourself hanging – scan the QR code provided where you'll discover some sap-solutely incredible resources including social media posts, graphics, digital resources, press releases, PSAs, and much more!



Statewide, 52% of the population has enrolled in the New York State Donate Life Registry. To view current county data, scan the QR code provided.

ABOUT DONATE LIFE NEW YORK STATE

Donate Life New York State is the statewide non-profit organization whose mission is to increase organ, eye, and tissue donation in New York State. Our goal is to ensure a life-changing transplant for every New Yorker in need. **If your office needs additional materials or support during Donate Life Month, contact us at (518) 326-3237 or info@dlnys.org.**

MAKE NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH Tree-Mendous

Thank you for joining our poplar celebration of National Donate Life Month! This oak-ay observance will make your numbers of registered donors take root, giving hope to those in need of organ, eye, and tissue transplants. Below are six unbe-leavable fun ideas to promote donor registration in your community.

SIX UNBE-LEAVABLE WAYS TO CELEBRATE

1

Spruce up your office with a captivating Regis-Tree: Turn a wall into a tree mural and let donors add leaves to its branches, symbolizing lives saved through their decision to give, compliments of Donate Life NYS.

2

Conduct a Donate Life flag-raising ceremony.
Contact us at info@dlmys.org to request a Donate Life flag for your building.

3

Host a "Leave a Legacy" tree-planting ceremony: Plant a tree to symbolize the lifesaving impact of donation. Invite speakers and volunteers, and celebrate your event with a press release, press conference, or county resolution. Sample materials are available on our website.

4

Grow a "Forest of Support" and spread awareness of organ, eye, and tissue donation: Share leaf graphics and facts on social media, tag [@DonateLifeNYS](https://www.instagram.com/DonateLifeNYS), and include Donate Life messages in workplace voicemails or hold messages. Sample materials and scripts are available on our website.

5

Make your customers green with envy!
Encourage employees to wear Donate Life t-shirts or blue and green on National Blue & Green Day (Friday, April 10). Don't be a sap – make sure to capture the moment(s) for our Blue & Green Day photo contest!

6

Draw a sidewalk chalk "leaf walk" outside your office: For National Blue & Green Day on Friday, April 10, draw colorful leaves with quick organ and tissue donation facts.

You'll be surprised at the forest of resources found on our website at donatelifenys.org/dlm-partners. Have a creative idea you'd like to share? Email info@dlmys.org or call (518) 326-3237.



Raymond McKune's STORY OF HOPE

Raymond McKune considers himself a “pretty simple guy.” He loves watching horror movies and professional wrestling. He cherishes time spent with friends and family. The Manhattan resident absolutely loves and adores his job at a NYC nonprofit developing enrichment programs for pre-school children.

You would never know that the 28-year-old has faced a constant array of incomprehensible medical challenges since a fateful annual physical appointment at age 14. Nothing seemed amiss with him health-wise prior to the doctor’s appointment other than his frequent after-school naps, seemingly typical behavior for a growing, teenage boy. However, some abnormal blood results would abruptly alter the life he once knew.

“One day, I was living normally,” recalled Raymond, “and the next day I was on dialysis.” He would later be diagnosed with kidney failure in January 2012.

He received his first kidney transplant the following July. A series of health complications and transplant rejections would lead to a second transplant in May 2017. In March 2020, he caught COVID-19. Placed on life support, Raymond battled courageously to recover, but it cost him his second transplant.

Undaunted, he received his third kidney in 2022 “hoping this time would be different.” Unfortunately, it was not the case, requiring surgeons to remove it in 2023. Now, he awaits a donor match for the fourth time in 14 years.

Raymond stays admirably positive given the formidable challenges he continues to face in his young life. “Even through all of this, I’ve continued to push forward, adapting to each new challenge and finding strength in the process,” said Raymond.

Given the gift of life from his three deceased donors “literally means everything to me. It gives me the chance to live and do things that I’m passionate about.”

Raymond hopes his story inspires others to register as organ, eye, and tissue donors and bring hope to the nearly 8,000 patients in New York State waiting for lifesaving transplants. Register today at donatelifenys.org/register.



