

Mission Statement:

Raising awareness of the critical need for organ transplant donors through public education and advocating for donors and their families.

Celebrate Life The Living Bank's 45th Anniversary



On the evening of October 11th, over 300 Texas Medical Center professionals, living donors, recipients and supporters celebrated life and the gift of living organ donation.

The Living Bank was privileged to honor Houston philanthropist, Margaret Alkek Williams. The poet Longfellow wrote, "No person was ever honored for what they received. Honor has been the reward for what they have given."

Margaret Alkek Williams is a Houston treasure. She has devoted her life to supporting many of the institutions in the Texas Medical Center, education and the arts, helping to make Houston the vibrant world-class city it is today.

Pictured Left: Margaret Alkek Williams, 2013 Celebrate Life Honoree



1. Dr. Ed Reitman & Dr. Joan Anderson, Celebrate Life Co-Chairs
2. Dr. Richard Knight, Houston Methodist and wife, Dr. Christine Knight
3. Kevin Foyle, Vice President, Development, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Dr. Michael Fallon, Memorial Hermann, Christi Myers, Medical Reporter, KTRK-TV Houston, Dr. Giuseppe Colasurdo, President, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
4. Dr. Bud Frazier, St. Luke's Health System, Jon Gossett, Vice President St. Luke's Foundation
5. Matt Girrotto, Texas Children's Hospital & wife Jennifer, Dr. Michael Braun, Texas Children's Hospital

**Photo credit to: Kim Coffman & Associates Photography*



The journey began in 1968

The Living Bank's Journey Began in 1968



Dr. Joan Anderson served as the co-chair of The Living Bank's Celebrate Life 45th Anniversary. Joan is one of five women who founded The Living Bank. Founders Louise Johnson, Glen Karsten, Esther Phillips and Marjorie Robinson are deceased.

In 1968, the Texas Medical Center was making medical history with early heart transplants. But the quest for organ donors was not being met. At dinner one evening, these five Houston women discussed how they could donate their organs when they died. They discovered that no formal way to donate organs existed and took action to establish The Living Bank as a nonprofit and the first organ donor registry in the nation.

The Living Bank's first office was in a rented trailer in the Texas Medical Center in a parking lot across from Houston Methodist Hospital. The Living Bank's first donor registrant was a kidney transplant recipient who got up from his bed in Hermann Hospital and walked slowly across the parking lot to the trailer to sign up.

The Living Bank's enthusiastic and energetic founders traveled through Texas and the United States conducting seminars and encouraging newspapers to write articles. Within the first few months of operation, over 100,000 letters requesting more information poured in, volunteers came forward, over 1,000 people registered as organ donors. As the years went by, they received recognition and thank you's from three presidents, all of whom, signed up to be organ donors and encouraged Americans to do so.

It is remarkable how much these five women accomplished before technology entered our lives. They did not have computers, the Internet, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, or an iPhone. Dr. Anderson states that they had binders, maps lining the walls, the U.S. Postal Service, and the use of rotary phones.

Today, the program focus of The Living Bank is living donation due to the prevalence of diabetes and kidney disease that has caused demand for kidney donors to exceed the number of deceased kidney donors.

We thank Dr. Joan Anderson for imparting the history of The Living Bank and her wealth of knowledge to Board members, staff and volunteers. She continues to be our most valuable resource and tireless advocate of organ donation and transplant.



A Gift of Life through Living Kidney Donation

There are 120,270 people currently on the national transplant waiting list. Over 98,000 (82%) are waiting for a kidney. For the people who are waiting for a kidney, it can take many years, years they might not have.

This year, an estimated 40% of people who have a kidney transplant will receive that kidney from a relative or friend who were willing to donate their kidney and went through the psychosocial assessment and medical testing.



Pictured Above: Reverend Hazel Rhodes Thomas & John Medrano. **Photo credit to: Glen E. Ellman*



John Medrano had been experiencing a series of kidney related issues for several years and underwent surgery for the repair of the ureter and removal of a kidney stone. He was now becoming ravaged by renal failure and dialysis. John was worn out and resigned to death. As he neared the inevitable, he found a viable donor from an unlikely source, a classmate, Rev. Hazel Rhodes Thomas.

Hazel met John at Paschal High School in Fort Worth in 1982 when they were both freshmen. They had English together and later marched in the band. When it came time for college, they both picked hometown Texas Christian University. After college, their paths diverged. John moved to Austin and Hazel went on to become Reverend Thomas, a hospital chaplain at Texas Institute for Rehabilitation & Research Memorial Hermann in Houston. Through TCU football games they would often meet and cheer the team on.

In June 2010, John and Hazel met for a weekend with their other TCU friends and John confided that he had some health issues. He had been on dialysis for about 18 months and one day he would need a kidney transplant. When Hazel listened about his pain, his bleak outlook and the growing sense of hopelessness, she said to John, "When the time comes for you to have a transplant, I'll be your donor!"

