

FOTA TRANSPLANT LIFE QUARTERLY



LATEST NEWS FROM FLORIDA ORGAN TRANSPLANT ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL ISSUE: COVID-19 SPRING 2020 UPDATE

FOTA Patient Programs in Full Swing with COVID-19

We are living through an unprecedented time with the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of Americans and our neighbors around the globe are practicing social distancing and staying home to stay safe. FOTA spring/summer events are on hold until further notice, but we are here and continue to serve the transplant community.

In late-February, we launched the Helping Hand Gift Card Program and sent out batches of \$50 Walmart gift cards to social work teams of all five South Florida transplant hospitals. This program launch, thanks in part to the Wawa Foundation, has been well-received and already making a major impact for transplant families who need a small boost of support.

“We remain open and ready to support the transplant community through this challenging period,” said John Venezia, FOTA Executive Director. “We are committed to you—living donors, donor families, transplant patients and recipients, and transplant families. While we cannot see you right now, you are in our thoughts and we are here to serve you.”

Emergency support grant programs remain in full effect where social workers may request one-time support that provides financial respite for basic necessities such as lodging, medical care, transportation, and incidentals. Last year, FOTA awarded nearly \$20,000 in support to the transplant community.

For more information, please visit www.floridaorgantransplant.org or like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/florgantransplant.org/>.

Transplant Games is Postponed: What does this Mean for You?

On Monday, March 30th the Transplant Life Foundation released this statement on social media:

The past couple of weeks have brought uncertainty and great concern. The COVID-19 virus has tremendously altered our nation, relationships and lives. Please know that you are an important part of our family and have been in our thoughts during these trying times.

Our community includes recipients, donor families, living donors, caregivers, donation and transplant professionals and many others. Each day, the Transplant Life Foundation works to further our mission of serving the donation and transplant community with educational materials, programs, and events that enhance and improve lives.

The Transplant Games is the cornerstone activity of our mission and one that allows us to come together to demonstrate the amazing gift of life, the miracle of transplantation, and to focus the nation on the need for more organs. Our entire transplant family, working together, gives hope and encouragement and saves lives. We are so much more than an athletic competition.

Since the spread of the virus, we have closely followed the experts as they have reviewed data on patients, and the progression of the disease. Despite some positive news on increased testing and possible existing drug therapies, there is a growing concern that conducting our event in July would not be in the best interest of our community.

Our number one priority is your health and well-being, and with that objective in mind, we have decided to postpone the 2020 Transplant Games scheduled for July 17-22, 2020. This was a heart-breaking decision for our team, but we can promise you that once the COVID-19 health crisis subsides, we will announce a new set of dates for the New Jersey Games. Rescheduling is a massive undertaking and we will collaborate closely with our incredible partners and sponsors and are committed to bringing you the biggest and best Games ever.

We understand that many of you will have questions, and our intent is to get you the answers that you need. However, we ask that you please be patient as we work through the enormous number of details while under government restrictions.

Bill Ryan



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Executive Director's Message



Dear Friends,

I hope this edition finds you healthy and staying at home practicing social distancing. Of course, for transplant patients and families, social distancing is a part of our existing reality. We are in a constant fight to maintain germs at bay and well-meaning friends and family may not understand that they carry the very bacteria that can send us to the hospital.

You may not already know that I am a two-time kidney recipient. My first transplant was 34 years ago, so I've been around the block for some time. With all of the uneasiness surrounding COVID-19, I've gone back to post-transplant surgery recommendations like fist bumping.

Did you know that during a friendly handshake we transfer approximately 124 million microbes—and the firmer your handshake the more transfer takes place! A high-five is two times cleaner than a handshake, but the almighty fist bump is 20 TIMES cleaner.

Join me and Howie Mandel, in bringing back the fist bump!

In this special edition, please find latest information on Transplant Games, local events and FOTA patient programs. Until next time, please take care and stay healthy.

Be well,

John Venezia
John Venezia
Executive Director



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Now is a great time to consider joining the FOTA Family!
Annual membership provides the ongoing support to keep patient programs and activities running in earnest.

