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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2011

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For Denver police detective, donating his kidney was not enough

To celebrate his one year transplant anniversary, hosted a fundraiser to promote living organ donation and support other transplant patients

(DENVER, CO) – One year ago, Denver Police Detective Danny Veith donated his kidney to a fellow officer. Today, he went even further, hosting a fundraiser to spread the word about living organ donation and raise money that will help other patients cover transplant-related expenses.

Held at downtown's Celtic Tavern, the event was titled "Celebrate Life – Part 2" after last year's "Celebrate Life" fundraiser that Veith's friends held in his honor to help pay for time away from work after the surgery.

"Becoming a living donor was one of the greatest things I've ever done, but the support I got from last year's fundraiser made all the difference," said Veith. "Seeing the improvement I made in one person's life through organ donation and how much a little extra money can help, I wanted to make it happen for others who need a transplant."

100% of the proceeds from the event will go to American Transplant Foundation's Patient Assistance Program, which awards emergency financial assistance grants to transplant patients in need.

People who attended the event were treated to bagpipe music, Irish step dancing, games and raffle drawings. They also learned sobering facts about the need for more living organ donors.

"Right now, there are 100 million registered organ and tissue donors in our country, yet the transplant waiting list is at an all-time high," said Anastasia Darwish, Executive Director of American Transplant Foundation. "Donor registration is very important, but without more living donors, we won't solve the problem. It's critical that people learn the facts about living donation and hear personal stories from living donors like Danny Veith."

One of Veith's past coworkers, Laura Altobelli, also tested to be a donor for their fellow officer last year, but Veith was the better match. She was so determined to help someone that she became an altruistic donor, giving her kidney to a stranger in January, 2011. Altobelli helped organize today's event.

"I hope we inspire others to consider living organ donation, just as I was inspired when I first learned that you only need one kidney. Maybe someone here tonight will take that lifesaving journey, and then help us organize next year's Celebrate Life – Part 3 event," said Altobelli.

As a surprise for Veith and Altobelli, a giant thank you card full of signatures was presented to them, honoring them for giving the Gift of Life.

"People thank me, but it was an easy decision to make," said Veith. "I'm grateful that I was able to do this. And since the surgery, my quality of life has only improved."

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.

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