

[▶ SEARCH RUTGERS](#)
**Links:**

- ▶ [About us](#)
- ▶ [Send us story ideas](#)
- ▶ [Publication dates](#)
- ▶ [Archive](#)

**Campus News:**

- ▶ [Rutgers–Camden](#)
- ▶ [Rutgers–Newark](#)
- ▶ [Rutgers–New Brunswick / Piscataway](#)
- ▶ [Events at Rutgers](#)

**Search Focus:**
 


### Organ donation campaign raises campus awareness

Archived article from Nov 18, 2003

By Marilyn Kochman

*By Marilyn Kochman*

Nine years ago Charlene Price-Holder, a special events planner in alumni relations on the New Brunswick campus, had a nagging cough and a high fever that wouldn't break. When her legs began to swell, she knew something was radically wrong. A series of blood tests brought sobering news: she was in renal failure.

Price-Holder began dialysis almost immediately and was placed on a donor waiting list for a kidney. She would spend nearly five years undergoing dialysis, three times a week. All the while, the 44-year-old Price-Holder continued to work, enduring extreme fatigue. Then, one day, she got a call. A kidney was available.

The woman who saved Price-Holder's life had died suddenly from an aneurysm, leaving her husband and 12-year-old child in shock. "It's a weird feeling knowing your life is possible because someone else has died," said Price-Holder. "You never know how much this means until it touches you or someone you love."

Price-Holder is one of several Rutgers employees who will spend the next year explaining what organ donation means through the university's work-site organ donation campaign. Led by Rutgers' School of Communication, Information and Library Studies (SCILS), the campaign was launched Sept. 23 in partnership with the New Jersey Organ and Tissue Sharing Network.

The campaign, which is also a research study, is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Transplantation. Susan Morgan, an assistant professor of communication at SCILS, is the principal investigator. She wrote the research grant and will be gathering and analyzing data to identify the factors that influence people's willingness to donate organs.

"One thing we realized early on is that most people working for Rutgers don't know how many of their co-workers, friends and colleagues have been touched by organ donation," Morgan said. "A lot of people in our own community either have loved ones who became organ donors or are desperately hoping that a loved one's life will be saved by organ donation."

The campaign to get more Rutgers faculty, staff and students to sign donor cards will continue over the next 10 months. A survey of randomly selected university employees next September will help to determine whether the campaign was successful.

The campaign includes other universities as well: Texas A&M, University of Arizona and University of Alabama. Pennsylvania State University and University of North Carolina at Charlotte are serving as control sites and conducting additional studies about how families talk about organ donation.

Today, some 88,000 people are awaiting transplants in the United States, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing, a national organization that administers the nation's only organ procurement network. Yet there were only 6,456 donors and 12,505 transplants during the first six months of 2003.

The campaign's goal is to educate people about the process of organ donation and motivate them to sign organ donor cards and discuss the decision with their families. Price-Holder, who said she hopes to humanize the subject of organ donation by "attaching a face to it," and others will be available at campus events to provide information, answer questions and demonstrate, by virtue of being alive, the life-saving impact of this medical miracle. Paul McCartney, 34, who teaches political science on Rutgers' Douglass campus, joins Price-Holder in her mission to educate the community. When McCartney was 6, his father was hospitalized for primary pulmonary hypertension (PPH), a rare genetic lung disease. While the elder McCartney

ultimately died in an accidental fall, his medical condition would make a heart-lung transplant the only effective treatment option today.

Then, in 1996, PPH claimed McCartney's sister Jean who was 29. Last year, the day after Christmas, McCartney's sister Mary died of PPH. She was 37. Jean had been on an organ donor list for three years, waiting for the right heart-lung match, which never materialized.

A third sister, Allison, 31, was diagnosed with PPH in the mid-1980s and was on a donor list for nearly two years before the right match appeared. In 1988, when she was 16, she had a heart-lung transplant. Today, Allison leads an active life, working as the public relations director of a real estate company and participating in local theater.

Denise Johnson, 38, a secretary at the law school on the Camden campus, will also share her story. Sept. 3 marked the ninth anniversary of the death of her mother, Margaret. In 1994, Margaret suffered a heart attack during bypass surgery and was placed on a donor waiting list, but a new heart wasn't available in time. She died a few months later, just after turning 60, but not before informing her husband, Paul, that she wanted to donate her eyes. Margaret's gift has restored the vision of three people — each of whom has received a critical eye segment.

Now, Paul Johnson, 69, is waiting for a kidney. Although he has been on dialysis for five years, he still serves as deacon of his church when his energy permits.

Keith Pasichow, 22, a lab technician at the Cell and DNA Repository at Nelson Labs on the Busch campus, works with several local organ donation associations, and has recently added the Rutgers campaign to his list of volunteer venues. Pasichow also speaks from experience.

In December 1996, when Pasichow was 15, he was diagnosed with bone cancer of the left femur. Unlike Price-Holder and the loved ones of McCartney and Johnson, Pasichow did not have to wait on a list for a new femur. "Bone tissue can be frozen and stored," he explained. "There usually aren't any waiting lists because the tissue doesn't have to be viable." After three months of chemotherapy treatment, Pasichow underwent a transplant operation and received a new left femur.

"Because someone donated bone tissue, I didn't have to have my leg amputated at 15," said Pasichow, who plans to attend medical school and specialize in oncology.

Chris Sickels, 38, application programmer in human resources on the Busch campus, manages the database of the HR Weekly Digest, among other responsibilities. After she saw the campaign notice and consulted with her husband, Christopher, she responded. Christopher Sickels, 40, who suffers from Type 1 diabetes, developed renal failure a year ago. In March, he had an unsuccessful transplant of a kidney his mother donated. It had to be removed, and he remains on the transplant waiting list. Sickels self-administers peritoneal dialysis nightly—an eight-hour process that leaves him fatigued and frustrated that he doesn't have the energy to pursue his favorite hobby, home renovation. Chris Sickels hopes the current campaign will make people at least consider donating organs. "I'd do anything to raise awareness," she said.

#### **How to become an organ donor** It's easy to become an organ donor:

\*Stop by the campaign's table at the College Avenue student center on the following dates: Dec. 2, Jan. 22, Feb. 11, March 10, April 7 and April 29. Those who sign donor cards or add their names to the New Jersey Donor Registry will receive a free T-shirt.

\*Download a universal donor card from [www.donorworld.com](http://www.donorworld.com) (follow the link "Become a donor" at the top of the screen).

\*Sign the back of your driver's license with a ballpoint pen or permanent, fine-point marker.

\*Fill out a New Jersey state registry form at [www.sharenj.org/registry.htm](http://www.sharenj.org/registry.htm)

More information about the research project and the campaign is available at [www.scils.rutgers.edu/~odc](http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~odc).

 Print Article

For questions or comments about this site, contact [Greg Trevor](#)  
Last Updated: May 30, 2006

© 2013 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. All rights reserved.

[XML](#)