

Serenity


A newsletter for our donor families

QUARTER 1 • 2024

Celebration of Heroes

Please join Midwest Transplant Network (MTN) staff and fellow donor families at one of our upcoming Celebration of Heroes events in Kansas City, Wichita or Columbia. Celebration of Heroes events are held annually to honor organ, eye, and tissue donors and their families. MTN will provide heavy hors d'oeuvres.

During the celebration, you can participate in our sand ceremony and have an opportunity to honor your loved one on a donor memorial quilt by pinning on your quilt square (Instructions are on page 2). Additionally, MTN will present your family with a beautifully handcrafted stained glass heart to honor your loved one. This is an open-house style event — please join us at your leisure.

A video tribute to these heroes will highlight the celebration. If you wish to share a photo of your loved one, follow the directions in your confirmation email or send photos to aftercare@mwn.org. If you email your photo, please include your loved one's full name, and which event you plan to attend (Kansas City, Wichita or Columbia). Photos must be received three days prior to each event. 

Kansas City Area • Wednesday, March 27 • 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Midwest Transplant Network • 1900 W. 47th Place, Westwood, KS 66205

Columbia Area • Tuesday, April 2 • 6 – 7:30 p.m.

The Broadway Hotel • 1111 E. Broadway, Columbia, MO 65201

Wichita Area • Thursday, April 25 • 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Botanica, the Wichita Gardens • 701 Amidon St., Wichita, KS 67203



Register for Celebration of Heroes:
mwn.org/events

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MIDWEST
TRANSPLANT
NETWORK

Joplin Area Celebration of Life and Rose Dedication

Tuesday, April 9 • 5:30 p.m.

Freeman Business Center

3220 McClland Blvd.

Joplin, MO 64804

MTN is proud to partner with Freeman and Mercy Hospital for a Celebration of Life and Rose Dedication to honor organ, eye and tissue donors in the Joplin area and their families.

Dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. During the celebration, families are encouraged to participate in our sand ceremony and to honor your loved one on a donor memorial quilt by pinning on a personalized quilt square. Additionally, each family will receive a beautifully handcrafted stained glass heart to honor your loved one.

There is no need to register for this event. If you wish to include your loved one's photo in our donor video tribute, please email a photo by Friday, April 5, to clucchi@mwtn.org. For more information or questions, please contact Cathy Lucchi at 620-231-6056 or clucchi@mwtn.org. 🌱



How to Make a Quilt Square



At Midwest Transplant Network, we offer free quilt square packets to all our donor families. The packet includes a quilt square template, photo transfer paper, a photo release form and a return envelope. To request a packet, please email your request, along with your address, to aftercare@mwtn.org. If you are interested in making a quilt square in honor of an organ donor, it is important that your square meets these requirements:

- Your quilt square must be eight inches on each side.
- Your design must be contained within the center seven inches of the square, leaving a half-inch on each side blank for stitching into the quilt.
- Do not “finish” the square with quilting or use backing.
- You may use any color or type of fabric, including sentimental materials like your loved one's baby blanket, high school jacket, tie or favorite sweater.
- You may use paint, permanent markers, glitter, thread or any other medium to design the square.
- You may adorn the square with poems, quotes and symbols of your loved one's life.
- Feel free to include your loved one's name and dates of birth and death on the square.
- If you would like to include a photograph of your loved one, you can have a photo transferred onto fabric by a copy shop, or you can laminate a photo and sew it onto the quilt square.
- Only one square is allowed for each donor.
- Enclose the quilt square in a zipped plastic bag to ensure that it arrives safely.
- Please complete the quilt release form and send it with your quilt square by mail to:

Midwest Transplant Network
1900 W. 47th Place, Suite 400
Westwood, KS 66205 🌱

Anxiety in Grief

Adapted from "What's Your Grief?"

Many people experience the thoughts and sensations of fear and anxiety in your grief. Often times, this isn't one particularly traumatic moment, but a prolonged period of time when you experienced ongoing apprehension and worry.

After the death of a loved one, you may experience anxiety because you are trying to avoid unpleasant thoughts, memories and emotions. Experiential avoidance is an attempt to block out, reduce or change unpleasant thoughts, emotions or bodily sensations. These are internal experiences that are perceived to be painful or threatening and might include fears of losing control, being embarrassed, or physical harm and thoughts and feelings including shame, guilt, hopelessness, meaninglessness, separation or isolation.

Although grief is always unpleasant and uncomfortable, for some there are aspects that actually seem threatening, and these perceptions can lead to attempts to control or avoid frightening feelings and reactions. While avoidance can be useful in certain scenarios, for many it can become a harmful cycle that persists to the detriment of personal healing.

Many mistakenly think that if they make efforts to avoid their feelings for long enough these unpleasant emotions will be kept at bay or fade away, when in actuality deliberate attempts to suppress certain thoughts often make them more likely to surface. Avoidance is a large factor in the development and maintenance of anxiety and becomes a learned response.

There may be elements of your loved one's death that, in the moment, you perceived as traumatic and terrifying. When something traumatic happens the thoughts, emotions and sensations experienced in that moment can become paired with objects and situations associated with the event. Psychologists call this phenomena, Classical Conditioning.

Prior to your loved one's death, you may have assumed that the world was a good and benevolent place where things happened for a reason. You may have also subconsciously believed that bad things wouldn't happen to you. When something bad does happen, your assumption about the world becomes shattered. Depending on your understanding of what happened to you and your loved one, you may now hold new beliefs or engage in modes of

thinking that contribute to feelings of anxiety such as probability overestimation, cost overestimation, and intolerance of uncertainty.

