



Give thanks. Give life.

National Donor Sabbath



What is National Donor Sabbath?

Organized by Donate Life America, National Donor Sabbath has been celebrated every year since its inception in 1997. It is a time for faith leaders from all denominations across America to come together and **raise awareness about organ and tissue donation to save lives**. The national event is observed on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday two weekends before Thanksgiving (November 11-13, 2011.) The three day observance is intended to include the days of worship celebrated by all the major religions in the U.S.

Many religions consider organ donation to be a priceless gift and give their full support. Other religions leave the choice to the individual and fully support their decision. In Judaism it is considered a great mitzvah and an honor to give the gift of life through organ donation. Followers of Islam are not only permitted to give their organs upon death or while living, but are encouraged to do so. The Vatican supports the act of organ donation for all Catholics and considers it an act of charity and love. In fact, all major faiths in the U.S. support organ and tissue donation.

Living Donation

Living Donation is an issue many religious groups do not address directly during National Donor Sabbath. This year, American Transplant Foundation will make it a focus of National Donor Sabbath events. Past events focused on registering people as organ and tissue donors, but even though the number of registered donors is at an all-time high (100 million), the transplant waiting list continues to grow. Currently, although Colorado has one of the highest donor registration rates in the country (67%), every three days someone in Colorado dies while on the waiting list. Therefore, deceased donation alone cannot solve the problem. We feel it is important to give thanks to those who give the Gift of Life while living, and to inform our communities that living organ donation is an option supported by major religions.

How to participate

To participate in this event, a faith leader must commit to speak to his or her congregation during the National Donor Sabbath event, discussing their faith's position on organ and tissue donation. Specifically, we ask that you address living organ donation, because it is critical to reducing the transplant waiting list. This can be done as part of a sermon, as the focus of an event, or by any means appropriate to your practice. It could take a full day, or just a few minutes. Some groups hold candle-lightings, prayer breakfasts, or faith education classes. Many use their newsletters to raise awareness.

To sign up, email kyle@americantransplantfoundation.org the name of your faith group, the name of your faith leader participating, and let us know that you are committed to speaking to your congregation about both living and deceased organ donation during the weekend of the event.

Speaking points will be provided. All participating congregations will be recognized in American Transplant Foundation's media relations materials and on American Transplant Foundation's website.

To learn more, please visit www.americantransplantfoundation.org or call 303-757-0959.

For more information about the positions of different faiths and denominations on organ and tissue donation, and for more ideas about what participating groups can do, visit http://www.organdonor.gov/pdf/HRSA_DONORSABBATH.pdf

The American Transplant Foundation is a national nonprofit organization that works to increase the donation of organs and tissue to reduce the growing list of men, women and children who are awaiting a lifesaving transplant.