For 50 years, the UW Health transplant and donation teams have been tirelessly working to create hope and share gratitude. Through the generosity and courage of donors and their families, and the dedication and expertise of physicians, nurses, researchers and countless talented professionals, more than 13,000 people from across the nation are able to share their gratitude for the gift of life they received at UW Hospital. Together, we can all be proud to be one of the oldest, largest and most successful programs in the country. It took courage to get to this milestone, and we thank you.

The people featured in this calendar are all courageous in their own way. For some, courage came through trust or hope. Others had the courage to persevere and prevail through the most difficult challenges. Organ and tissue donors and their families created hope when they said yes to donation. We are grateful to these people for sharing their personal words of courage to help educate and inspire others.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, it’s natural to look back and reflect on the leadership, expertise, partnerships, compassion and courage that brought us to this point. But we’re even more enthusiastic about the future and the next 50 years. We anticipate that our research will create new opportunities and are happy to note that our nationally respected patient-care initiatives are greatly improving the donation and transplant experience.

Thank you for your support throughout the last 50 years. We welcome your partnership as we work to create the future of transplantation. If you would like to learn more about philanthropic support, and read more stories of hope and gratitude, visit uwhealth.org/HopeMeetGratitude
Liver:
- 2,209 transplants*
- Offering live donor transplants, and deceased donor split- and reduced-liver transplants
- Department of Veterans Affairs approved liver transplant program
- Review our living donor toolkit and videos, and share them with your patients, family and friends
- Watch our patient education videos to stay current with health maintenance needs
- Review our patient education learning sessions listing for information on new sessions and recordings of past sessions
- Download our liver transplant program app for quick access to important information and contacts
- Refresh your contacts list with our referral resources information
- Study our program-specific quality outcomes data
- Link to our physicians’ research, clinical trials and journal publications
- Email us at transplant@uwhealth.org if you are interested in learning more about our program

50 Years of Courage
The UW Health Transplant Program began in 1966 and celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2016. Consistently ranked in the top 10 most active programs in the nation based on volume, our team has completed 13,386 lifesaving transplants.*

Program Highlights
Kidney:
- 9,523 transplants*
- Only kidney transplant program ranked in the top 10 in the Midwest, based on volume
- Adult and pediatric programs
- Offering prednisone-free immunosuppression protocols to certain kidney patients
- Comprehensive living donation program including: direct donation; patient desensitization; extensive patient education resources; robotic, single-port and laparoscopic nephrectomies; and non-directed donation opportunities through the UW Transplant Paired Exchange Program, The National Kidney Registry and the United Network for Organ Sharing Paired Donation Program
- Multiple outreach clinic locations (see page 2)

Pancreas:
- 1,380 transplants*
- Largest simultaneous pancreas/kidney transplant program in the nation
- Only Pancreas Transplant Center of Excellence in Wisconsin
- Offering simultaneous kidney/pancreas, kidney after kidney, and solitary pancreas transplantation
- Transplanting a select population of patients with Type II diabetes

Heart:
- 681 transplants*
- Only Lung Transplant Center of Excellence in Wisconsin
- Accredited by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation as a CF Care Center
- Adult and pediatric programs
- Offering prednisone-free immunosuppression protocols to certain kidney patients
- Comprehensive living donation program including: direct donation; patient desensitization; extensive patient education resources; robotic, single-port and laparoscopic nephrectomies; and non-directed donation opportunities through the UW Transplant Paired Exchange Program, The National Kidney Registry and the United Network for Organ Sharing Paired Donation Program
- Multiple outreach clinic locations (see page 2)

Lung:
- 9,523 transplants*
- Only kidney transplant program ranked in the top 10 in the Midwest, based on volume
- Adult and pediatric programs
- Offering prednisone-free immunosuppression protocols to certain kidney patients
- Comprehensive living donation program including: direct donation; patient desensitization; extensive patient education resources; robotic, single-port and laparoscopic nephrectomies; and non-directed donation opportunities through the UW Transplant Paired Exchange Program, The National Kidney Registry and the United Network for Organ Sharing Paired Donation Program
- Multiple outreach clinic locations (see page 2)

Quality Initiatives
The Forward Focus Collaborative:
- The collaborative began in 2011 as a quality improvement project and is now the framework for how we make improvements internally and with our partners.
- We continue to engage more hospital partners each year in our “all teach, all learn” community of practice.
- Each hospital has its way of creating excellence. Forward Focus allows for rapid sharing with colleagues throughout our service area.
- Raising a Donate Life flag to commemorate a patient’s gift of life—together with the donor’s family and hospital staff as the family leaves the hospital—was a Forward Focus idea that was developed, shared and quickly adapted among many hospitals (see July story).

