

Hello, fellow IMA Ann Arbor Chapter Members.

What does a former chapter president do when offered a buyout? Take it and don't look back.

It's approaching a year since I "retired" from Detroit Edison and a lot has happened. I had a total knee replacement, my Marine son returned home after serving his second tour in Iraq (hoo-rah!), and I earned my Master of Science from Concordia University --no time to enjoy retirement as it were. After graduation, I began searching for my next career, because I wasn't ready to *really* retire. I knew I wanted **TO BE HAPPY TO GO TO WORK AND WANTED MY EMPLOYER HAPPY I WAS WORKING FOR THEM.** About a month ago, I found the magical match at a wonderful organization you may be familiar with, Gift of Life Michigan. I work in their finance department.

My intention is to introduce our Ann Arbor chapter to the notion of registering to become an organ and/or tissue donor. I have been registered as a donor ever since the opportunity became available on my drivers license many years ago.

Did you know that in 2006 over 900 organs were transplanted – truly a gift for those who were waiting. But the work is not done. As you can see from the list on the right, there were 3,181 people in Michigan alone waiting as of September 1st.

You may be wondering and asking yourself, "but to be a donor, don't you have to die?" The unfortunate reality is many people do die and their organs and tissue are buried with them.

I think to put it in perspective, just ask yourself "who is the most important person in my life?"

I know in my life the answer is my dearest two grandsons. And, if they had a life threatening issue and needed a new organ, I would pray for that organ to become available for them. It's not that I would pray someone else would die, but that if someone did die, that they would have registered as a donor or that their family would consent to donate their loved one's organs so that others could live.

Gift of Life Michigan is a full service organ recovery organization that acts as the intermediary between donors, physicians and hospital staff, and provides all services necessary for organ and tissue donation and transplantation. Their mission statement is **TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE CITIZENS IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN THROUGH SUPERIOR TRANSPLANT SERVICES, AND TO INCREASE PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF AND PARTICIPATION IN ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION.**

When you go to their link to **sign up on the Michigan Organ Donor Registry**, it will take you **about 60 seconds to complete**- just enter the data as prompted. **Since the Donor Registry was updated the first of this year, everyone should re-enter their information to receive the heart donor sticker to place on your license.** This helps verify registered donors information is up to date (in case you moved since last registering). I encourage you to visit the website and learn more about organ donation and better yet, **sign up.** It's quick and the benefits are immeasurable.

Thank you

~ Mary Cortese



Last year, 905 organs were transplanted. So far this year, the generosity of Michigan donors has led to 607 transplants and saved numerous lives.

The need continues. The number of Michigan Patients Currently Waiting For a Transplant September 1, 2007

Kidney	2585
Liver	391
Lung	49
Kidney/Pancreas	56
Heart	65
Pancreas	24
Kidney/Liver	9
Kidney/Heart	2
TOTAL	3181

Every day hundreds of people in our state are in need of other tissues such as heart valves, veins, tendons, bone, and corneas in order to survive or maintain their quality of life.



SIGN UP ON THE MICHIGAN ORGAN DONOR REGISTRY TODAY

ONLINE AT WWW.GIFTOFLIFEMICHIGAN.ORG

OR CALL 800.482.4881