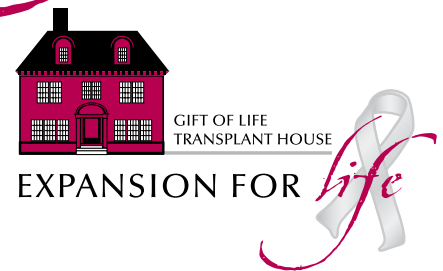


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# SHARING THE *gift*

A NEWSLETTER OF GIFT OF LIFE TRANSPLANT HOUSE VOLUME 11 | NO 1 | SUMMER 2011

## Heart Transplant Patient Simon Keith Speaker for 2011 Golf Tournament Banquet



Summer's here...and the 27th Annual Gift of Life Benefit Golf Tournament is coming up quickly on Monday, July 11, 2011 at the Rochester Golf & Country Club. Besides golfing on a premier course, reconnecting with transplant friends and Gift of Life staff, and enjoying a gourmet banquet dinner, we are excited to announce this year's program speaker – Simon Keith.



Simon Keith

Simon holds the distinction of being the first athlete in the world to play a professional sport after undergoing a heart transplant. He was just 21 when, in July of 1986, he received the heart of a 17-year-old boy in a successful operation performed by Dr. Mohsin Hakim, at the Papworth Hospital outside of Cambridge, England. Simon was a world class soccer player prior to the operation, and was determined to return to "his normal." His goal was realized and after playing at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) for two seasons, he was drafted #1 overall into the Major Indoor Soccer League only three years after his surgery.

After retiring from professional sports, Simon settled in Las Vegas where he became a successful businessman. Married for 20+ years to Kelly, with three children (Sarah, Sam, and

Sean) he began his advocacy for organ donation at year 25 since his initial operation. "I felt the need after 25 years, and after building some credibility as an organ recipient, to become an advocate for organ donation." He now travels the world sharing his story hoping to inspire others to become organ donors as well as to inspire recipients to open their minds to what can be achieved post transplant.

Staff member Sharon Verbeck will also share some thoughts about her unique *Gift of Life* Experience. On February 1, 2011 Gift of Life lost one of its most devoted volunteers, Sharon's daughter, Sandra. Sharon and Sandy's journey from Las Vegas to Rochester is a remarkable story. In Sharon's

*Continued on page 2*



All lined up and ready to go!

words, “It is difficult for me to express the gratitude and love Sandy had for this community. As I continue to make it my home, I can only hope to pass on the loving kindness that was shown to me and my daughter throughout the years.”

Come enjoy a great day on the course with friends, patients, staff, and volunteers. Come listen to Simon and Sharon’s incredible stories, bid on an array of intriguing silent auction items, and purchase your raffle tickets for \$500, \$300, and \$200 cash prizes. If you aren’t a golfer, banquet only tickets are also available for \$40 per person.

For more information or to register, please go our web site [www.gift-of-life.org](http://www.gift-of-life.org) and click on the Events tab at the top of the page.



GOL staff and board members man the registration desk.

If you would like to acknowledge a transplant recipient or friend or special event, we have a sponsorship opportunity for you called “Tributes.” A \$100 donation will honor this person/event with your personal message on a sign which will be placed on the greens at the golf course and with a note in the program.

Raffle tickets are available from any Gift of Life board member of at the 705 or 724 transplant house reception desks. You need not be present to win.

Please call 507-288-7470 or email [office@gift-of-life.org](mailto:office@gift-of-life.org) for more information.

## Thank you, Sister Jane Frances

By Dr Tom Schwab, GOL Board Member and Past President

This month we celebrate the retirement of Sister Jane Frances Gregoire, O.S.F.

The Board of Directors invites all our friends to share in congratulating our Executive Director, Sister Jane upon her retirement after 20 years of absolutely exceptional service to *Gift of Life*.

Sister Jane has served on *Gift of Life*’s day-to-day leadership and management team longer than any other single person in our history.

One of nine children Sister Jane was born in Buffalo, New York. An O.S.F. Sister since 1957, she first taught 7th and 8th grade English and literature for ten years.