Consent Workshops:
- Through our Hospital Partners Survey, we learned that they wanted more frequent having crucial conversations with families about consent for donation. Organ donation occurs in less than two percent of all deaths, so these conversations happen infrequently.
- With help from national leaders in end-of-life conversations, we developed the Consent Workshop, where these conversation skills can be practiced in a realistic setting.
- Consent Workshops are offered through the UW Health Clinical Simulation Program. Professional actors portray family members experiencing an end-of-life discussion with their loved one’s health care team.
- Participants have the opportunity to fully engage in a realistic conversation to practice and validate their skills. This environment includes peer and donor family feedback.

Understanding Consent Opportunities:
- Our Designated Requestor model trains hospital colleagues to lead donation conversations.
- Hospital teams are committed to, and compassionate about, delivery these services to donor families, but our team did not fully appreciate the intricacies during these discussions.
- We designed an onsite data-gathering pilot project to clarify the consent conversation experience. This project will shape how we better support hospitals and families.

UW Organ and Tissue Donation
- We are members of Donate Life Wisconsin (DLW), a collaborative of donation and transplant professionals. Our staff are engaged in the $2 check-off on renewal forms at the DMV, DLW will distribute new multicultural education materials in DMVs in 2016.
- We designed an onsite data-gathering pilot project to clarify the consent conversation experience. This project will shape how we better support hospitals and families.
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UW Organ and Tissue Donation works with 103 hospitals in Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan. To review a list of our hospital partners, visit uwotd.org

Find valuable resources at uwotd.org
- Visit our donation promotion toolkit for helpful tips and to download images
- Share a tribute to an organ, tissue and eye donor
- Learn how to join our volunteer team
- Study our hospital partners resource center
- Creating Hope and Sharing Gratitude for the Gift of Life

In calendar year 2014, 127 organ donors resulted in 403 organs for transplant. These gifts of hope create so much gratitude, and we thank our dedicated partners, families and volunteers for making those gifts possible. We currently provide tissue donation services to more than 25 hospitals. In 2014, we served 162 tissue donors, making hundreds of gifts available for transplant.

Donation Education and Awareness
- 2.8 million people (almost 60 percent) have registered as organ, tissue and eye donors since the Wisconsin Donor Registry began in 2010. Our team is focused on reaching 75 percent by 2020.
- Extra effort goes into April (National Donate Life Month) and October (Orangefest) when donor registrations increase by about 50 percent.
- We are members of Donate Life Wisconsin (DLW), a collaborative of donation and transplant professionals. Our staff leads the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) partnership, data collection and marketing initiatives. As a result of their efforts, and with funds donated through the $2 check-off on renewal forms at the DMV, DLW will distribute new multicultural education materials in DMVs in 2016.
- Transplant recipients and donor families create opportunities to raise funds that greatly expand donation education and awareness. Visit uwotd.org to learn more about the Haley Rath Memorial Event, Donna Frett Foundation Event, David Duranace Golf Outing, Joshua J. Richards Charitable Foundation events, Ted’s Trek Golf Run/Walk, Al Wright’s Donation Awareness Concert and the Central Wisconsin Gift of Life Scavenger Hunt.
- We support the National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin’s Capital City 5k Run/Walk for Organ, Tissue and Eye Donation, on July 30, 2016, in Madison; and their Spotlight on Life Gala, on January 23, 2016.
Kidney Exchange

When Lisa Moore read an article about a woman who donated a kidney to help a stranger, she thought “I could do that.” She was already a generous volunteer and regular blood donor and was looking for another way to give back. Lisa reached out to the UW Health Transplant Program to learn about becoming a non-directed donor. Her courage began a paired kidney exchange that connected four people and saved two lives.

Lisa donated a kidney to Michelle Sullivan, whose lupus had caused kidney failure. In turn, Michelle’s sister, Susan Tillman—who was not a match for Michelle—donated a kidney to Tim Burgess, who had been on dialysis for more than four years.

When the four met in August 2015, the room was filled with hope and gratitude. “It’s amazing to me that someone who didn’t even know me, was willing to help me,” says Michelle. “It was wonderful to meet Lisa.” When Susan met Tim, her eyes filled with tears. “Someone else gets to smile another day because he’s here,” says Susan. “It was beautiful to look into Tim’s eyes and see his gratitude.” Tim’s gratitude was twofold—for Lisa and for Susan. “They are all heroes to me,” Tim says.

