



NEWS
For Immediate Release

Contacts:

Tania Llavaneras
213/229-5654

Tllavaneras@onelegacy.org

Ross Goldberg
818/879-1876

ross@kevinross.net

Celebrating 20 Years of Rose Parade Participation,
The 2023 Donate Life Rose Parade® Float, Lifting Each Other Up
Will Honor 59 Organ, Eye and Tissue Donors and Recipients

The float will be featured on the 2023 Rose Parade® on New Year's Day

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – December 27, 2022— The Donate Life community is celebrating 20 years of participation in the traditional Rose Parade in Pasadena. The 2023 Donate Life Rose Parade® float, “Lifting Each Other Up,” will feature 59 honorees representing 24 states in the U.S. With ages ranging from 17 to 78 years old for riders and walkers, and from 3 and a half months old, to 68 years old for floragraph honorees, these participants and their families will travel to Pasadena to be part of America’s Donate Life celebration on New Year’s day’s traditional Rose Parade®.

The 2023 Donate Life Float will feature:

- **4 walkers**, including living donors, as well as organ recipients
- **16 riders** who are organ and tissue recipients
- **39 floragraphs or floral portraits** representing organ, eye and tissue donors who gave the gift of life to others

Float Walkers

Four honorees whose lives were connected to organ donation will walk alongside the 2023 Donate Life float. The 2023 Donate Life float walkers include **Keith Gooch**, a 63-year-old living kidney donor from Fresno, Calif. who helped start a kidney chain that saved nine lives, including the life of his late brother.

Additional walkers include:

- **Thomas Dougall**, a 67-year-old living kidney donor from Columbia, SC, who will be accompanied by his wife and his neighbor and kidney recipient, Jo Byrd
- **Wendy Dougall** from Columbia, SC, a 63-year-old tissue recipient who is an advocate for donation, and who will walk next to her husband, Thomas, who is a living donor
- **Yadira Ortega**, a 37-year-old from Anaheim, Calif., who donated one of her kidneys, as well as stem cells to her brother Ricardo, as part of a groundbreaking medical study conducted by UCLA and funded by OneLegacy that will hopefully eliminate the need for anti-rejection medications on organ transplant patients in the future.

Bios to all four 2023 Donate Life float walkers are available here:

<https://donatelifefloat.org/si/participants/2023/walkers.html>

Float Riders

The 2023 Donate Life float 16 riders include **Dr. Martha Gonzalez de Vidal**, a 67-year-old Mexican American obstetrician from Hermosa Beach, Calif. who, after the COVID-19 virus destroyed her lungs, received a lifesaving double lung transplant in 2022.

Additional float riders include:

- **Bree Majsiak**, a 28-year-old nerve allograft tissue recipient from Los Angeles, Calif.
- **Caitlin Pendzinski**, a 24-year-old kidney recipient from Monroe City, MO
- **David Wheelis**, a 36-year-old liver recipient from Oklahoma City, OK
- **Goldie Williams**, a 38-year-old liver recipient from Oakland, Calif.
- **Harleen (Leena) Sandhu**, a 51-year-old kidney recipient from East Windsor, NJ
- **Hayden Schiller**, a 20-year-old bone tissue recipient from Vancouver, WA
- **Jo Byrd**, a 78-year-old kidney recipient from Columbia, SC, whose living donor will also be honored on the float
- **Dr. Larry Yokoyama**, a 68-year-old kidney recipient from Bakersfield, Calif. whose kidney donor will also be honored with a floragraph on the float
- **Lavender McKillip**, a 17-year-old liver recipient from Sparks, NV
- **Marcus Roberts**, a 43-year-old heart and kidney recipient from Long Beach, Calif.
- **Mary Louis**, a 50-year-old skin tissue recipient from Baytown, TX
- **Megan Mehta**, a 19-year-old heart recipient from Pleasanton, Calif.
- **Ricardo Ortega**, a 33-year-old kidney recipient from Bellflower, Calif., whose sister and kidney donor will also be honored on the float
- **Xavier McLeod**, an 18-year-old kidney recipient from Lemon Grove, Calif.