THANK YOU to all of our recent new/renewed members as of March 31st:

James and Amy Birr	Elizabeth Harris
Eli V. Compton	Shawn Scott
Erik Compton Foundation	Betty-Ann Straub Ruotolo
Ilene Gross	

Membership begins at \$25 and this introductory level gives you a complimentary admission to our annual Holiday Celebration of Life. To review levels and join the family, please visit www.floridaorgantransplant.org.



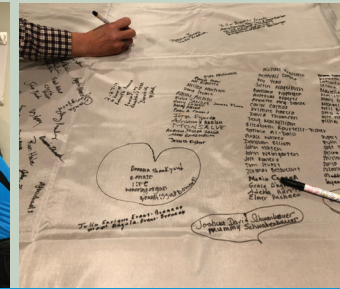
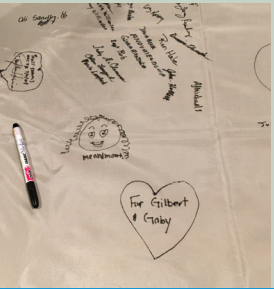
OUR GOAL

is to become a central hub of resources and fellowship for the transplant community

TRANSPLANT GAMES CEREMONIAL FLAG SIGNING



LifeCare Specialty Clinics and FOTA hosted the Broward flag signing event on March 3rd. This special event brought together an intimate group of Team Florida members – transplant recipients, donor family members, living donors, and supporters – and the donation and transplantation community.



FOTA SPRING/SUMMER EVENTS ARE ON HOLD

The following FOTA spring and summer events are on hold until further notice. We will provide updates as soon as we are able.

APRIL 5 Build-a-Bear Patient Event at Pembroke Lakes Mall

MAY 20 FOTA Member Wine Tasting Networker at REVOLVE Cycle and Fitness

APRIL 25 3rd Annual FOTA Transplant Wild Adventure Fun Run/Walk at Zoo Miami

JUNE 13 Annual Marina Day Picnic at John U. Lloyd Park

To all registrants, and sponsors who have renewed their commitment, **THANK YOU** for your understanding and ongoing support of the cause.

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Transplant Games is Postponed: What does this Mean for You? On Monday, March 30th the Transplant Life Foundation released this statement on social media:



On a managers call, Bill Ryan asked for everyone's patience as their team works on the logistics and costs of postponement. The plan is to keep the Games in New Jersey, once COVID-19 is behind us. In the meanwhile, what does this mean to you, if you have already registered?

Please proceed with cancelling your flights. Thankfully, in this unprecedented time airline companies have stepped up for the most part to honor cancellations and offer refunds. The Transplant Life Foundation team is working with the housing coordinator who helped to secure lodging options and has asked to wait before cancelling reservations in the short-term. They will circle back with team managers over the next few weeks to provide updates.

Most all public activities have been postponed through the fall, including the Summer Olympics in Japan, with the promise that normal activities will resume as soon as possible. No one knows the timeframe of COVID-19, so right now we are all being asked to have patience, take care, and stay tuned.



FLORIDA ORGAN TRANSPLANT ASSOCIATION
 Helping Organ Donor and Transplant Families

934 N. University Dr., #451, Coral Springs, FL 33071
www.floridaorgantransplant.org

Join over 11 Million Floridians to give the Gift of Life

A single organ/tissue donor can save the lives of more than 50 people. For more information and to sign up, please visit www.donatelifeflorida.org.

While a signed donor card and a driver's license with an "organ donor" designation are legal documents, your family will ultimately give consent when the time has come. It is important to share your decision to donate life with your family. Once you've made the decision to become an organ/tissue donor, please share this card with your family and start the conversation today!



Name _____ Date _____
 Dear _____ (next of kin)
 I have made the important decision to sign up to become an organ/tissue donor. Although I have _____ signed an organ donor card and/or _____ signed up through my state's registry, and it's legally binding, the medical team may ask your for permission at the time of my passing to proceed with this gift. Please honor my wishes and allow me the chance to make a difference in up to 50 lives by becoming an organ tissue/ donor.
 _____ I signed up to donate everything I can
 _____ I signed up with donation limitations that include _____
 Let's talk! With love, _____
 (donor signature)



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