- **Probability overestimation:** You may overestimate the likelihood of bad things happening. Perhaps you overestimate the likelihood of the event that led to your loved one's death occurring, like cancer, accidents, or violence. Or perhaps your loved one's death led to the belief that bad things can happen to anyone at any time and now you feel that disaster is likely to strike at any moment.
- **Cost overestimation:** Cost overestimation occurs when someone believes that the consequences of something happening will be worse than they truly are. For example, you may worry that if you encounter a grief trigger in public you will become emotional and lose control in front of everyone and that this will be a mortifying experience. Because you believe that the pain of experiencing this event is so excruciating, you may feel anxiety over the possibility of it happening and engage in avoidance to prevent it. However, by never allowing yourself to experience the event, you are never able to learn that (1) the cost isn't as high as you assumed and (2) you are capable of coping with the experience.
- **Intolerance of uncertainty:** Some people have a very hard time dealing with even the remote possibility of something bad happening. Even if the odds of an event occurring are very low, the uncertainty of whether it will happen is enough to cause intense anxiety and distress.

While it's normal to experience a sense of fear and apprehension during times of hardship and high stress, if you feel that you are experiencing excessive worry and panic in the absence of an actual threat and for a prolonged period of time, you may want to speak to a mental health professional. Your situation is unique and the best way to truly understand your anxiety related experiences is to speak to a trained mental health professional in a one-on-one capacity. 🧡

Mission

Saving lives by honoring the gift of donation with dignity and compassion



1900 W. 47th Place, Suite 400
Westwood, KS 66205

Vision






Leading organ and tissue donation through excellence, quality and partnerships

Contact Us

For more information or questions, call **913-262-1668** or visit **mwtn.org**

To receive Serenity via email or to unsubscribe, please send your request to **aftercare@mwtn.org**.


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Donate Life Legacy Walk Registration is Open

Midwest Transplant Network invites you to join us for our eighth annual Donate Life Legacy Walk on Saturday, June 1, from 6 – 9 p.m. at the National WWI Museum and Memorial in Kansas City. This free community event features a live concert, food trucks to purchase meals or snacks, our Tribute Trail honoring donor heroes and transplant warriors, and the opportunity for those impacted by organ, eye and tissue donation to gather together to celebrate the gift of life while helping raise awareness about the importance of registering as organ, eye and tissue donors.

The Donate Life Legacy Walk does not include a formal, timed walking event. Participants are encouraged to walk the path that borders the north lawn of the National WWI Museum and Memorial at their leisure. The path is lined with Tribute Trail signs, giving donor and recipient families the opportunity to stroll the site in celebration and remembrance.

For a limited time, MTN will cover the first \$9 per shirt (with a limit of five shirts per order). The purchaser is responsible for additional costs, such as back-of-shirt printing, shipping, additional shirts and upgraded shirt material. Orders must be placed by April 23 to guarantee arrival for the Donate Life Legacy Walk. 



For more information or to register:
mwtn.org/legacy-walk



Midwest Transplant Network 2024 Event Calendar

Please look for additional details and information about registering for these events in upcoming issues of Serenity.

Celebration of Heroes

Wednesday, March 27

Midwest Transplant Network

1900 W. 47th Place, Westwood, KS 66205

Donate Life Legacy Walk

Saturday, June 1

National WWI Museum and Memorial

2 Memorial Dr., Kansas City, MO 64108

Celebration of Heroes

Tuesday, April 2

The Broadway Hotel

1111 E. Broadway, Columbia, MO 65201

Donor Family Day

Saturday, July 20

Kansas City Zoo

6800 Zoo Dr., Kansas City, MO 64132

Joplin Area Celebration of Life and Rose Dedication

Tuesday, April 9

Freeman Business Center

3220 McCelland Blvd., Joplin, MO 64804

Donor Family Day

Saturday, July 27

Tanganyika Park

1000 S. Hawkins Ln., Goddard, KS 67052

Celebration of Heroes

Thursday, April 25

Botanica Gardens

701 Amidon St., Wichita, KS 67203

Hope for the Holidays

Tentative Dates

Joplin – Tuesday, Nov. 19

Kansas City – Tuesday, Dec. 3

Wichita – Tuesday, Dec. 10

Columbia – Tuesday, Dec. 17

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I communicate with my loved one's recipients?

Midwest Transplant Network (MTN) helps to facilitate anonymous written correspondence between donor families and transplant recipients. Many donor families choose to write to the recipients and share information about themselves or their loved one who donated. If you wish to write to your loved one's recipient, please visit mwtn.org/donor-families for additional information.

What is a Donor Memorial Quilt, and how do I make a quilt square?

MTN works with donor families to create Donor Memorial Quilts to honor those who have given the gift of life through organ, tissue and eye donation. Families have the opportunity to make a quilt square to honor their loved one any time. There are specific size guidelines that must be followed. Please visit mwtn.org/quilt for more information.

What should I expect at a Celebration of Heroes event?

Celebration of Heroes is held each year to honor organ, eye and tissue donors and their families. MTN presents each family with a beautifully handcrafted stained-glass heart to honor their loved one. We also have a grateful recipient speak about what the gift of life meant for them. Donor family members have the opportunity to pin their quilt square on the Donor Memorial Quilt.

What should I expect at a Donor Family Day event?

Donor Family Days are a time for you and your families to meet for a day of fun, food and friendship. These events take place at family friendly locations and offer a variety of activities for all to enjoy.

What is an MTN Ambassador?

MTN Ambassadors are volunteers from Kansas, Missouri and beyond whose lives have been touched by the gift of organ, eye and tissue donation. Ambassadors share their stories of hope and inspiration through public speaking engagements, and at health fairs and other events where people may want to know more about donation and transplantation. If you are interested in becoming an Ambassador in your community, please go to mwtn.org/ambassador. MTN will provide training.

