1500 New York Organ Donor Families and Transplant Recipients Come Together at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in NYC for 24th Annual “Gift of Life” Ceremony

1500 organ, eye and tissue donor families and transplant recipients come together at St. Patrick’s Cathedral on 5th Avenue in New York City for 24th annual "Remember & Rejoice" event, celebrating the “Gift of Life.” This is the largest gathering of donor families and transplant recipients in the country and is sponsored by the Manhattan Chapter of TRIO (Transplant Recipients International Organization) with the support of the federally designated organ procurement organization, LiveOnNY.

NEW YORK (PRWEB) April 12, 2019 -- The 24th annual ‘Remember & Rejoice’ ecumenical service, honoring New York organ donors, the families of deceased donors and organ transplant recipients, will be held Saturday, April 13 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Manhattan.

It is the single largest gathering of donor families and transplant recipients in the country.

The candlelit ceremony includes the selfless families of deceased donors, living donors, and transplant recipients who have been given a second chance at life. The emotion in the 140-year-old neo-Gothic-style sanctuary is palpable as donor families find solace in honoring their loved ones and remembering their legacy, while bearing their losses. Conversely, recipients express their heartfelt gratitude to their donors and their families for their precious gift.

“The day is so powerful, filled with tears, hugs, smiles and sometimes even laughter as people whose lives have been impacted by organ donation come together every year,” said Fran Dillon, a 30-year liver recipient from Queens who coordinates the event.

The program includes donor and recipient speakers, spiritual leaders, soaring music and a beautiful dedication to donors and their families, where donor’s names are read aloud during a candle lighting and white rose distribution ceremony.

The unique stories told by each speaker bring the audience to a place of strength and hope as they give thanks and appreciation for those who donated a part of themselves, so that others could live.

This year features a Yonkers man who lost his 23-year old brother, Michael, a baseball player prospect to be drafted by the Oakland Athletics. Michael was killed by a stray bullet in a drive by shooting in 2015 and donated his organs. His family found solace knowing his brother lives on through the six people (two of which are New Yorkers) whose lives he saved. Marsha-Ann Hay of Brooklyn, will also speak. Marsha-Ann sees today because of her two generous cornea donors. She views them as real heroes, will speak about receiving the gift of sight.

Other extraordinary touches throughout the service interweave people whose lives have been touched by organ donation. For example, the priest who presides over the annual St. Patrick’s service – Rev. Thomas A. Lynch – donated a kidney to his brother.
The event is sponsored by the Manhattan Chapter of Transplant Recipients International Organization (TRIO) with the support of LiveOnNY.

TRIO is an independent nonprofit organization committed to improving the quality of life for people touched by the miracle of organ donation in the community by promoting awareness, offering support, providing education and participating in advocacy.

LiveOnNY is the federally designated non-profit that oversees and coordinates organ and tissue transplantation in New York. More than 22,000 New York lives have been saved since its inception in 1978 as the New York Organ Donor Network.

Speakers:

James Nolan – Donor family, brother of 23-year-old Michael Nolan, a baseball player prospect to be drafted by the Oakland Athletics. Michael was tragically killed in a drive by shooting in 2015, and saved the lives of six people by donating his heart, lungs, liver and both kidneys and pancreas. - Yonkers

Dave Rodgers – 2002 Liver recipient; Retired information systems manager - born in Brooklyn, grew up in Flushing, Queens, currently resides in Nassau County


Christopher Melz, RN – Living Kidney Donor to a childhood friend (2009) – Long Island

Eduardo D. Rodriguez, MD, DDS – Helen L. Kimmel Professor of Reconstructive Plastic Surgery and Chair of the Hansjörg Wyss Department of Plastic Surgery – NYU Langone Health. Dr. Rodriguez leads NYU Langone’s vascular composite allotransplantation (VCA) program, which encompasses face and limb transplantation. - Manhattan

Helen Irving, RN, MBA – President and CEO of LiveOnNY

Where: St. Patrick’s Cathedral - Fifth Avenue between 50th & 51st Streets - Manhattan

When: Saturday April 13 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm

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