GET THE FACTS About Organ & Tissue Donation



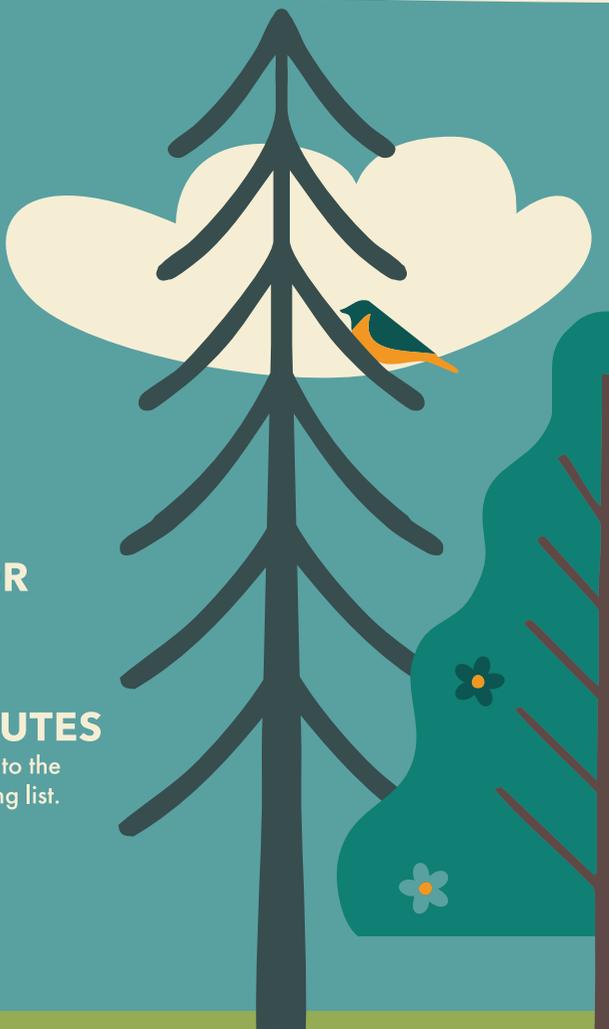
1 NEARLY 8,000
New Yorkers are waiting for a
lifesaving organ transplant.

2 NEARLY 800
have been waiting more
than five years.

**3 ONE ORGAN DONOR
CAN SAVE 8 LIVES**
eye and tissue donation.

4 EVERY 8 MINUTES
another person is added to the
national transplant waiting list.

5 NEARLY 300
New Yorkers died in 2025
because the organ they needed
wasn't donated in time.



**6 REGISTERING AS A DONOR DOES
NOT INTERFERE WITH MEDICAL CARE**
Donation becomes an option only after death has been determined.

**7 NO ONE IS TOO OLD OR TOO
SICK TO REGISTER**
Anyone age 16+ can join the NYS Donate Life Registry.

8 ALL MAJOR RELIGIONS
support organ and tissue donation, viewing
it as an act of love and generosity.



**9 THERE IS NO COST TO
THE DONOR'S FAMILY**
or estate for organ and tissue donation.



NEW YORK STATE County Data

Statewide, 52% of the population has enrolled in the New York State Donate Life Registry. Donor Designations on December 31, 2025



County	Donor Designations <small>Number of residents enrolled in New York State Donate Life Registry</small>	Donor Designation Share <small>Percentage of residents age 18+ enrolled in NYS Donate Life Registry</small>	County (continued)	Donor Designations (continued)	Donor Designation Share (continued)
Albany	158,262	60.25%	Oneida	100,943	56.17%
Allegany	25,444	67.07%	Onondaga	260,759	70.08%
Bronx	334,556	31.75%	Ontario	73,694	80.50%
Broome	102,866	64.66%	Orange	161,467	52.71%
Cattaraugus	47,146	79.78%	Orleans	20,599	64.00%
Cayuga	42,724	70.82%	Oswego	67,790	71.99%
Chautauqua	75,759	76.79%	Otsego	34,299	66.51%
Chemung	52,120	81.23%	Putnam	50,094	63.08%
Chenango	26,926	74.08%	Queens	594,008	31.69%
Clinton	47,512	74.59%	Rensselaer	82,343	63.08%
Columbia	39,487	77.50%	Richmond	139,285	35.61%
Cortland	26,073	69.54%	Rockland	108,445	44.44%
Delaware	24,612	66.07%	Saint Lawrence	55,076	64.67%
Dutchess	148,283	60.43%	Saratoga	148,543	76.20%
Erie	497,083	65.36%	Schenectady	78,410	61.40%
Essex	24,263	78.05%	Schoharie	16,804	67.31%
Franklin	27,330	72.55%	Schuyler	11,862	85.43%
Fulton	27,199	65.21%	Seneca	16,749	64.69%
Genesee	36,300	79.07%	Steuben	60,299	83.37%
Greene	26,509	67.28%	Suffolk	682,755	55.92%
Hamilton	3,702	83.06%	Sullivan	35,376	56.09%
Herkimer	28,926	60.91%	Tioga	30,891	81.27%
Jefferson	73,996	86.06%	Tompkins	72,259	79.47%
Kings	788,881	38.54%	Ulster	99,675	65.47%
Lewis	15,416	75.06%	Warren	42,495	78.70%
Livingston	36,476	71.91%	Washington	33,168	67.84%
Madison	41,118	75.13%	Wayne	52,045	72.41%
Monroe	410,614	68.41%	Westchester	409,613	51.52%
Montgomery	22,240	58.33%	Wyoming	22,992	71.09%
Nassau	472,997	43.22%	Yates	13,020	69.07%
New York	871,349	60.66%			
Niagara	121,325	72.10%	NYS TOTAL	8,293,627	52.31%