

Monthly news and information about organ and tissue donation from LifeCenter Northwest.

[Click here to view this email in your browser.](#)

To subscribe to the Gift, [click here](#)



Partnering with hospitals and community partners in Alaska, Montana, North Idaho, and Washington to save lives through organ and tissue donation.

## In this issue:

- **Featured Leader in Donation: Theresa Braungardt, Valley Medical Center**
- **LifeSaver Series: Laura Garcia, CHI Franciscan St. Joseph Medical Center**
- **Prominent Seattle Orthopedic Surgeon Visits LifeCenter**
- **Benefis Health Donates Pajamas for Cooper PJ Program**
- **Celebrating Donation Achievement Around the Region**
- **Montana Donation Celebrations**
- **Stories of Hope**

## Did You Know?

In May this year, LifeCenter collaborated with our hospital partners to provide a record number of organs for transplant. Thanks to the tireless effort of our hospital partners in making timely referral calls, engaging in collaborative conversations and huddles, **101** lives were saved in May!

Read more about this amazing month [here](#)  
[Back to Top](#)

**"Leader in Donation" Theresa Braungardt, Valley Medical Center**

The medical professionals we work with have a significant and direct influence on donation outcomes. Just as the geography and demographics of our vast service area differ from place to place, so does the donation experience. In an effort to celebrate the successes and highlight the unique obstacles of our donation partners, we interviewed leadership from around our region to ask why donation is important to them and what they enjoy most about living and working where they do. We are proud to feature Theresa Braungardt, Senior Vice President/Chief Nursing Officer, Valley Medical Center as our June "Leader in Donation".



**Valley Medical Center** is the largest nonprofit healthcare provider between Seattle and Tacoma, serving over 600,000 residents. In addition to the hospital, the

Medical Center operates a network of more than two dozen primary care, urgent care and specialty clinics throughout Southeast King County. Year to date, Valley has seen three organ donors and saved the lives of seven people through donation. This is a big increase from 2017 where they saw only one organ donor. Theresa's commitment to donation is a strong contributing factor to the recent improvement in their donation program.

#### **What does organ and tissue donation mean to you?**

*I think it means being able to offer our families the opportunity to give a gift to someone else in light of something really tragic happening. It's a silver lining for them so that someone they love didn't die for nothing. That they were able to help others.*

**Key point:** Donation not only offers families hope, but also offers healthcare providers some meaning in an otherwise senseless death.

#### **Why has your donation program been so successful/what drives you to make donation a priority in your hospitals?**

*I think our leadership is dedicated. We don't have a lot of potential but the potential, that we do have, we are able to make donation happen. We keep it on our priority list because we don't want to let any potential go unmet. I think that every time it comes up we want to do our very best.*

**Best practice:** In hospitals where donation potential is minimal, a leadership team that is supportive and engaged in donation outcomes can influence bedside staff to prioritize donation so that no opportunity is lost.

**What makes you most proud of working for Valley Medical Center and why?** *The team at Valley makes me very proud, because we are aligned around the mission and serving the patients and families of this public hospital district. The teamwork is very*

---

## CEU Opportunities

---



In need of annual continuing education credits? [Check out](#) our growing list of CEU courses and specialty events. For further questions and additional offerings, [click here](#) to find your Hospital Development Program Manager.

[Back to Top](#)

---

## LifeCenter Northwest is Growing!

---

### **Current job openings at LifeCenter Northwest:**

**Bellevue, WA**  
Vice President, Clinical Operations

Donor Information Specialist  
Manager, Organ Recovery

Organ Recovery Coordinator

Senior Accountant

Surgical Recovery Coordinator

Tissue Recovery Coordinator

#### **Montana**

Tissue Recovery Coordinator, per diem

For information about LifeCenter Northwest, including links to more job openings [click here!](#)

[Back to Top](#)

---

*good because of that. There is never a time when asked that staff say, "I can't, I won't" "I don't know how", it's always "we'll figure it out". No matter what the challenge is! The teamwork here is outstanding.*

**Best practice:** Teamwork and a "can-do" attitude is critical to the success of a donation program. Hospitals that have this culture across the board see it impact the donation program in positive ways.

