

CDS maximizes the passing of the heroic gift of life from one human being to another through organ and tissue donation.

Local, National Events Offer Recognition Opportunities for Those Who Gave Gift of Life

April is designated National Donate Life month and here in North Carolina numerous organizations host events to recognize the significance and need for the Gift of Life.

Carolina Donor Services (CDS) supports events at local hospitals, universities and other locations to raise awareness of organ and tissue donation.

One of the largest events is the annual Donate Life Walk, which will be held on Saturday, April 9th. This year the event will feature a competitive 5k run as well as the

traditional 3k walk. CDS works with Forsyth Medical Center and NC Baptist Medical Center on this tradition in order to educate on the need for donation and allow families and recipients another venue to share their stories.

Focusing ahead on a national level, the 2011 National Donor Recognition Ceremony and Workshop will be held July 15th - 17th in Washington D.C. This biennial event held by the federal government features educational and support workshops for donor families and

living donors. Several donor families from CDS have attended in the past and found the experience to be enriching and rewarding. More information can be found at www.organdonor.gov or by calling the National Donor Family Council at (800) 622-9010 or by emailing donorfamilly@kidney.org.



This Donor Family Quilt was made for the 2010 Celebration of Life services with quilt squares contributed at the 2009 ceremonies. Over 60 quilt squares were collected at the 2010 Celebration of Life ceremonies for the 2011 Donor Family Quilt Panels.

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Annual Donor Memorial Services Held

Each spring Carolina Donor Services hosts three memorial services for donor families, one in each region the organization serves. These ceremonies are opportunities for donor family members and their guests to honor the precious Gift of Life given by their loved ones through organ and tissue donation. This year's theme centers around how donation makes a difference, even to just one person.

Families are invited on a two-year basis; however, families from previous years may attend future services by requesting information from the Life Anew Coordinator. During the ceremony each donor family has the opportunity to present and share a quilt square made in honor of their loved one. Moreover, families can participate in the donor memorial slideshow tribute. All quilt squares contributed at the services will be patched and sewn together in preparation for the following year's Celebration of Life events. Photos of the quilts will be made available at the CDS website at www.carolinadonorservices.org starting soon.

Only 18 Years: Seeing Gift Through New Lens

BY PAUL HUSSEY, DONOR FATHER

On October 6, 2010 my family's life changed in ways that I had never even imagined. I received a phone call that no parent ever wants to hear.

The call came from my wife that our 18-year-old daughter, Samantha, had been in a car wreck and that they were transporting her by helicopter to Chapel Hill. My heart sank as I rushed from work praying that she would live and be ok. A few minutes later my wife called again to tell me that Samantha was now at the local hospital. They had called off the air-lift transport. As tears streamed down my face, I asked my wife if Samantha was dead. She said at this point that was all the information available.



We live in a small town and word had quickly spread. We have a very strong sense of community and people from all over our county were arriving at the hospital. When I arrived home, I picked up Patrick (Samantha's brother) and we hurried to the hospital. My wife was already there, and when we arrived, my son and I were met by Samantha's boyfriend.

We entered the emergency room and as the hospital staff ushered us to a room, the sign on the door read Clergy. I knew in my heart Samantha had died, but I still wanted to cling to hope. As the door opened the look on my wife's face confirmed my worst fear. The loss was so sudden and our hearts were full of sadness.

Samantha was a Christian and had given her heart to the Lord when she was a young child. That October day God had sent his angels to take Samantha by the hand and carry her to heaven. We still miss her dearly but we know that as Christians we have the hope

that one day we can see her again.

The Pastor at Samantha's funeral said something to the church and to my family that may be of some help to those who have lost a child. He said "as much as you are hurting and as sad as you feel, if God would have told you, 'I will give you a little girl but you can only have her for eighteen years,' you would have still told God YES, please give her to our family." I had never thought about it in that way.

That day in the hospital, my wife and I were asked by staff if we would like to talk to Carolina Donor Services about donation. As the staff led us into a quiet room, we began talking about the decision to donate.

There were several deciding factors in our decision. One of the factors was that a friend of our family had received a heart transplant. He had a very bad heart and had been on the waiting list for about six months before he got his new heart. That was five years ago and he is doing well. His heart is in good shape and he is with us today because someone made the right decision to give the gift of life. Another deciding factor was that a close friend of our family had told us of their decision to become an organ donor. The last factor had to

do with our daughter.

Samantha was a kind, compassionate, friendly, loving person. She had a smile that would light up a room. She liked helping people. She would have been so pleased that her donation helped to improve someone's life. She would have wanted to know that someone now has hope and a brighter tomorrow.