Bios to the 2023 Donate Life float riders are available here:

<https://donatelifefloat.org/si/participants/2023/riders.html>

Floragraph Honorees

39 deceased donors, whose images were memorialized with floral portraits or floragraphs on the 2023 Donate Life float, will be placed on the body of the legendary Asian dragon. These donors gave the ultimate gift of life to save and heal others through the power of organ, eye and tissue donation. The floragraphs were made using organic materials like rice, farina, coffee, yellow millet, and cinnamon.

Among the 2023 floragraph honorees is **James Parsons**, a 57-year-old avid handyman from New Market, AL, who was part of a groundbreaking study. Upon his being declared brain dead, and while on a respirator, he was the first human selected to successfully receive a genetically modified pig kidney. The kidneys produced urine throughout the 77-hour study, now called "The Parsons Model." Doctors will conduct more testing with hopes of implanting pig kidneys into living humans.

The 2023 Donate Life float floragraph honorees include:

- **Tammy McKeown**, a 47-year-old travel enthusiast from Bakersfield who saved three lives as an organ donor, and whose kidney recipient will also be honored on the float
- **Amanda Wilken**, a 23-year-old gifted student from Norwalk, IA, who wanted to become a pharmacist and help veterans
- **Anthony Galvan**, a 23-year-old outdoors enthusiast and tissue donor from Ontario, Calif.
- **Asante Contreras**, a 20-year-old EMT and tissue and cornea donor from Del Rio, TX
- **Barbara Schmit**, a 65-year-old outgoing woman from Tustin, Calif. who became an organ, eye and tissue donor in 2021
- **Brittany Hoover**, a 32-year-old hard working woman and organ, eye and tissue donor from Virginia Beach, VA

- **Dalton Rashad Criss**, an 18-year-old musician, athlete and prolific student from Peru, NY who became an organ, eye and tissue donor
- **Ivan Sandoval**, a 5-year-old superhero enthusiast from Anaheim, Calif. who became an organ and tissue donor
- **Joseph Peter Keenan**, a 48-year-old hairstylist from Pawtucket, RI who saved 3 lives as an organ donor
- **Kaylea Curry**, a quirky and creative 10-year-old girl who donated her organs, corneas and tissue

Bios to all 39 floragraph honorees for the 2022 Donate Life float are available here:

<https://donatelifefloat.org/si/participants/2023/floragraphs.html>

The Donate Life Rose Parade float is produced by OneLegacy, designed by Charles Meier, built by Fiesta Parade Floats and made possible thanks to more than 50 sponsors, including: American Association of Tissue Banks, Artivion, AxoGen Corporation, Bridge to Life, Cedars-Sinai, We Are Sharing Hope SC, Center For Donation and Transplant, Community Tissue Services, David’s Final Flight, Ryan’s Legacy, Dignity Memorial Providers of Las Vegas, New Jersey and Seattle, Donate Life California, Donate Life Indiana, Donate Life South Carolina, Donor Alliance, Donor Network West, Global Transplant Solutions, Indiana Donor Network, Iowa Donor Network, JJ’s Legacy, Kamden’s Group Hug, Inc., Legacy Donor Services Foundation, Legacy of Hope, UAB Medicine, LifeCenter Northwest, LifeLink Foundation, LifeNet Health, LifeShare of OK, Lifesharing, Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency, Midwest Transplant Network, MTF Biologics, Nevada Donor Network, New England Donor Services, OneLegacy, RTI Donor Services, Sharing Network Foundation, Student Organ Donation Advocates, Thermo Fisher Scientific, UAB Medicine, Union County Community Foundation, We are Sharing Hope, SC, Xtant Medical, Mark Wesley Pinckard – Renaissance Scholarship Fund, CPMC, Stanford Children’s Hospital, UCSF Health, CompuMed, First Republic Bank and Specialist Direct.

As the world’s most visible campaign to inspire organ, eye and tissue donation, the Donate Life Rose Parade® float inspires viewers to help the over 1 million people in need of organ, eye or tissue transplants each year. Register today to become an organ, eye or tissue donor by visiting <http://registerme.org/campaign/float>.

About Donate Life America

Donate Life America is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit alliance of national organizations and state teams across the United States committed to increasing organ, eye and tissue donation. Donate Life America manages and promotes the national brand for donation, Donate Life, and assists Donate Life State Teams and national partners in facilitating high-performing donor registries; developing and executing effective multi-media donor education programs; and motivating the American public to register now as organ, eye and tissue donors.

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(Editor’s Note: The float rendering is included below.)

