

Giving Your NDLM Efforts a Boost

Use volunteers to help plan, manage and staff your events

BY KIM ZASA

I'll be here before you know it—National Donate Life Month (NDLM)! Harnessing the power of your organization's volunteers is one of the most-effective ways you can increase your state's donor designation rate this April.

Here are a few ideas on working with your volunteers to make NDLM a big success.

YOUR LOCAL DMV OFFICES

- At Gift of Life Michigan, we have a special program called "Buddy Day." We partner with the Michigan Eye-Bank to schedule over 350 volunteer "buddies" in all 140 Secretary of State branch offices across the state.
- Volunteers greet customers and encourage them to sign up on the donor registry. Over 3,700 people signed up on Buddy Day last April.
- Ask volunteers to say "thank you" to their local DMV office by paying them a visit, writing them a letter or sending them an e-mail.
- You also can have volunteers "Adopt an Agency" and visit the offices regularly.

SOCIAL MEDIA PUSH

- Put a call out to your volunteers in late March to push your message hard all through the month of April.
- Encourage them to update their Facebook status with the message to sign up on the donor registry
- Ask them to send an e-mail to their friends, family and co-workers with the same message.
- Ask volunteers to add a signature line to their e-mails with a message to sign up on the donor registry. Also ask them to include a link to your organization's website.
- Create a text message on registering as a donor that they can send to their contacts.

WORKPLACE PARTNERS

- Now is the time to get your donor drives and blood drives lined up with your Workplace Partners, which may include hospitals and churches.
- Ask your volunteers to help by contacting their local faith communities.
- Ask hospital development staff to include volunteers in hospital donor drive events.
- Ask your volunteers to reach out to one new big company this April. Hold them accountable for setting up and staffing the donor drive table.



Gift of Life Michigan volunteers help at a donor drive. From left: liver recipient Beth Ann Dalrymple, Quentella Ambrose and kidney recipient Denise Wardlow.


- Give a prize to the volunteer with the highest number of new donor registrants at a workplace this April.
- Ask volunteers who own their own businesses to offer a free item during April, such as a free car wash or ice cream, for anyone who signs up.

NEW SPECIAL EVENT

- Do something you've never done before, such as a donor drive at a sporting event, concert or your state's Capitol.
- Ask volunteers to help with the planning and execution of the proposed events.
- Have a contest for volunteers to come up with ideas for NDLM events. Implement the ones you think could be the most successful.

MEDIA

- Create a sample newsletter article that your volunteers could add their personal story and forward to their local newspapers and radio stations as well as to employers and places of worship.

 For more ideas on using volunteers during NDLM and for volunteer resources, visit Donate Life America's volunteer workgroup website at dlamembers.net.

Kim Zasa is Gift of Life Michigan's volunteer coordinator and Secretary of State branch liaison. To contact her, call 1-800-482-4881 or send her an e-mail at kzasa@giftoflifemichigan.org.