

# BRIDGES

Summer 2014

A Newsletter for Donor Families



## What Is *BRIDGES*?

The name of this newsletter derives from an acronym that reflects the services FLDRN offers to our donor families: **B**uilding Relationships, **I**ntegrating **D**onation, **G**rief, **E**ncouragement and **S**upport.

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

We would like to resume emailing *BRIDGES* to you, our donor families. If you haven't done so already, 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/families-of-donors/news/](http://www.donorrecovery.org/families-of-donors/news/) for "News and Events for Donor Families" in the *Families of Donors* section.

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## A New FLDRN Donor Family Support Page on Facebook!

We have recently created a new donor family support page on Facebook. It is called the FLDRN Donor Family Support Page. The new page has all of the same features but provides increased privacy and security for all our families.

We currently have 43 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 is different, there is a similar commonality among you. You are all donor families... and who best to support donor families, than donor families???

So.... 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 proper paperwork has been completed.

You can reach either Judy Hess or Sue Miller at: [Judy\\_Hess@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:Judy_Hess@urmc.rochester.edu) or [Susan\\_Miller@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:Susan_Miller@urmc.rochester.edu). Or call the office at (585) 272-4930.

## Meet the Family Services Coordinators



**SUSAN MILLER**

My name is Susan Miller. I have been married for 26 years and have two daughters, ages 25 and 22. I started my career in Human Resources at the R.T. French Company, in Rochester NY. I completed a Master's degree in Career and Human Resource Planning and Development in 1985.

I feel like my whole life has led me to this position as a Family Services Coordinator. I have dealt with unexpected death as most of us have. My first husband died very suddenly at age 25 from a drowning accident. I did re-marry and I stayed home with our children when they were young. When they got into school, I soon realized that I needed more in my life.

I decided to volunteer at Serenity House, our local Hospice Home and quickly discovered that the nursing and feeding part of that job did not interest me as much as sitting with the patient and just listening. Most of the experiences I had with them made me feel ill- prepared to have these end of life discussions. While I felt comfortable with these discussions, I knew I wanted to be professionally equipped to give them more support. That's when I went back to school and completed a Master's Degree in Pastoral Care at St. Bernard's College in Pittsford NY in 2006.

I then became a hospice Chaplain for Lifetime Care which led me to teaching a Death & Dying class as an adjunct professor at Monroe Community College for six years. One of the things I noticed about the students in this class was their interest and willingness to be organ donors.

Once our children were out and on their own, I wanted to pursue a full time job. That's when I discovered an opening at Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network. I have been here for over two years and have met the most incredible people! I cannot imagine how blessed my professional journey has been.



**JUDY HESS**

I am Judy Hess and I have two grown daughters. My oldest daughter Cydney is 30 years old and Amanda is 28 years old. I have two grandchildren, Morgan who is Cydney's son, turned 9 years old in April and Emelia, who is Amanda's daughter, was just born in April.

My background involves being an office manager for an OB/Gyn practice and a Physical Therapy chain in Rochester for nearly 25 years.

In 2005 I decided that I needed a college education. I spent two years at MCC and then transferred to SUNY Brockport for the next two years; then studied one year at the University of Buffalo, graduating in 2010 with my Master's degree in Social Work.

It was while I was in my Master's program that I had decided that I wanted to do an internship with Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network (FLDRN). There was a lot of red tape but the director of FLDRN, Rob Kochik, worked hard to make it happen. During my education I realized that being a social worker meant that I could fight for those who couldn't fight for themselves at the time when it was most important... as it was ending. I did this for my mother as she passed away even before I was a social worker. I just knew that this was my area of interest and after interning with FLDRN, I realized that was an important value of FLDRN as well, and knew that someday when the time was right, I would like to do this type of work.

To make my long story short, after graduating with my Master's degree, I was hired by Highland Hospital as a Medical/Surgical Social Worker and earned my New York State License in Social Work. I continued to keep in contact with Rob, and one day he let me know that there might be an opening at FLDRN. I jumped at the chance, and the rest is history.

