



## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER...

- Thanks to medical advances, transplant recipients now can live longer and more active lives.
- One person's donated organs and tissue can help save or improve the lives of 50 people.
- Most major religions support organ donation.
- Your decision to be an organ donor will not affect the quality of care you receive in a medical emergency. If you are sick or injured, the number one priority is to save your life.
- Nearly 25 percent of people who died waiting for an organ transplant in 2005 were African American.
- African Americans are four times more likely than Caucasians to develop kidney failure. As a result, blacks make up 35 percent of the people on the kidney transplant waiting list.

# Linkages to Life: Organ, Tissue and Bone Marrow Donation Awareness Program

## “Sunday at Church” Program Planner & Resource Guide

*Supported by Roche*

### **Message from The Links, Incorporated**

Thank you for expressing interest in arranging a *Linkages to Life: Organ, Tissue, and Bone Marrow Donation Awareness Program* Sunday at Church event.

African Americans are at increased risk for many of the medical conditions that lead to the need for a transplant, such as heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes, so it is especially important that we communicate this information to our brothers and sisters. By arranging to have this important community service program in your area, you are helping to send the message to the African-American community that awareness of and participation in organ, tissue and bone marrow donation **must** become a priority.

This resource guide explains the basics you need in order to plan a local event. This guide and the *Linkages to Life* program are made possible by support from Roche, a company that continues to expand its commitment to improve long-term outcomes in transplantation, with the goal of improving the quality of life for patients.

Should you have any questions or need additional resources, you can contact me at 716-566-3943, and visit our web site, [www.linksinc.org](http://www.linksinc.org).

Victoria Dent

National Chairperson, *Linkages to Life*

## ABOUT ORGAN DONATION

### What is organ donation & transplantation?

The process of organ donation and transplantation involves surgically removing an organ from one person, a living or non-living donor, and placing it into another person, the recipient. Transplantation is needed when the recipient's organ has failed or has been damaged by illness or injury. The solid organs that can be transplanted are the heart, lungs, kidney, pancreas and liver. Other parts of the body, such as tissues, corneas, bones and bone marrow, also can be transplanted.

Many different factors are considered when a deceased donor's organ is assigned to a potential recipient. While the specific criteria differ for various organs, they generally include: blood type and size of the organ(s) needed, time spent awaiting a transplant and the geographical distance between donor and recipient. Living donors usually are family members or friends who designate their kidney for a specific person.

- Organ transplants have saved the lives of more than 360,000 people in the U.S.
- In 2005, an average of 71 people per day received organ transplants.
- More than 92,000 people are on the growing waiting list for an organ transplant — 25,000 of them are African American.
- Each day in 2005, an average of 15 people died while waiting for an organ and 112 more were added to the organ transplant waiting list.



**VITAL  
STATISTICS...  
Organ Transplant  
& the African-  
American  
Community**

## ABOUT THE LINKAGES TO LIFE PROGRAM

*Linkages to Life: Organ, Tissue and Bone Marrow Donation Program* "Sunday at Church" is a program sponsored by The Links, Incorporated and Roche to help the African-American community learn about the importance of, and dire need for, organ, tissue and bone marrow donation. The program aims to decrease the number of African Americans on the transplant waiting list by increasing the number of African-American donors.

A recent study found that African Americans were more likely to think positively about organ donation if they learned more about it from their religious leaders. The *Linkages to Life* program involves talks by transplant recipients, donors and doctors at churches across the country during Sunday services to increase awareness of the need for organ donation in the African-American community.

Over the past five years, the *Linkages to Life* program has grown significantly. It has reached thousands of people through church events and millions more through media coverage of this important issue. Additional information on the program can be found at [www.linksinc.org](http://www.linksinc.org).

Currently, 35 percent of the people waiting for kidney transplants and more than a quarter of people on the national transplant waiting list are African American.

The *Linkages to Life* program works to educate and encourage African Americans to think about donation and the difference each of us can make in saving lives.

### Why is awareness important?

Despite advances in medicine, the need for organs is far greater than the number of organ donors — which is why education and awareness are critical.

It is not enough to have "organ donor" noted on your driver's license or carry a donor card. Except in the case of living organ donors, in most states, willing organ donors must discuss the matter with their family ahead of time. To ensure that their family understands their wishes, it is important to share their decision to donate life.

