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COLORADO'S *DONATE LIFE* SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

DENVER, CO- January 4, 2010- Today, *Donate Life Colorado*, the state's organ and tissue donor registry, announced that the new *Donate Life* specialty license plate is available for purchase at Title and Registration Offices throughout Colorado. With the introduction of the plate, Colorado has joined 22 other states around the nation in raising awareness for organ and tissue donation through license plates.

The new plate, which incorporates the national *Donate Life* logo and includes the message, "Be an organ and tissue donor," is available for purchase for a one-time \$50 fee, which goes to the State of Colorado. The plate can be purchased any time and does not need to coincide with registration renewal.

The *Donate Life* plate's creation is the culmination of three years of effort by the Denver-based American Transplant Foundation. The foundation collected more than 4,000 signatures of support from Colorado citizens in order to bring the legislation before the Colorado General Assembly. Representative Daniel Kagan and Senator Chris Romer were the sponsors of House Bill 09-1347, which passed the House and Senate in April and May and was signed into law by Governor Bill Ritter on June 1, 2009. The *Donate Life* plate has received broad support from organizations in Colorado's donation community.

"Beginning January 1, the law will require a minimum of 3,000 *Donate Life* plates be in circulation by July 1, 2013," explained Heidi Heltzel, executive director of the American Transplant Foundation. "To meet this requirement, we encourage all those who support or who have been impacted by organ and tissue donation to assist in promoting the plate by purchasing one for their vehicle."

"Each year, nearly 500,000 Americans benefit from the lifesaving and healing gifts that organ and tissue donors provide," said Sue Dunn, president and CEO of Donor Alliance, the organ procurement organization serving Colorado and most of Wyoming. "Still, nearly 2,000 Coloradans are currently waiting for an organ transplant. The *Donate Life* specialty license plate is another tool to help spread the word about the need for Coloradans to register their decision to be organ, eye and tissue donors."

To promote the new plates, the American Transplant Foundation has launched a YouTube video campaign which features the stories of donor families, recipients, living donors, and supporters of the cause. The campaign kicked off with a video of donor mother Robin Mitchell, whose son Joseph Templeton became an organ and tissue donor after he died of complications from epilepsy in 2008. "Robin helped us collect hundreds of petition signatures and testified before the legislature in the support of the plate, so it is fitting that she should be featured in our first video," said Heltzel. The license plates officially become available January 1, 2010—the two-year anniversary of Joseph's death.

"Nothing takes the pain of loss away, but knowing that your child is a hero to someone is a wonderful thing," Mitchell said. "I hope that these new plates will encourage more people to register to give the gift of life like Joe did."

To receive additional information about the *Donate Life* license plate and to watch videos about some of the Coloradans who have been impacted by organ and tissue donation, please visit the campaign blog at www.DonateLifeCO.wordpress.com.

Coloradans can register their decision to be an organ and tissue donor in the following ways:

- Online at www.DonateLifeColorado.org.
- At the Division of Motor Vehicles the next time you obtain or renew your driver's license.
- By calling the registry at 1-888-256-4386. (automated)

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