That was two years ago, and I LOVE what I do!!! I really feel that I get to honor and protect the wishes of the patient's whose lives are ending and it is my greatest privilege to ensure that they are treated with the utmost dignity and respect that they deserve. I am proud to be affiliated with FLDRN, which also believes in these values.

## Legislative Education Day in Albany

On May 6, FLDRN joined other organizations and headed to Albany for the annual Legislative Education Day. Time was spent with legislators emphasizing the importance of organ donation for their constituents.

Prior to the May visit, on April 8, the New York Alliance for Donation (NYAD) thanked Governor Cuomo and members of the New York State Senate and Assembly for taking decisive steps to improve the performance of the New York State Donate Life Registry.

The 2014-15 State Budget allows for the transfer of administration of the state donor registry to a not-for-profit organization with experience facilitating organ, eye and tissue donation.



Representatives from FLDRN, Rochester Eye and Tissue Bank and The Harbor House joined other volunteers to meet with our legislators in Albany. From left: Nancy Ryan, Karen Guarino and Amy James. Seated in front is Joan Malley.

## Donor Family Celebrations

We had our Donor Family Celebrations in both Syracuse and Rochester. The **Syracuse event** was held on May 4 at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool. We had a fantastic turnout and the speakers were very touching. We heard from Erin Knack who is a donor family member, Michael Sargent who received two corneal transplants, Wendy Huban spoke about her tissue transplant, and Lisa Abbey spoke about her heart transplant. Very moving and inspirational speakers!

The **Rochester Donor Family Celebration** took place June 1 at the Double Tree Inn in Henrietta. Nearly two hundred attended and we had a great response to our quilt pinning. We heard from Laurie LoMonaco who was a tissue recipient, Ron Passmore who was an organ recipient, and Derek Swanson who is a family member of a recipient.

For both events the favors were candle holders in the Donate Life colors of blue and green and as in previous years, they were stenciled with a butterfly by our donor mom Sharron O'Buckley. Thank you to Sharron O'Buckley and all our volunteers and attendees for making both celebrations so special.

## Transplant Games



Eleven organ recipients and 4 donor families from the FLDRN region recently attended the 2014 Transplant Games of America. The Games are held in a different city on an every other year basis – this year Team Finger Lakes went to Houston, Texas from July 11- 16, and Amy James and Susan Miller attended from FLDRN.

Events included a 5K walk/run, bowling, golf, table tennis, volleyball, badminton, basketball, cycling, swimming, tennis, track and field, and racquetball. New to the Games this year were ballroom dancing, Cornhole, Texas Hold-em poker, and Trivia Challenge. This variety allowed for anyone, at any ability, to shine as they showed their appreciation for the Gift of Life they have received!

There were many special events incorporated into the Games in Houston. These events included an Opening Ceremony to rival the Olympics; a Quarter Century Club Dinner for recipients who have had their transplant for 25 years or more, and a Donor Tribute. We will have pictures of the event in our next newsletter!

## SAVE THE DATES!

**Upcoming Events:** If you are interested in attending any of these events and need more information, please visit our website at: [www.donorrecovery.org](http://www.donorrecovery.org) (click "Calendar") or call the office at (585) 272-4930.

## August 2014

- 11 NASCAR event in Watkins Glen– Joey Gase, a donor son and NASCAR driver will be decorating his car with Donate Life and FLDRN logos
- 11 Harbor House Annual Golf Scramble @ Irondequoit County Club
- 17 Donate Life Night with the Red Wings
- 22 Donate Life Night with the Syracuse Chiefs
- 24 Home Plate at Frontier Field; need to be at Frontier Field at 11:30 AM (to work concession stand)