Our decision now was made easier by these factors. We were immediately at peace and we knew that this was the right decision. I can't tell you how pleased we were to know that Samantha had helped people with cornea, bone and tissue donation that is so desperately needed.

Samantha was a friendly, happy, optimistic, fun-loving person who was a friend to everyone. She always looked for the good in others and could always find a way to make you laugh.

We knew how much we loved her but never realized the impact she had on others. Many of her friends told us how much Samantha meant to them and how hard it is for them to deal with her



loss.

She had just started to pursue her nursing degree at Montgomery Community College in Troy, NC and some of her college classmates that had not known her very long commented on how Samantha had made a lasting impression. The college started a scholarship in memory of Samantha that will award scholarships to pre-nursing students.

One of Samantha's favorite movies was the Wizard of OZ. There is a scene where the wizard is awarding the Tin Man with a heart that he had dreamed of having. The wizard speaks these words to the Tin Man and I can't help but think of my daughter: "A heart is not measured by how much you love but by how much you are loved by others." Samantha was truly loved by all.



Why become a Friends for Life volunteer?

- Make a difference in the lives of thousands each year
- Spread the word about organ, eye and tissue donation
- Work with recipients, donor families and those awaiting a transplant

If you are interested, please email volunteer@carolinadonorservices.org with your name, mailing address, county of residence, email and phone number. You can also call (800) 200-2672.

Donor Family Spotlight:

Xander's Gift Brings Blessings to Other Children, Families

BY CHRISTIE EVANS
DONOR MOTHER

March 20, 2010. It was a beautiful, warm, sunny day. I came home from work with decorations for Xander's 4th birthday celebration that night, and everyone was running around, laughing and playing hide-and-seek.

We were celebrating a day early since everyone was going to be home that night

could get his hands on: cereal, chewys, and peanut butter sandwiches; and we remember how much everyone loved this blue-eyed, blonde-haired happy boy who gave hugs and kisses to everyone he met.

I try desperately not to think of finding him in our pond, not even 5 minutes after we talked about his cake, and try even harder not to think of the long, lonely

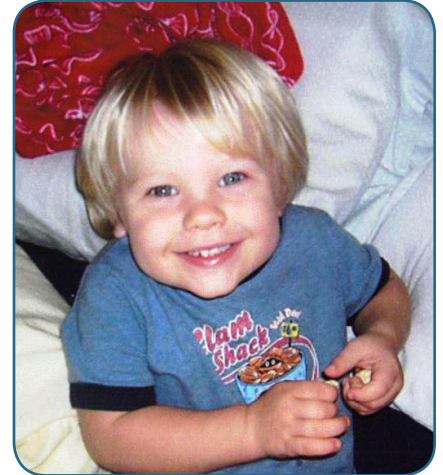
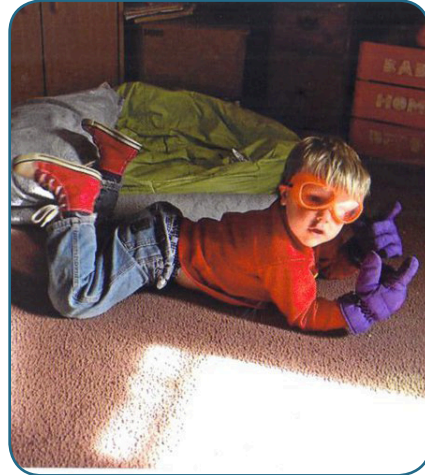
weeks, months, or even years is something that we know will help and be remembered for a lifetime.

We have built a beautiful memorial garden for him. We have an angel statue at the edge of the pond given to us by our loving friends and we have planted several trees in his memory. Many of our family members and friends have gotten tattoos in his honor, and I wear a

still love him so.

We feel very lucky to have had such a wonderful boy, our 5th child, and know just how blessed we are that our daughters and son are kind, loving, intelligent children.

We hope that someday we can meet our recipient families and bask with them in their glory of a healthy child. To know that losing our son had meaning, of



even though his birthday was the next day. Xander was very excited about the pizza and asked, "Am I going to have a truck cake?" When I said yes and that his sister had made him a very cool one, he jumped up and down, smiling, and said he was so excited. That was the last thing he said to me, and the last time I saw his smile.

We remember Xander playing with his truck in the sandbox. We remember him coming down the hall with his crazy bed-head hair, blue teddy bear and blanket in tow. We remember him eating everything he

ride home from the hospital without him.

The decision to donate his heart valves was immediate. If he could have been saved by a transplant, we would have our son. How could we deny another parent that same opportunity? It wasn't a difficult decision to make. That thought of his sweet heart being used to help another child spend even one more day with his family is what gets us through our days.