Beginning in 1971 she served as an administrative services director at her order’s New York Motherhouse. During her 20 year career there she earned certifications in asbestos handling, EPA inspections and boiler operations.

Sister Jane also has first hand experience in knowing how life-threatening illness can profoundly affect patient and family. Her only sister died tragically of leukemia at the young age of 24 and Sister Jane herself is a breast cancer survivor.

Sister Jane was drawn to *Gift of Life* when in 1991 she was given the opportunity to combine her occupational talent and her life’s experiences with her passion to help people. So began the inseparable missions of Sister Jane as our Facilities

Manager and Sister Margeen Hoffman, O.S.F., as our first Executive Director. After the untimely death of Sister Margeen in August of 2007 Sister Jane was appointed *Gift of Life*’s Executive Director.



During the tenure of these two devoted and passionate leaders *Gift of Life* enjoyed unprecedented growth and service to thousands and thousands of grateful guests and caregivers.

Sisters Jane and Margeen were instrumental in the successful architectural design and model of care our home enjoys. That novel design and model of care has since been emulated at other hospitality houses including Mayo Clinic Arizona and Mayo Clinic Florida.

Thanks to their leadership Mayo Clinic transplant patients and their caregivers enjoy the finest home-away-from homes of their kind in our nation.

Sister Jane embodies all that is the very, very best about Gift of Life Transplant House and her Franciscan Community.

Please join us in conveying our most genuine admiration to Sister Jane for her many accomplishments as well as our gratitude for her life’s service to all the fortunate people whose lives she has touched.

## To Gift of Life, With Love

By Sharon Verbeck

My daughter, Sandy Verbeck, and I made our first trip to Rochester in 1987 when she was 15-years-old and officially became a heart patient at the Mayo Clinic. We stayed at the Gift of Life Transplant House for the first time in 2000. We walked past it many times throughout our visits to Rochester – to and from what were to become our favorite restaurants and shops. When it was mentioned to us that we might consider staying there, we were skeptical. In our minds, we expected this dorm-style housing for patients visiting Mayo Clinic to be cold and depressing. From the moment we set foot in *Gift of Life*, we were met with warmth and compassion. Little did we know that the Gift of Life Transplant House would become so much more than a house at which to stay during our visits – eventually it would become our home, both literally and figuratively. We moved into the 705 House to be the night managers in 2007, and then to the 724 House on its opening day in November, 2009. We have had the gift and the pleasure of welcoming numerous patients from all over the world who have become friends. My daughter cherished our home here,

and intended to write a letter to express this love and gratitude but was unable to before her passing on February 1, 2011. It is difficult for me to express the gratitude and love Sandy had for this community. As I continue to make it my home, I can only hope to pass on the loving kindness that was shown to me and my daughter throughout the years.



Sandy and Sharon Verbeck

To all those who enter through the Gift of Life home, may they share the same experience that Sandra and I did until her very last day.

Sincerely,

Sharon Verbeck

## Rochester Mayor Proclaims Sister Jane Frances Day!

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 was officially proclaimed Sister Jane Frances Gregoire Day in the City of Rochester by Mayor Ardel Brede at a surprise recognition event celebrating Sister's 20 years of service to *Gift of Life*. On that beautiful spring evening over 200 guests gathered in the 724 House Dining Room to laugh, reminisce, and honor Sister Jane for her dedicated service to *Gift of Life's* mission.

*Gift of Life* Founder Ed Pompeian noted that during Sister Jane's tenure thousands of patients and caregivers have walked through GOL's doors and felt her caring, supportive presence. He fondly remembered when former Executive Director Sister Margeen Hoffmann recruited Sister Jane to come and spearhead facilities management for the campus. Following Sister Margeen's death, Sister Jane accepted the Executive Director role. Her steady influence continued to keep the house running smoothly. Her leadership also played a major role during the planning and building of the 724 House. "Sister Jane has been instrumental in making *Gift of Life* what it is today – from one eight bedroom house into a three building campus with 87 bedrooms. She has mowed lawns, planted flowers, shoveled snow, organized events, encouraged donors and comforted patients and their families," stated Ed.

