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Former KU Basketball Star Joins Green Ribbon Campaign: Alonzo Jamison Gives Back After Organ Donation Saved His Life

WESTWOOD, KAN. (November 1, 2018) — Alonzo Jamison is intimately familiar with the highs and lows of being an elite athlete. But nothing could prepare him for the lows of a life-threatening illness, nor the highs of restored health made possible by the kindness of a stranger—his living kidney donor.

When asked to compare his involvement in the Kansas Jayhawks' 1991 Final Four run with receiving a kidney transplant, Jamison said, "This is much better." The former standout power forward received a kidney from Wichita native and Army Veteran Shekinah Bailey, who worked with Jamison's wife and felt moved to help.

"Kindness builds on kindness, and the upside to living kidney donation is the ability to change someone's life," said Bailey, humbly adding that his selfless deed cost him nothing "except a little Tylenol."

Now, Jamison is sharing his story as the newest [Green Ribbon Champion](#) for Midwest Transplant Network. His goal, like that of the entire [Green Ribbon Campaign](#), is to encourage more people in Kansas and Missouri to join the organ donor registry. Jamison joins three other local leaders who have been featured as Green Ribbon Champions so far:

- [Jeff Jones](#), **president and CEO of H&R Block**, whose father received a lifesaving living-donor transplant, shared his story to demonstrate the second chance that comes with organ donation.
- [Bryan Busby](#), **chief meteorologist at KMBC 9 News**, who once thought diabetes prohibited him from joining the registry and is now dispelling that and other myths about organ donation.
- [Sophia Dominguez-Heithoff](#), **Miss Teen USA 2017**, whose cousin saved and improved lives as a tissue and organ donor, is raising awareness about the need for more registered organ donors among people of all ages.

Both living and deceased organ donation is desperately needed in Kansas and Missouri, where nearly 2,500 people need lifesaving organ transplants. "We can't rest on our laurels," Jamison stresses, a point which is especially true for kidney donation (one of the few transplant types that offer the opportunity to be a living donor). Of the 2,500 Kansans and Missourians on the waiting list, three-quarters of them—nearly 1,900 people in total—need kidneys. Thanks to Bailey's kindness, Jamison is no longer one of them. But he is a registered organ donor, and he wants you to be one, too.

Jan Finn, president and CEO of Midwest Transplant Network, echoes Jamison's remarks. "Nationwide, an average of 22 people die every day due to lack of available organs for transplants," she said. "We have the power to change that. Alonzo and Shekinah are proof of it."

Starting today, the public will begin seeing Jamison and Bailey in a variety of advertisements across the region. The two men tell their story in a video featured on ShareLifeMidwest.com, which is also the website that directs people to the state donor registries for both Kansas and Missouri. Signing up at the DMV is another option. Either way, the process of registering as an organ and tissue donor is fast and easy, and it gives everyday people the chance to become extraordinary heroes for those in need.

About Midwest Transplant Network

Midwest Transplant Network (MTN) has been connecting lives through organ donation since 1973. As the federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization (OPO) for Kansas and the western two-thirds of Missouri, MTN provides services, which include organ procurement and surgical tissue and eye recovery, laboratory testing and 24-hour rapid response for referrals from hospital partners. Midwest Transplant Network ranks in the top quartile nationally among OPOs, which reflects the organization's quality, professionalism and excellence in partnerships throughout the region. For more information, visit mwtn.org.

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