Xander's death was sudden and unexpected, but the sudden and long-anticipated gift of his tissue to a child who has been waiting

necklace with his picture on it. We try hard to continue to include him in everything we do, yet we sit and wonder, when will he come home?

It seems to us, even after a whole year has gone by, that he is simply away visiting with his aunts and uncles and cousins, and he will walk through the door at any minute. Some of us constantly dwell about him. Others need to put it aside, for it is simply too much to handle. Each of us dealing with our loss in such different, unique ways, yet sharing a common thought: we miss him terribly and

some sort, would be the greatest gift we could ask for. To see these children run and play, realizing that life is made up of victories, as well as tragedies, and that we must all somehow go on, gives us purpose and hope and lets us know that God has a plan. Although we may not understand it now, it will all, someday, make sense.

If ever you see Curious George, hear someone yell "hey you guys!" or see a giant tractor coming down the street, smile, and think to yourself, Xander would love that. We love him mostest muches.

Dealing with Grief

With the Spring Comes Hope -- Finding Your Way through Grief

by Julie Fisher, MSE, Licensed Professional Counselor

Spring is just around the corner: new life, new color, new hope. But for many who are experiencing a loss of some kind, the promise of spring is difficult to envision and even harder when it arrives. Because while many people feel light, joyful and renewed, those experiencing a loss may be deep in the trenches of grief, and find it difficult to take part in the celebration of new life, in the happiness and hope that usually accompany Spring.

Often times we associate grief only with the death of someone we know and love. But grief can be felt by anyone experiencing the loss of anything of real value about which she or he cares. Grief can be experienced any time there is a significant change or transition in someone's life, because change is most often accompanied by loss of some kind, or giving something up. Moving to a new house, losing one's job, ending a relationship, losing one's health, loss of a pet, loss of a dream, as well as loss of self-control, loss of trust, or loss of freedom.

Whatever changes, transitions or losses are the cause of your grief, know that grief is not a single event or occurrence, but rather a process. Denial, Bargaining, Anger, Depression and Acceptance are well-known stages of grief that a person may go through. Despite the linear sequence of the steps as presented here, know that each person moves through her or his own process in her or his own way and according to her or his own timeline, and that each person may cycle through these steps many times for years to come.

What can you do to get through this process? Some coping mechanisms to help you move through the grief include sharing your thoughts and feelings with trusted family members and friends. Having and using your support system is critical. Do some journaling or perform a ceremony or ritual to call forth any untapped feelings. Take care of yourself. Be gentle with your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual self. If you feel stuck, unable to express your emotions, or find yourself using unhealthy coping mechanisms (over-eating, smoking, drinking, drugs, etc.), contact a professional counselor.

So, when should you be "over" all the hurt and pain? First, remember it's a process, so be gentle with yourself and don't rush yourself (or anyone else). Second, know that a person never completely recovers – an emptiness may remain for years to come, and certain emotional insecurities and issues may remain. Sadness may come back, washing over you in waves on special days or in certain circumstances. But take heart – there will come a time when you feel like the worst is over, like some healing has occurred and you are ready to move forward with your life ... spring is not far off, and with the spring comes hope.

Expressing Emotions:

Crafting offers outlet for grief

While the healing journey is unique to each individual as to how long, one outlet that many have found comfort in is through creation. Regardless of a person's artistic abilities, the act of making and completing a project may provide for you a positive outlet to share your thoughts and feelings in a different manner.

A popular project that grieving families have embraced to honor the loved one who died is through the creation of a memory box. Memory boxes can start from any type of container: show box, jewelry box or wooden boxes available at most craft stores. The



outside of the box can contain photographs of the individual or other decorations such as fabric, stickers, flowers or ribbon. What you keep in this box is up to you and how you want to remember your loved one: photographs, prized possessions, clothing, letters and other mementos that hold significance to your relationship. These boxes can be as personal and private as you so choose. If you do have interest in displaying your

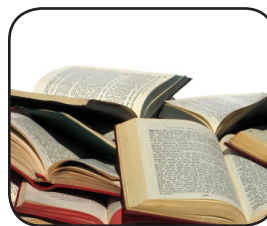
memories, you may opt to use a shadow box.



Along the same vein, scrapbooking may be another idea for those interested. While scrapbooking can be more labor intensive, it will allow you to preserve precious memories and items to share with other family members, friends

and those who were positively impacted by your loved one.

Website Feature



The Compassion Books website offers an array of materials designed to help you in your individualized grief journey. This company, run out of our own state of North Carolina, has books for all ages and covering many different types of loss. Moreover, the website offers titles in Spanish and materials on CD and DVDs. Please look through all of the available titles to see if one fits your personal needs at www.compassionbooks.com.

