

For Immediate Release

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Donate Life Month offers hope amid challenging times

Registering as an organ, eye and tissue donor creates a positive impact on our communities

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (April 1, 2020) — As communities in Virginia and around the world cope with the extraordinary impact of COVID-19, choosing to be an organ, eye and tissue donor is one way each person can create a powerful positive impact on those around them.

Just ask Kristy Lovingood.

In 2014, she had a flawless pregnancy and delivery with her twin sons Parker and Grayson. But a few days later, a pediatric cardiologist noticed Parker had a heart murmur, and after a few tests, discovered that he had multiple heart defects that would require major open heart surgery. At just 17 days old, he had his first surgery. At 3 years old, Parker needed a heart valve replacement. He received this life-saving tissue donation thanks to one person's selfless decision to become a tissue donor.

April is National Donate Life Month – an opportunity to share the importance of organ, tissue and cornea donation and to honor the legacy of the selfless donors who provide these gifts. It also serves as a reminder to register as a donor and share your wishes with family and friends.

Fast-forward to today, and Parker is a typical little boy — a foodie who loves being active and playing with his siblings. Donation impacts the lives of recipients, but also their loved ones. “To make your child a donor was such a selfless act, but I want you to know that your child lives on through my child,” said Kristy Lovingood.

Despite the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, organ and tissue donation continues throughout the country thanks to hospitals, providers, and community partners who work closely with organizations like LifeNet Health to fulfill the wishes of donors and donor families.

“There is no greater gift than hope. That is especially true in the midst of these unprecedented challenges in our communities,” said Rony Thomas, LifeNet Health President and CEO. “Donate Life Month offers a chance to celebrate the extraordinary positive impact one person can have while offering hope to those in need of healing.”

One donor can save nine lives through organ donation and restore the health of more than 150 through tissue donation. In 2019, more organ transplants took place than ever before, but there are still more than 2,400 Virginians waiting for transplants across the commonwealth. Registering as a donor has the potential to change their lives — and the lives of their loved ones — for years to come.

For more information about donation and to register as a donor, go to **RegisterMe.org**. You can also sign up the next time you go to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

About LifeNet Health

LifeNet Health helps save lives, restore health, and give hope to thousands each year. It is the world's most trusted provider of transplant solutions — from organ procurement to bio-implants and cellular therapies — and a leader in regenerative medicine, while always honoring the donors and healthcare professionals who enable healing. For more information about LifeNet Health, go to www.lifenethealth.org.