

-Media Release-

**Employees of St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton Help Save Lives in Ontario
Through Organ and Tissue Donation Campaign**

www.BeADonor.ca/StJoes

Friday, May 30, 2014 – Hamilton, ON – June 3rd marks the kickoff of the inaugural Organ & Tissue Donation Campaign for all staff, physicians, volunteers as well as patients and visitors at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton (SJHH) in partnership with Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN).

"As a leader in organ and tissue donation and transplantation in Ontario, St. Joe's is helping to promote and educate our staff and community about how organ and tissue donation can save and enhance lives," said Winnie Doyle, Vice President, Clinical Programs and Chief Nursing Executive, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton. "We were very surprised to learn that over 1,500 Ontarians are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant but less than 25% of Ontarians have registered their consent to be donors. With this month's campaign we know our staff, patients and community will help raise the registration rate in Hamilton."

During the month of June St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton is dedicated to increasing awareness for organ and tissue donation in Ontario as well as celebrating the cause by sharing the stories of those who have benefitted from organ donation. Becoming a registered organ donor is a quick and easy way to pay it forward by potentially passing on the gift of life to another person in the future. Every year thousands of transplants are performed in Canada.

"Encouraging more Ontarians to register as organ and tissue donors is critically important because too many Ontarians die before receiving the organ transplant they need," said Ronnie Gavsie, President and CEO of Trillium Gift of Life Network. "When we launched beadonor.ca in 2011, we made it easier for Ontarians to register their consent. Now, by bringing this awareness into the workplace, we are making it even easier for caring organizations like St. Joe's in Hamilton to engage their employees and to make a difference in the lives of Ontarians."

48 year old Norman Pite is lending support to the cause and campaign taking place at St. Joseph's Healthcare by sharing his experience as a transplant recipient. His 67 year old sister Barbara wanted to give a kidney to her ailing brother. In March, when Barbara suddenly slipped into an irreversible coma, family members and physicians followed through on her desire. Norman is recovering well from the surgery. Recovering from the loss of his sister will take more time. "Telling my story, speaking about the gift my sister has given me, is the best way to pay tribute to Barbara," said Norman Pite, transplant recipient. "At the same time, I encourage others to make the choice to be a donor."

Norman will be part of St. Joe's campaign kickoff event on Tuesday, June 3rd at the Charlton Campus where staff and community will gather to register to be a donor, learn more and celebrate with cupcakes.

WHO: St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton's Organ & Tissue Donation Campaign

WHAT: Campaign Kickoff

WHEN: June 3 at 2:00 p.m. Main Lobby, Charlton Campus

WHY: Be a Hero. Be a Donor. Sign Up and Become Someone's Hero Today at www.BeADonor.ca/StJoes

Media contact:

Maria Hayes, Communications Specialist

Public Affairs Department, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton

905.522.1155, ext. 33506

mhayes@stjoes.ca

Quick Facts about Organ and Tissue Donation in Ontario

These quick facts provide a glance at the top line issues surrounding organ and tissue donation. Like the myths and misconception document, these work well to bolster your social media and email activity.

1,500 ONTARIANS WAITING

- Currently in Ontario, there are nearly 1,500 people on the waiting list for an organ transplant.
- Every three days someone in Ontario dies waiting for a life-saving transplant.
- Less than 25% of eligible Ontarians have registered consent to donate.
- Families of registered donors almost always consent to donate their loved ones' organs and tissue when they see evidence of their loved one's donation decision. In the absence of a registered donation decision, families consent only 50% of the time.

SAVE EIGHT LIVES

- One donor can save up to eight lives through organ donation as well as enhance the lives of up to 75 others through tissue donation.
- Everyone is a potential organ and tissue donor, regardless of his/her age. The oldest Canadian organ donor was over 90 years old, while the oldest tissue donor was 102.

About Trillium Gift of Life Network

Trillium Gift of Life Network is a not-for-profit agency of the Government of Ontario and is responsible for planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting organ and tissue donation for transplantation across Ontario and improving the system so that more lives can be saved.

Media Inquiries:

About St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton

St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton is a regional leader in patient-centred care providing acute care, research, teaching, community and international outreach programs throughout our network. Since being founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1890, our hospitals span three specialized campuses in the Greater Hamilton Area (Charlton Campus, West 5th Campus and King Street Campus), with St. Joseph's Villa Dundas providing long-term care and St. Joseph's Home Care providing personalized home care traversing the reach of our region. For more information about St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, please visit www.stjoes.ca.