Click [here](#) to read more

[Back to Top](#)

## LifeSaver Series: Laura Garcia, RN CHI Franciscan St. Joseph Medical Center

**St. Joseph Medical Center** in Tacoma, WA has seen a recent increase in donation cases. LifeCenter relies on the help of hospital staff during cases for logistical and scheduling responsibilities. On a recent evening as multiple cases developed, Laura Garcia, RN was luckily on shift.

Laura was a critical resource for LifeCenter during this time. She supported successive cases. After the first case went to the OR, Laura immediately began to assist as the 1-to-1 nurse with the second case. As many bedside RNs know, working with a donor case can be both mentally and physically draining but Laura's efforts on both cases allowed her co-workers to care for other patients on the busy unit. Laura went above what is normally expected of nurses caring for donor patients. In addition to providing excellent care on the ICU, Laura also took it upon herself to reach out to the pathologist and the OR for scheduling, which freed up the LifeCenter team to tend to other responsibilities for the organ recovery. Laura's kindness and compassion toward both families and LifeCenter staff was unwavering during a hectic time.



Every single LifeCenter recovery coordinator mentioned Laura's help and support of donation, her patients, their families and her co-workers.

In addition to helping on active donor cases, Laura continuously makes timely referral calls for donation and ensures that LifeCenter teams are fully informed on patients being evaluated for donation at St. Joseph Medical Center. It is an honor to present her with the LifeSaver award for June!

[Back to Top](#)

## Register to Become an Organ Donor



If you want to learn more about how you can help

others through organ and tissue donation or want to register as an organ, eye, and tissue donor, [click here](#).

[Back to Top](#)

## We'd Love to Hear From You!



Your feedback is important to us. It helps us maximize collaboration and serve our stakeholders as best we can.

Please [click here](#) to share your feedback!

[Back to Top](#)

## Prominent Seattle Orthopedic Surgeon Visits LifeCenter to Share Fresh Graft Outcomes

LifeCenter is fortunate to partner with **Community Tissue Services** and **JRF Ortho** to recover and provide fresh tissue grafts for patients in need of joint repair. These partnerships do not stop at the tissue bank but reach further to the surgeons who specialize in cartilage restoration. Surgeons are helping their patients regain movement and return to active lifestyles by performing corrective surgeries using donated allograft tissue transplantations.

In May, LifeCenter was honored to host Seattle orthopedic surgeon, **Dr. Christopher Wahl**, Suzanne Wahl, PA and representatives from JRF Ortho at our office in Bellevue, WA for a presentation on the utilization of cartilage allografts in orthopedic surgery.



Dr. Wahl has established a regional and national reputation for his innovative treatments of complex sports injuries including ligament reconstruction of multi-ligament knee injuries, cartilage transplantation, and repair, joint resurfacing as well as fracture management and minimally-invasive treatment of shoulder pathology.

He shared many case studies of young athletes who are now able to return to the sports and outdoor activities they love after having tissue and cartilage transplants. Dr. Wahl acknowledged that none of this would be possible if it weren't for LifeCenter's dedicated team and the donors who are committed to helping others by graciously sharing their gifts.

Here are a few facts about fresh tissue transplantation:

- Fresh tissue allografts include the joints (bone and tendons) from the hands, elbows, knees and shoulders.
- Fresh tissue grafts must be transplanted within 28 days of recovery.
- Fresh grafts are not one size fits all. Each patient requires a specific size and fit.
- Currently there is not enough fresh tissue available. Over 400 people are waiting for fresh tissue transplantations.

We are so grateful to Dr. Wahl, Suzanne, and JRF Ortho for their partnerships and for their continued support of tissue donation and transplantation.

[Back to Top](#)

---

## Benefis Health Donates Pajamas for Cooper PJ Project

During National Donate Life Month in April, the [Benefis Health](#) OR team collected kids' pajamas in honor of organ and tissue donation and presented them to LifeCenter to help fulfill the needs of the Cooper PJ Project.

The Cooper PJ project is a program that offers the parents of our youngest donors the option to have their little heroes dressed in a new pair of pajamas as they transition out of the OR after organ recovery. It is a way to bring everyone involved in these difficult cases a little comfort and provide another way to honor these beautiful, young people and their amazing legacy.



