

# BRIDGES

A Newsletter for Donor Families

Summer 2016



## *What Is BRIDGES?*

The name of this newsletter derives from an acronym that reflects the services Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network offers to our donor families: **B**uilding **R**elationships, **I**ntegrating **D**onation, **G**rief, **E**ncouragement and **S**upport.

## *Meet Jenna Heery, Our Newest Family Services Coordinator*



Hello everyone!

To quickly introduce myself, my name is Jenna Heery and I am excited to join Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network as a new Family Services Coordinator.

I just recently moved to New York with my husband and two fur-babies from Louisville, Kentucky. It has been a big transition for our family, but we are already captivated by the beauty of the Finger Lakes and by the warm welcome we have received. We look forward to exploring and getting to know New York better, and we hope to put down some deep roots here.

Before my journey led me here, I trained as a chaplain. This calling has blessed me with the opportunity to serve with a remarkable diversity of people in a wide variety of places. In my wildest adventures, I served in the wilds of Yellowstone National Park, where for a summer I helped lead Sunday services for tourists, and I served on the backside of the racetrack at Churchill Downs in Louisville, working with jockeys and trainers and (occasionally) even praying over the horses. I have also worked among the homeless in a big city, as well as with the youth of a small, country church. It has truly been an extraordinary journey.

My most meaningful calling, however, came when I served with patients and families as a hospital and hospice chaplain. It always astounded me how so many families would allow me to walk with them through some of their darkest and most personal moments. And it was during this time when I first experienced the power of organ donation. As a chaplain, I would often be called to work alongside coordinators from our local organ donor program as they served donor families. These were some of my most profound experiences, as I bore witness to donor families so generously offering the gift of life to others, and I knew then that I would like to work with these amazing families more closely.

I am thrilled for this opportunity, and I look forward to walking with those who have been touched by donation.

## *Donate Life - Transplant Games of America*

Written by Jeffrey Mancini, Family Services Coordinator  
with contributions from Nancy Ryan, Director of Marketing

“And the Gold Medal Goes to.....”



As the media begins to focus its attention on the upcoming Summer Olympics in Rio, there was a less well-known event which recently took place this last month in Cleveland, Ohio. No, I'm not talking about LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers finally ending that city's long standing championship drought. I am speaking of the Donate Life - Transplant Games of America that are similar in nature to the Olympics.

If you're like me, this is might be the first time you are hearing about the Games. Since working at FLDRN, I have learned more about the Games and want to take an opportunity to provide some insight into its background and FLDRN's important role in support of them.

The primary focus of the Donate Life - Transplant Games of America is to help promote awareness of organ, eye, and tissue donation by showing that transplantation through donation extends and improves lives. Transplant recipients are able to showcase what they are able to do after receiving the gift of life. Similarly, living donors can also demonstrate their quality of life after donation. Additionally, donor families participate, giving them a chance to see, first-hand, how passing life on through organ, eye and tissue donation helps others to live life to the fullest – even if they never meet the actual recipients of their loved ones' gifts.

Transplant recipients (at least 9 months post-transplant) and living donors compete in a variety of events including: a 5K or 10K Run/Walk; basketball; bocce; bowling; table tennis; swimming; and cycling events. Recipients and living donors of any age may compete, as well as international participants. Donor families take part in special activities and tributes honoring their loved ones who gave the gift of life.



In June, thirty seven members of Team Finger Lakes took part in this year's Transplant Games of America. The team consisted of 15 transplant recipients, 3 living donors, 11 donor family members and 8 supporters, making it the largest number of regional participants in the past 3 previous games.

FLDRN Community Education Manager, Amy James, (who also served as the team's manager) says that although there is a competitive spirit, the real focus from everyone involved is on building relationships, sharing stories of family, and celebrating the gift of life.

Team Finger Lakes brought home a total of seven medals, but I am positive that participants at the Transplant Games didn't need a medal to prove what they already knew: their success wouldn't have been possible if it were not for their donor heroes and donor families.

My hope is to personally attend the next transplant games in 2018. If you would like more information about the Transplant Games and Team Finger Lakes, please contact Amy James at 585-272-4930 or email her at [amy\\_james@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:amy_james@urmc.rochester.edu).



## ***Harbor House of Rochester Annual Fundraiser***

The mission of Harbor House of Rochester, Inc. is to serve as an invaluable support for families of patients at the University of Rochester Medical Center who are receiving medical care for such things as heart failure, organ transplant, or mechanical assistive devices.

The Harbor House provides temporary lodging needs during these kinds of health emergencies and for periods of long-term care. It offers an environment of safe and supportive living that eases the burdens on families during difficult times, providing them with a home-away-from-home atmosphere in an effort to reduce the emotional and financial stress.

Plans for additional houses to further meet the needs of visiting patients and families is dependent on the support of the community.

Please join us for our annual fundraiser on Saturday, September 10, 2016. Tickets may be purchased online at [brownpaperticket.com](http://brownpaperticket.com). Call the Harbor House with any questions or for volunteer opportunities. (585) 473-1779.

### ***DONOR FAMILY EMAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED!***

We like emailing BRIDGES to you, our donor families. If you are reading this on the website and would like the newsletter emailed to you, kindly provide us with your first and last name, your email address, and tell us that you wish to be added to our distribution list. Please send your request to Judy Hess at: [Judy\\_Hess@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:Judy_Hess@urmc.rochester.edu) or call her at 585-272-4930.

Of course, we also invite you to keep up-to-date by visiting our website at [www.donorrecovery.org](http://www.donorrecovery.org) for "[News and Events for Donor Families](#)."

## ***FLDRN Donor Family Support Page on Facebook***

Our Family Services team is pleased to offer donor family members the opportunity to join the “FLDRN Donor Family Support Page,” on Facebook. This is a Closed Group, meaning only members can post and see stories on the Page, providing increased privacy and security for all our families. We currently have 58 members on our Page, and it has been so rewarding and heartwarming to see the support that you have been giving each other. It is why this Page was created! Even though each of your experiences are different, there is a common bond among you: you are all donor families... and who best to support donor families, than donor families?

If you are a donor family member who has not been invited to join the FLDRN Donor Family Support Page on Facebook, just send us a quick note with your email address and we will send you an invitation once all of the privacy paperwork has been completed. Email [Judy Hess](#), [Jeff Mancini](#) or [Jenna Heery](#) or contact them by calling the Rochester office at (585) 272-4930.

## ***Upcoming Events***

### **2016**

**July 15** - Donate Life Night – Syracuse Chief’s Baseball Game @ NBT Bank Stadium.  
Gates open at 6 pm. Game starts at 7:05 pm. Fireworks to follow.

**July 22** – [Katie’s Star 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Golf Tournament](#) at Ravenwood Golf Club, Victor, NY.  
Starts at 11 am.

**September 10** - Harbor House “And the Beat Goes On” Annual Fundraising Event.  
Event starts at 6 pm. Double Tree, 111 Jefferson Road, Rochester, NY.  
Purchase tickets at [brownpaperticket.com](http://brownpaperticket.com) or by call (585) 473-1779.  
Tickets are \$35 (before 9/1/16) or \$40 (after 9/1/16).

**October 6** – Donor Enrollment Day

### **2017**

**May 7** – Donor Family Celebration, Holiday Inn Liverpool, NY

**June 4** – Donor Family Celebration, Double Tree, Rochester, NY

**\*\* If you would like more information about any of these events, please call the office at (585) 272-4930.**