Long time Board Member and Past President Roger Erickson presented Sister Jane with a framed print of the 705 House. A paver honoring her will also be placed in the 724 House Peace & Healing Memorial Garden.



Sister Jane with fellow Franciscans.

A number of Sister Jane's fellow Franciscans were also present to share in the evening. Sister Ramona Miller, Associate Minister at Assisi Heights, spoke of how proud the Community was of Sister Jane's work at *Gift of Life*. "We want you all to know how well Sister Jane has lived the Franciscan tenets in her work at *Gift of Life* and how proud we are of what she has achieved. We are so happy to be here tonight to acknowledge her efforts."

The program concluded, patients, families, staff, volunteers, and guests enjoyed a wonderful buffet. Sister Jane stories filled the air – there were plenty of good ones to share!

*Gift of Life Board Member Ron Kreinbring, and his wife, Nancy, befriended patient Mary Melquist at the time of her stem cell transplant in 2004. Mary recently shared the following letter about her Gift of Life experience.*

## Truly, a Gift of Life

I was one of those who “talked-the-talk” about the end of my life. After all, I am a realistic and spiritual person, believer in life after death. It was inevitable that I would die, that my family would lovingly take my place in the world, dispose of my belongings accordingly, rejoice in the life I had led. My husband would, no doubt, die before me as he is four years older than I. At least, so I thought.

At 68 years of age, I worked as an RN, bicycled, swam, and was an active piano accompanist. An occurrence of breast cancer was behind me and I knew that there was life ahead, life to live.

My husband was soon diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, my daughter was pregnant, and I was diagnosed with amyloidosis. The possibility of dying soon suddenly became a reality, almost a statistical expectation. There is no cure for ridding the body of this protein which invades all body systems and causes their failure.

My family became instantly active and took the “movers and shakers” position. I am a Cherokee Indian, a thinker, ready to accept that which cannot be changed.

Before I knew it, I was at the headwaters of amyloidosis – the Rochester Mayo Clinic, being evaluated and scheduled for a stem cell transplant. The decision to do so did not come easily. The alternative authorities did not all agree. At my age and for this disease, they questioned that decision, thinking it was far too extreme, that chemotherapy alone would accomplish a similar outcome – not a “cure” but an extension of life.

My family would accept whatever decision I made. After volumes of research, contact with others who had recent but similar treatments, my decision was to go forward with the transplant.

My sister insisted on becoming the caretaker of both my husband and me. We toured and registered at the Gift of Life Transplant House. What a GIFT that was for us! Surely that

was a sign and a gift that we had made the right decision. Love and support for all of us surrounded every corner of our being. The unspoken gifts received there were, and still are, far beyond our expectation.

To our disbelief, in that setting, amyloidosis and stem cell transplant became almost a “routine” diagnosis. Other residents’ diagnoses and transplants threatened younger and seriously ill people with lives yet to be dreamed and lived.

As new residents, we learned quickly how to support my and others’ deficits and immune systems, how to access and fulfill needs independently, the importance of encouragement received and given. Interactions with other transplant recipients and families gave perspective to our own situation.

What otherwise could have resulted in isolation and depressive days found those living there encouraged by on-going life. We all were delighted with caring staff, delighted with entertainments, involved in joyful music, story-telling, sharing of life’s journeys, occasional sumptuous dinners provided by outside volunteers, and the making of new, often to-be-life-long, friends.

Courage was witnessed, sadness was shared with others who truly understood, and successes were celebrated. Life was recognized as fragile and, truly, as a gift.

My family and I can never show enough gratitude to *Gift of Life* for all it has meant and done for us. We totally support its true gifts in our journey through life.

Now, seven years post transplant, I am loving a 6-year-old granddaughter, feeling great and thankful for each new day.



