



NEWS RELEASE

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OVER 10,000 PARTICIPANTS EXPECTED FOR NJ SHARING NETWORK'S ANNUAL 5K CELEBRATION OF LIFE

***Nonprofit organization gears up for 5K Walk and USATF Certified Race
on June 5 in New Providence to raise awareness
for organ and tissue donation***

NEW PROVIDENCE, NJ – Elizabeth Stamler's life has been touched by organ and tissue donation – in more ways than one. Both her father and brother received a life-saving heart transplant and her other brother later passed away and gave the gift of life as a tissue donor, restoring health for over 30 people. Elizabeth, resident of Scotch Plains, is a dedicated volunteer and captain of Donation Nation, one of the over 200 teams participating in this year's 5K Celebration of Life in New Providence.

NJ Sharing Network's Annual 5K Celebration of Life Walk and USATF Certified Race will take place Sunday, June 5, at the organization's headquarters, 691 Central Avenue in New Providence, NJ. Every year, the event brings together thousands of walkers, runners and volunteers to honor those who gave the gift of organ or tissue, pay tribute to those who have

received a transplant, offer hope to those currently waiting for a transplant and remember those who passed away while waiting for the gift of life.

Others, like Elizabeth, have many reasons to celebrate the gift of life and participate in the upcoming 5K:

- Allison Ognibene of Sparta received a heart and double lung transplant nearly 30 years ago. At the time of her transplant in the 1980s, that type of procedure was not common and the success rate was unknown. Allison has been training to race in the upcoming 5K—it will be her first.
- Jenny Godnick, living kidney donor, was unfortunately not a match for her brother-in-law, who was in need of a transplant. While she could not donate directly to him, the Hightstown resident was able to save someone else's life as part of a kidney chain. Another donor involved in the chain was a match for her brother-in-law and his life was saved by that donation. Jenny runs at the 5K every year as a member of Team Susie. Team Susie runs in memory of Susie Nelson who passed away and gave the gift of life.

"The Annual 5K Celebration of Life is an amazing gathering of families, friends and volunteers who have been touched by organ and tissue donation," said NJ Sharing Network President and CEO, Joe Roth. "The outpouring of support for each other and dedication to our life-saving mission is inspiring."

The organization hopes to raise \$1.25 million this year to increase the number of lives saved through research, donor family support, education and public awareness about the life-saving benefits of organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

The 2016 5K Celebration of Life events kicked off on April 24 at Bergen Community College and the final 5K Walk/Run will be held on Sunday, August 21 at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, NJ.

"NJ Sharing Network set a record in 2015 for making 531 organ transplants possible, a 37 percent increase from 2014. It's events like this that help make these record-breaking numbers possible," added Roth.

Today, there are over 122,000 people waiting for a transplant and 22 die each day while waiting for a transplant, but one donor can save eight lives and one tissue donor can enhance

the lives of over 50 people. In New Jersey, there are 5,000 people on the waiting list and one person dies every three days waiting.

New Jersey residents can help save lives by registering as organ and tissue donors at www.NJSharingNetwork.org, talking about it with their families and friends and joining NJ Sharing Network at its next 5K Celebration of Life event.

About NJ Sharing Network

NJ Sharing Network is a non-profit, federally designated organization responsible for the recovery and placement of donated organs and tissue for New Jersey residents in need of life-saving transplants. NJ Sharing Network partners with Donate Life America, a not-for-profit national alliance that drives communities to increase their numbers of registered donors. NJ Sharing Network honors those who gave, pays tribute to those who received, offers hope to those who continue to wait, and remembers the lives lost while waiting for the gift of life.