Eventually, John's dialysis was no longer effective and he began to reach out to family and friends to find a kidney donor. John did not forget Hazel's statement on being his donor but he didn't put stock in it either. Hazel had discussed her decision to donate with her husband and prayed about it because she truly felt once the match process was started, it would end in donating her kidney. Unbeknownst to John, Hazel went forward to be tested and was indeed a match.

This month, John and Hazel met in Fort Worth at the TCU Homecoming to mark the first anniversary of the transplant procedure. John's health is now excellent. Hazel feels healthier than before surgery.



Celebrating Life



David & Beth Langston

On September 5, 2013, David celebrated his first year with his wife's gift of her kidney. Their surgery was performed at Memorial Hermann Hospital.



What a difference transplant makes!

Tom & Stephen Kraft



On February 15, 2013 Tom Kraft celebrated life after his son, Stephen provided him with a remarkable gift, his kidney. Their surgery was performed at St. Luke's Cooley Transplant Center.



The Kraft Family enjoying the evening and life.



Jim & Andrew Bertrand

Jim Bertrand needed a kidney, his son Andrew donated his kidney through a six-way swap. Their surgery was performed at Houston Methodist.



Jim shared his story with Celebrate Life guests, "I was part of a kidney swap, there were brothers in Mississippi and one needed a kidney and they weren't a match. My son Andrew gave his kidney to one of the brothers and the other brother gave a kidney to a gentlemen here in Houston. Then my kidney came from a woman that worked for a man that needed the kidney here – wow, that's a mouthful – and it sure saved my life!"



Jordan Merecka & Dr. David Morales celebrating life

At the age of 18, Jordan Merecka lived with an artificial heart and now has a real heart beating in his chest.

Jordan was Texas Children's Hospital's first total artificial heart patient. On October 29, 2011, Jordan's family received a telephone call that a good match for a donor heart was found.



Dr. David Morales is now the Executive Co-Director, The Heart Institute, Professor and Endowed Chair of Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery, Chief, Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

Thank you to all those that attended our 2013 Celebrate Life 45th Anniversary. Your support is vital to the success of our mission. To view more photographs of the event please go to: www.livingbank.org or visit our Facebook page: TheLivingBank





Knitting for Living Donors

At Nancy's Knits, Nancy and her volunteers have graciously given their time and talent to knit beautifully fashioned shawls on behalf of The

Living Bank. These shawls will be given to our heroes, living organ donors, during the holiday season by our Independent Living Donor Advocates. We thank Nancy and her team for their generous efforts. Nancy's Knits, located at 5300 North Braeswood Blvd., No. 30, has "just about" every yarn available and is the oldest yarn shop in Houston, offering group classes. View more details at www.nancys-knits.com



Give the Priceless Gift of Life This Holiday Season

For the 120,270 people on the national organ waiting list, a gift of life would be the best gift of all. Your support of organ donation education and the work of The Living Bank could mean they will celebrate with renewed good health.

Skip the crowds and hectic shopping. We offer a meaningful present for someone on your list who has everything. Honor them with a donation to The Living Bank. Simply complete the form below and we will send a card to your honoree acknowledging your thoughtful gift and a card to you acknowledging your donation.

☐ In Thanksgiving for... ☐ In Honor of... ☐ On the Occasion of... ☐ In Memory of...
☐ Contribution (We appreciate your kind support of our work.)

Send acknowledgement to:

Name _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name(s) to appear on card _____
Amount \$ _____

Contributed by:

Name _____
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Address _____
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State _____ Zip _____
Email _____
☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover
Card Number _____
Expiration Date _____
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Card Sentiment:
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thanksgiving for/ in
honor of/ on the
occasion of/ in
memory of _____
given by _____.

Enclosed is my check payable to The Living Bank
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www.livingbank.org

One hundred percent of your donation is tax deductible. The Living Bank tax ID number is **74-1607315**.

Thank you



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Houston, Texas 77265

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Independent Living Donor Advocate Network

The Living Bank's Independent Living Donor Advocate Network (ILDAN) is an online networking community of social workers, psychologists, physicians, nurses and clergy who work as independent living donor advocates. ILDAN offers professional development, solutions, collaboration and peer support through live webinars, videos of instruction and forums.

ILDAN has been generously funded by:

- The George & Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation
- The Brown Foundation

**CEU credits available for
Nurses and Social Workers!**



If you would like to participate, please register with us at livingbank.org/ilda-network

The Living Bank Programs

Living Donor Advocacy
(assessment, counseling and
resources for living donors)

Public Education & Outreach

**Independent Living Donor
Advocacy Network**

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Please Consider Donating to The Living Bank

Simply go to livingbank.org/donate to make
a donation to our secure server.

If your employer matches your donation to nonprofit
organizations, please provide your company's
matching gift form with your contribution.