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

Shown left to right: Lisa, Michelle, Susan, Tim

DID YOU KNOW?

UW Health participated in one of the nation’s longest kidney exchanges involving 70 patients and 26 hospitals.

Courage to connect

2016

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New Year’s Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
When Jill Dillon (shown here, center), an optometrist at Marshfield Clinic, decided to become a living donor to help her long-time patient Lonnie Jelinski, she couldn’t have imagined the ripple effect of her decision.

Jill and Lonnie were evaluated at a regional medical center. When the transplant was postponed, Jill began researching their options. She reviewed the UW Health Transplant Program quality and outcomes data and recommended to Lonnie that they go to University Hospital instead. After both of them underwent thorough evaluations, they discovered they were not, after all, a good match. Thankfully, Lonnie soon received a kidney from a deceased donor.

Jill decided to become a non-directed donor, offering her kidney to someone else in need. She soon learned that a co-worker had a friend who was waiting for a kidney. Jill reached out to her, Sara Solinsky, a young mother experiencing kidney failure. They went to University Hospital for testing where they learned they were a good match. Jill’s donation to Sara took place in July 2011 and the two have become good friends.

Jill’s courage continues to ripple. Jill and Sara recently formed Central Wisconsin Gift of Life, a group of volunteers who work to educate others about donation. “Before Lonnie, I didn’t understand the need for organ donation,” says Jill. “We have to talk about this!”

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

DID YOU KNOW?

At UW Health, you can donate a kidney through your belly button.
Leonard Stringfellow, a retired member of the United States Air Force, became very sick very quickly. His physician in Illinois referred him to the William E. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison, WI. His medical team there spent the next three months stabilizing Leonard’s condition so that he could receive a liver transplant. Leonard received his gift of life in March of 2015.

“I missed Christmas, New Year’s and Valentine’s Day,” says Leonard, but he never lost his optimism or his belief in his ability to recover and heal. He credits his faith, his medical team and the unwavering support of Cynthia, his wife of more than 30 years. “I am grateful to the team at the VA Hospital,” says Leonard. “They were very attentive and kept me very comfortable.”

Leonard and Cynthia are looking forward to the next phase of their lives. They recently built a new home where Leonard now has the strength to tackle home improvement projects and enjoy fishing off of their dock. “None of us are guaranteed a tomorrow,” says Leonard, “but we have to keep believing and looking on the bright side.”

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

DID YOU KNOW?
UW Health is the only transplant center in the nation that is VA approved for liver, heart and lung transplant.
Stan

Stan Sutton knows the meaning of the word hope. He received a double lung transplant in January 2015, after waiting and hoping for 15 years. Stan was originally listed for a lung transplant in 2000, but was put on hold status because his health improved enough to delay his need for transplant. “The last few years were quite a struggle. I was too sick to work but not sick enough to have a transplant,” says Stan.

Stan suffered from Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, an inherited disorder that causes lung disease. While he was waiting, he lost his sister to the same disease. Yet Stan, who was then on oxygen 24 hours/day, did not give up hope.

“I knew at some point I would get the transplant,” says Stan. “I just had to stay positive until I did.” His hope and patience paid off. Stan says he feels like he’s turned the clock back 30 years. “My family is thrilled that I can start doing things with them again,” says Stan. “They are seeing a side of me they haven’t seen for a while.” Stan and his wife, Lina, are back to enjoying some exercise during their evening bike rides, and Stan is looking forward to more camping adventures with his family.

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

DID YOU KNOW?
The UW Health Advanced Lung Disease Program is certified as a cystic fibrosis Center of Excellence.
Joshua Richards (insert photo) loved to help people. When his life tragically ended at age 25, he continued to help others through his gift of organ and tissue donation. Today, his mother, Jackie Pische (wearing Josh’s jersey), ensures that Josh’s desire to help others lives on in the Joshua Richards Foundation.

Through the Foundation, Jackie works to promote organ and tissue donation and support her community. Josh loved sports and even played semi-pro football, so the foundation also provides sports equipment to underserved children in the area. “This work has helped turn tragedy into hope,” says Jackie.