Benefis Health staff donated more than 70 pairs of pajamas for the project. The pajamas will be distributed around the state to honor all of Montana's youngest heroes.

LifeCenter is incredibly grateful for this wonderful act of kindness and for the amazing commitment to donation by the Benefis Health team.

[Back to Top](#)

---

## Celebrating Donation Achievement Around the Region

LifeCenter's Hospital Development department continues to celebrate our hospital partners with the presentation of awards honoring excellent work in donation. Below you'll find a little more about the awards and a few photos:

**Donation Referral Achievement:** Timely referrals have a significant impact on donation outcomes. Achieving and maintaining

a high compliant referral rate is incredibly challenging and requires a strong commitment and effective processes.

**Organ Donation Achievement:** Achieving a 75% or greater donation rate is an impressive accomplishment, requiring vigilance and sustained commitment to ensure every possible donation opportunity is realized.

**Tissue Donation Achievement:** Many factors impact tissue donation, including timely referrals, logistics, community education, and outreach. Hospital staff plays an integral part in the process, and the average US donation rate is around 50%. Few hospitals achieve a 75% or greater tissue donation rate.

Congratulations to all of our amazing partners and thank you for the work you do to support organ and tissue donation.



**L to R: Virginia Mason; CHI Franciscan St. Anthony Hospital; MultiCare Deaconess Hospital; Rosebud Health Care Center; Daniels Memorial Healthcare; Kootenai Health; St. Peter's Health; Mat-Su Regional Medical Center; Confluence Health, Central Washington Hospital; Providence St.**

Patrick Hospital; The HealthCenter.

[Back to Top](#)

## Montana Donation Celebrations



A big thank you to everyone who attended our Montana Donation Celebrations! The events took place in Billings at the Big Horn Resort and in Missoula at the Barn on Mullan. Both were beautiful events where families and recipients connected with each other, community partners and medical professionals. To see pictures of the events, please click on the link below.

<https://donationcelebration.shutterfly.com/>

**Join us for the Washington celebrations!**

- July 21 Spokane Valley, WA
- July 29 Bellevue, WA

To register for an event near you, click [here](#)

[Back to Top](#)

## Stories of Hope

### Johnathan Sim

Johnathan Sim spent his life helping those in need. Working for an international relief and development organization, he improved the lives of thousands of children all over the world. Needless to say, Johnathan was “enthusiastic about doing his part to do something good for others.”

At the young age of 33, Johnathan suffered a massive stroke. After emergency surgery, his state deteriorated and his large Korean-





American family was faced with his wish to be a donor. In her final moments with her husband, Kelly was reminded of Johnathan's desire to leave a legacy. As she clung to the end of Johnathan's life, Kelly realized that he "would

have wanted nothing more than to give life to others, even in his last days."


Johnathan saved four lives that day. Kelly and her children find comfort in Johnathan's donation. "His absence is less painful knowing that his legacy continues in the lives of those he saved," says Kelly.

Today, Kelly is "thankful that we honored Johnathan's last wish." She has learned about the impact of donation on both the recipients and the donor's family. As a passionate advocate for donation and a LifeCenter Northwest volunteer, Kelly shares her story and how donation "has helped to bring healing and hope back into her life."

Kelly and her children continue to live out Johnathan's legacy. They built the Johnathan Sim Legacy School in Zambia, host annual golf tournaments in his remembrance and will forever hold his recipients in their hearts.

[Back to Top](#)


## The gift of tissue *can be life-changing*



Washington State Patrolman, Tony Radulescu was a 16 year veteran when he was shot and killed during a routine traffic stop. His final act of service was to give back to his community, state and country as an eye and tissue donor. His legacy lives on in the people he helped and the lives he saved.

**"Having Tony be a donor has brought us the joy of knowing he continues to help and serve even in his passing. He has saved the lives of two pediatric patients and changed the lives of many others in a positive way with his life saving donations. Just knowing that Tony is still alive in so many warms my heart."**

-Ginna Miller  
Tony's fiance



**By making the referral call within 60 minutes of clinical triggers or time of death, you can change a life.**

**1-888-543-3287**



*Copyright © 2018 LifeCenter Northwest, All rights reserved.*

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list