## SUMMER WISH LIST

\$25 for a guest room night

Compact fluorescent light bulbs –  
60 & 100 watt

Paper towels

Facial tissue

Forever stamps – 44 cents

Postcard stamps – 29 cents

4 pack toilet paper

Table napkins

Paper plates

Hand sanitizer

Liquid hand soap

Liquid dish soap

Regular & decaffeinated coffee

Coffee creamer

Individual packs of  
Splenda, Equal, or  
Sweet’n-Low

Crystal Lite lemonade

Wrapped candy, especially chocolates



## Dr Edwards Shaves His Beard for GOL

Mayo Clinic cardiologist Dr. Brooks Edwards had an interesting dilemma – a full beard and a wife who was tired of looking at his whiskery face. It kept him warm during the winter, but spring was on its way, and it was time for the beard to go. As a dedicated supporter of *Gift of Life*, he came up with an idea for a fundraiser. If he could raise \$200, he would shave it off in public and donate the money to GOL. Well, lots of people were interested in seeing that beard go. Cash and checks kept coming in – a total of over \$1200 was raised!

The beard came off during a formal shaving ceremony attended by Mayo staff and friends with lots of laughs and teasing. Thanks for your creative fundraising efforts Dr. Edwards!



Dr. Edwards – bearded and clean shaven!



## We'd Give you an A+ for Sure!

Stewartville, MN 7th-grade students Derek Krenke and Zachary Payton had a health class homework assignment to do – and it was a big one, their Service Learning Project. After investigating several community service organizations they decided to support *Gift of Life* by collecting donations from the GOL Wish List. The boys put together a flyer listing needed items and posted it at their school and local businesses in Stewartville. They provided drop-off and pick-up services. They told other people about *Gift of Life* and its mission.

On Saturday, March 26th Derek, Zachary, and their chaperone, Autumn Wright, delivered a car full of assorted kitchen and household items to the 705 House. They also presented a check for \$75 to Sister Jane Frances to pay for three nights lodging for a family in need. Derek's Grand-

ma had baked a Chiffon cake and sent toppings and whipped cream for the guests to enjoy. According to Autumn, "The boys told me that even though this wouldn't be a required project for them next year, they'd like to do it again. They really enjoyed visiting with some of the guests and seeing first-hand how much all of the donations were appreciated."

Thank you Derek and Zachary for your efforts – your get an A+ in our book!



Derek Krenke and Zachary Payton

## Elks Raise Funds for Gift of Life

Thank you Rochester Elks Lodge 1091 for the assorted fundraising events you hosted this past winter benefiting Gift of Life including a dance, raffle, and pool tournament. We appreciate your support!



Elks representative Sue Foster presents a check to Sister Jane.

## The Dollar Dance

*A letter to Gift of Life from newlyweds, Mickey & Samantha Keefe*

In 2007 Ron Matye was diagnosed with bile duct cancer (cholangiocarcinoma) at his home in Ohio and was referred to the Mayo Clinic. He and his wife Pat were guests at the Gift of Life Transplant House during the summer of 2008 when he received a partial liver transplant from Pat's brother. He was cleared to go home and continue treatments. Sadly the cancer metastasized to his pancreas and he lost his battle to pancreatic cancer on April 7, 2009. He was able to spend his last months with his beautiful wife Pat, their son Jason, daughters Danelle and Kim, and their six grandchildren who he adored. Ron will always be remembered as a loving and devoted husband, father and dear friend.

Ron served in the U.S. Navy with my father, Tim Baudoin. They were both crew members aboard the U.S.S. Finback submarine. When Ron came to Mayo for his transplant, he and my dad were able to reconnect. When Ron was feeling well my parents would take them on road trips around southeast Minnesota and boating on the Mississippi River. I believe it was nice for the Matye's to have friends here when they were so far away from home and loved ones.

When Mickey and I were dating, Mickey also lost a close friend to cancer in 2009, Daniel (D.J.) Shimek. He was 32 years old and left behind a wife and four beautiful children. He was an avid golfer and an amazing father. He was a Rochester resident his entire life and was loved by many and is missed every day.