Her hope is further strengthened by her friendship with Ben Adler (shown here, right, the recipient of Josh’s heart, and Larry Hart, Josh’s lung recipient. They have become like an extended family to Jackie and proudly support the Foundation’s annual golf outing, Larry’s grandson, Matthew Dickman, got in on the action as he caddied for Ben at this year’s event.

Through unthinkable tragedy, Jackie has found the courage to prevail and help others, the way her son would have wanted. “I want to be a better person because of him,” says Jackie. “I want to help others understand how one person can touch so many other lives by being a donor.”

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

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DID YOU KNOW?

One organ donor can save eight lives. Hundreds more are greatly improved through tissue donation.
At four years old, Braxton Hanson is full of life and love. He enjoys school and adores his little brother, Blake.

Braxton was born 14 weeks premature and has faced many challenges. Medication he was given as an infant to close a heart valve also constricted a blood vessel to his kidney, causing renal failure. Braxton was transferred to UW Health American Family Children’s Hospital to receive the highly specialized care he needed. His medical team’s ultimate goal was to get him off of his ventilator and strong enough to undergo transplant.

In May 2015, Braxton received a kidney from his mom, Alysia. “Braxton woke up happy after surgery and has been happy ever since,” says Alysia. He recently took his first steps without his walker and is learning to use his voice again.

Throughout their son’s medical journey, Braxton’s parents, Alysia and Ken, found the courage to persevere. “We developed a high level of trust in our medical team. They cared so much about Braxton and our family,” says Ken. “We’ve always been hopeful for Braxton’s future and our medical team has been by our side every step of the way.”

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

DID YOU KNOW?
Alysia, Braxton’s mom and living donor, was the UW Health Working Mother of the Year in 2015.
Honoring Eric

When the Donate Life flag flew over Mercy Hospital and Trauma Center for the first time in July 2014, it was to honor 11-year-old Eric Gutierrez (inset photo) and the gift of life he had given.

Eric loved sports and playing guitar. He was a hard worker and willing helper. When he died, his mother, Rebecca, knew that Eric would want to help others through the gift of organ donation.

The family’s donation experience was guided by the staff of Mercy Hospital and Trauma Center in Janesville, WI, including Eric Abbot, RN, Alicia Hartell, RN, and Chaplain Nancy Leadhold. “We raise the Donate Life flag at the hospital in the presence of the family as a way to honor their gift and help bring closure to their experience at the hospital,” says Nancy. Eric was the first patient for whom the flag was raised. “The flag-raising moments were beautiful to me,” says Rebecca. “I’m proud that Eric was able to make that happen.”

Eric’s family recently returned to the hospital to share their story. “It’s very healing to be here today, and I’m grateful to the staff for their courage to care for my son and honor him,” says Rebecca. “I may not be able to hold my son again, but because of him someone else will have that opportunity.”

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

DID YOU KNOW?

To enhance their sensitivity while working with donor families, clinicians receive training through the UW Health Clinical Simulation Program.

Courage to honor

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UW Health Transplant and UW OTD 50th Anniversary Celebrations

UW Organ and Tissue Donation

School of Medicine and Public Health

University of Wisconsin Medical School

50 Years of Courage to Honor
Emily

Emily Mahon, 25, doesn’t let her medical condition define her. She was born with a mitochondrial disorder that prevents her body from absorbing nutrition. At age 2, Emily began intravenous nutrition that took 12 hours every night. Still, nutritionally, her body could not support her organs and her liver began to fail.

Just a few days after her sixth birthday, Emily received a life-saving liver and intestine transplant. She remembers both her mom and newborn brother staying with her in the hospital.

Today, Emily’s liver is functioning very well, but she still faces many challenges caused by her mitochondrial disorder. Although she is legally blind, receives nutrition through a central line and has a small intestine and liver transplant and frequent hospitalizations, she doesn’t let these issues stop her from helping others and being the person she aspires to be every day. Emily runs four annual blood drives at her church and is involved in other charitable activities. “There’s a lot I can’t do because I don’t have the energy or strength, but there’s a lot I can do,” says Emily. Her courage is an inspiration to all who know her. “This is the only life I’ve known,” says Emily, “I can’t imagine living it any other way.”

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

DID YOU KNOW?

Both adults and children receive liver transplants. The UW Health living-liver donor program increases their chances and shortens their wait.

Courage to inspire
HONORING
Dillon

Dillon Mueller (inset photo) was known for his big smile and generous heart. He loved racing his motocross bike and was a friend and mentor to many young racers. Whether racing, rock climbing, working on his family’s dairy farm or serving his community as an Eagle Scout, Dillon gave 100 percent to everything he did. When he died from complications from a bee sting at age 18, his family was proud to know he was a registered donor. Dillon’s generosity lives on through the lives improved by his eye, tissue and bone donations.