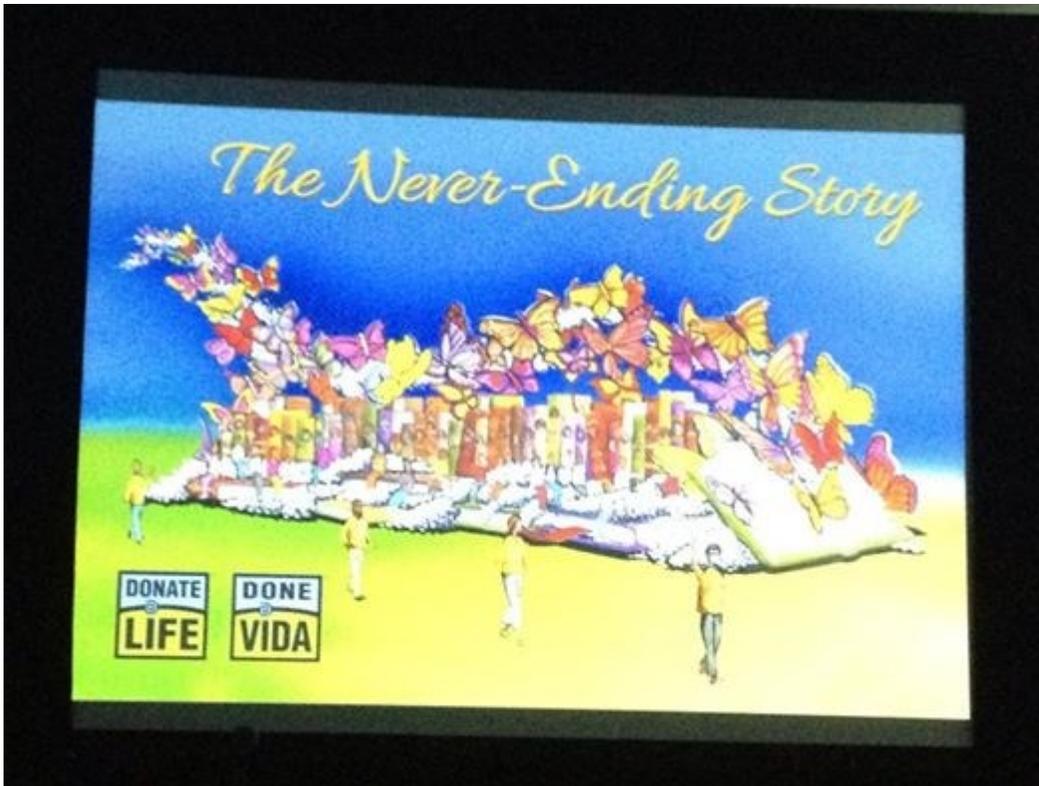
## September 2014

- 13 Harbor House: Sip, Savor, Support; DoubleTree Inn, Rochester; *time TBA*
- 15 Rochester Eye and Tissue Bank Golf Tournament, Shadow Lake Golf & Racket Club, Penfield, 10 AM Registration, 11 AM Scramble/Shot Gun Start

## January 2015

2015 Rose Bowl Parade – January 1, 2015

The theme of the 2015 Float is “The Never Ending Story.” It is pictured below.



Every New Year’s Day, the Donate Life Rose Parade Float serves as a memorial to organ, eye and tissue donors. Introduced in 2004, it also provides a platform for donor families, living donors and transplant recipients to inspire the world.

It’s seen worldwide by millions of people. One of the most celebrated traditions on New Year’s Day is to enjoy viewing—either in person—or by watching on TV, the Annual Rose Parade in Pasadena, California.

The Rose Parade is hosted annually by the Pasadena Tournament of Roses, a volunteer organization. Donors are honored with floral memorial “floragraph” portraits that grace the Donate Life Float. A floragraph is a portrait created with floral materials. The loving and generous individuals portrayed in the floragraphs leave a positive impact on their families, communities, and those they helped.

Finger Lakes Donor Recovery Network is proud to be participating in the 2015 Rose Parade and will be making a special announcement regarding this soon. Stay tuned!