You can help save lives by promoting organ donation awareness. By hosting a *Linkages to Life* event, you are helping to bring life-changing information to your community.

## ORGANIZING YOUR EVENT

*Linkages to Life* events usually take place before, during or after the worship service. You will need to work with your church to determine what timing works best. The program lasts 15-30 minutes and includes some or all of the following speakers:

<b>Church Pastor</b>	Provides brief introduction to program and discusses organ donation as a gift of life.
<b>Local Organ Donor/Recipient(s)</b>	Shares personal experience with donation or transplantation.
<b>Local Healthcare Provider(s) such as Transplant Doctor or Nurse</b>	Talks about medical challenges and advances in transplantation and why it is critical to increase the number of African-American donors.
<b>Representative(s) from Local Organ Procurement Organization</b>	Shares information on local resources. Visit <a href="http://www.organdonor.gov/links.html">www.organdonor.gov/links.html</a> for more on organ procurement organizations near you.

Can We Talk?

Starting the Organ Donation Conversation With Your Family

The Links, Incorporated

Roche

Copies of the “Can We Talk?” guide to starting the organ donation conversation have been provided to support your event and remind participants about the information covered. Download additional copies at [www.linksinc.org](http://www.linksinc.org).

## EVENT CHECKLIST

### Six Weeks Before Event

- Contact your church about the event and discuss the program and potential speakers.
- Work with the pastor and local organ donation groups to identify organ donors, family members of donors, organ recipients and/or healthcare providers to be speakers. Invite potential speakers to participate — discuss *Linkages to Life* and their role in the event.
- Determine event date and time. Many *Linkages to Life* events take place on National Donor Sabbath (Sunday two weeks before Thanksgiving). Visit [www.organdonor.gov/natldonorsabbath.htm](http://www.organdonor.gov/natldonorsabbath.htm) for more information.
- Confirm deadlines for including event information in church announcements and the need for any refreshments.

### Four Weeks Before Event

- Confirm event speakers are able to participate and comfortable with their speaking roles. Remind them to mark their calendars with the date, time and location of the event.
- Work with the pastor to make announcements about the event during services. You also may consider creating signs or posting information to the church Web site to let the congregation know about the event.

### One Week Before Event

- Confirm event logistics (e.g., scheduling, refreshments, etc.) with the pastor and speakers.
- Ask the pastor about the number of people expected for the event. Confirm you have enough materials to distribute.

## RESOURCE LIST

**How to Find Your Local  
Organ Procurement Organization**  
[www.organdonor.gov/links.html](http://www.organdonor.gov/links.html)

**American Society of Multicultural  
Health and Transplant  
Professionals (ASMHTP)**

700 North 4th Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Tel: 866-276-4871  
[www.asmhtp.org](http://www.asmhtp.org)

**Donate Life America**

700 North 4th Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Tel: 804-782-4920  
[www.donatelife.net](http://www.donatelife.net)

**The Links, Incorporated**

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Upstate New York Transplant Services  
110 Broadway  
Buffalo, NY 14203  
Tel: 716-566-3943  
Email: [vdent@unyts.org](mailto:vdent@unyts.org)  
[www.linksinc.org](http://www.linksinc.org)

**Minority Organ Tissue Transplant  
Education Program (MOTTEP)**

2041 Georgia Avenue, NW  
Ambulatory Care Center, Suite 3100  
Washington, DC 20060  
Tel: 202-865-4888  
Tel: 800-393-2839  
[www.nationalmottep.org](http://www.nationalmottep.org)

**National Donor Sabbath**

Joy Demas  
Tel: 301-443-7577  
[www.organdonor.gov/natldonorsabbath.htm](http://www.organdonor.gov/natldonorsabbath.htm)

**The National Kidney Disease Education  
Program (NKDEP)**

3 Kidney Information Way  
Bethesda, MD 20892  
Tel: 866-454-3639 (866-4-KIDNEY)  
[www.nkdep.nih.gov](http://www.nkdep.nih.gov)

**Roche Transplantation**

[www.RocheTransplant.com/community\\_support](http://www.RocheTransplant.com/community_support)

**United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS)**

700 North 4th Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Tel: 804-782-4800  
[www.unos.org](http://www.unos.org)

**U.S. Department of Health and Human  
Services National Organ and Tissue  
Donation Initiative**

[www.organdonor.gov](http://www.organdonor.gov)