His parents, George and Angel Mueller, are carrying on Dillon’s legacy of generosity and kindness by sharing Dillon’s story to raise awareness for organ and tissue donation. “He was the type of kid that could make you laugh and shake your head at the same time,” says Angel, “but whenever someone needed something, Dillon was there. Sharing his story provides an outlet for our family’s grief. We want to help as many people as we can.” Dillon’s family members have shared his story—and their message of support for organ, tissue and eye donation—at car shows, through local civic groups and at Donate Life events. “It’s so easy to register online,” says Angel. “It gave Dillon the opportunity to help someone else one more time.”

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

DID YOU KNOW?
More than 124,000 people in the U.S. are currently waiting for a life-saving transplant.

courage
to show
generosity
Deana Zorko is a busy wife, mother of two active boys and a high school Spanish teacher. She lived with type 1 diabetes for 20 years. Her pregnancies resulted in high blood pressure and kidney damage, and she struggled with overwhelming exhaustion and low blood sugar. Yet, Deana pushed herself to be there for her family and students. Her kidney function continued to decline, and her life became increasingly limited until she received a simultaneous pancreas-kidney transplant in April 2013. Today she has normal kidney function and no longer needs insulin.

“In hindsight, I really don’t know how I did it,” says Deana. “It took every ounce of energy just to get out of the car and walk into school!” Deana found the courage to endure her illness with great fortitude. This strength of mind allowed her to think past her struggles. “I refused to give in to my self-doubt and fear. Many of my colleagues and friends did not realize how sick I was until they saw me well again,” says Deana. Her transplant has given her a new sense of well-being and energy. She juggles her son’s busy soccer schedules, traveled to Costa Rica with her Spanish students, teaches with passion and received the World Languages Teacher of the Year Award.

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant
Gary Geil is enrolled in a research study that could change the lives of transplant recipients. Led by Dixon Kaufman, MD, PhD, chair of transplantation at UW Health, the study works to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of a new combination of prednisone-free anti-rejection medications for kidney transplant patients. This new protocol calls for one daily pill and one monthly infusion, rather than three daily pills. Dr. Kaufman’s research team, which includes Kristi Schneider, RN, MSN, ANP, and April Schultz, RN, BSN, is working to prove that fewer medications mean fewer side effects and a longer life for the transplanted kidney.

Research explores new ways to improve patient outcomes and is an essential part of an academic hospital. There are many active research studies at UW Health. They are all made possible because of people like Gary, who share in the team’s courage and are ready to explore new ways to help advance the field of transplantation.

Gary meets monthly with the research team and is doing very well on the new protocol. “I didn’t know what kind of results I was going to get,” says Gary, “but I wanted to help others as much as myself.”

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

Shown left to right: Dr. Kaufman, Gary, April, Kristi.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

Our team has worked on more than 250 research studies, including 10 that are active today.

**Courage to advance**
Daniel Pekarsky lives life to the fullest. In 1985, at age 38, he suffered a serious heart attack while riding a bus in the mountains of Israel. Following his heart attack, he completely changed his lifestyle and focused on heart-healthy living, but unfortunately, 10 years later he suffered cardiac arrest while jogging through New York’s Central Park. He was implanted with a defibrillator, put on medications and resumed his active, healthy life.

Nine years later, Daniel’s health declined and he was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. Although he continued to teach and travel, he struggled. Daniel worried that his life was over, but, like many people awaiting transplant, he dug deep within himself to keep going. “I had a powerful desire to live,” says Daniel. “I wanted to be there for my wife and son.”

It was that desire that allowed Daniel to persevere until he received his transplant, just a few days after Thanksgiving in 2011. “It’s a great blessing to live normally again,” says Daniel. “I went from thinking my life was over to asking myself how I wanted to live my new life.” Daniel is back to work and he enjoys traveling and hiking with his wife, Stephanie.

Read more at uwhealth.org/transplant

DID YOU KNOW?

UW Health is conducting groundbreaking studies to explore stem cell therapies in LVAD patients; and is participating in the HeartMate III LVAD trial.

Courage to persevere

2016

December

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Christmas  Hanukkah  New Year’s Eve

Hanukkah Begins  Christmas Begins  New Year’s Eve

Winter Begins