While planning our wedding, I wanted to do something to honor both Ron and DJ. I thought of different ways we

would be able to do this and shared my idea with Mickey. We both agreed that during our reception, we would have a dollar dance and donate the money raised to charities in Ron and DJ's names.

The night of the wedding reception, January 22, 2011, we displayed a side by side picture

of Ron and Pat Matye and DJ with his family. We let our guests know who the people in the pictures were, how we were going to honor them and where the donations were designated. It was very special because Ron's wife Pat and his son Jason were there. We had kept this a secret. Our guests were very touched and more than willing to donate to such a wonderful cause. Some gave regardless of whether they danced with us or not!

When the dancing was done, we had raised \$800. Half, \$400, was given to the Gift of Life Transplant House in Ron Matye's name to help assist families in financial need.

Thank you Gift of Life House for everything you did for Ron and Pat, and for all the patients you help every day!

With love,

Samantha & Mickey Keefe



Samantha and Mickey Keefe

### GIFT OF LIFE TRANSPLANT HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

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*Past Executive Director (retired)*  
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*724 House Manager & Volunteer Program Coordinator*  
 Steve Tarara  
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 Dave Losee, Sharon Verbeck

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#### Housekeepers

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*Receptionists*  
 Sister Colleen Byron, OSF;  
 Sister Patricia Himmer, OSF;  
 Sandy Mullen

*Sharing the Gift*, a newsletter about events and issues of interest to friends and supporters of Gift of Life Transplant House, is published twice annually by Gift of Life, Inc. at Rochester, Minnesota. Article topics and story contributions from guests are always welcome. Please submit them (preferably) via email to [Lynnette@gift-of-life.org](mailto:Lynnette@gift-of-life.org); include your name and all relevant contact information. Questions may be directed to Lynnette Stadtherr at the same email address or by phone at 507-288-7470, or by mail at 705 Second Street, SW, Rochester, MN 55902. The name, *Sharing the Gift*, and all newsletter contents are copyrighted 2010 by Gift of Life, Inc. Permission to reprint or use any aspect of this newsletter must be obtained in writing from Gift of Life prior to use.

## Hand Transplantation – a New Era of Transplantation at Mayo Clinic

*Hatem Amer, MD, Brian T Carlsen, MD, Thomas R Schwab, MD, and Steven L. Moran, MD*

The loss of one or both hands is a devastating, life altering injury. In the 1960's reconstructive plastic surgeons developed techniques for re-attaching severed limbs that provided some hope for those injured. Unfortunately, for many the severed limb is either so badly damaged or the delay in reaching medical attention precludes such therapy. Victims of these injuries have had to rely on prosthetics to enable some distant semblance of normalcy. For many, the prosthetics can offer only a cosmetic improvement. Others have been able to use mechanical prostheses with varying degrees of complexity. The technology of prosthetics has evolved at a fast pace. Now days there are myo-electric prostheses that can be controlled by the patient's remaining muscles and allow some degree of complex motor function. Many patients however, although fitted with these state-of-the-art prosthetics do not use them as although they can grasp objects, they lack sensation. Some patients feel that they are too cumbersome for the function they provide.

The dream of being able to transplant limbs has been present for many years. A limiting factor was the perception that the presence of skin would preclude such transplants. The skin is extremely antigenic- that is the body of the recipient will recognize it as foreign and will reject it. This hurdle was overcome with the development of potent immunosuppressive medication and in 1998 the first successful hand transplant was performed in France. The second case was performed in the USA in 1999 and continues to function to this day. Both men and women have received such transplant. Some received one limb, others two. Worldwide there have been more than 68 hand transplants. Most have been accomplished with the use of standard modern immunosuppression such as that used for solid organ transplants as kidneys and hearts. As of the most recent registry publication all hand transplant recipients regained protective sensation, which is they could feel hot and cold and avoid injury from these elements. More than three quarters also regained discriminatory sensation and can differentiate two points of contact on their skin. Some patients have returned to work and others have pursued new occupations with their regained function.

Hand transplantation is a form of vascularized composite allotransplantation (VCA). VCA differs from solid organ transplantation such as heart and kidney in that it involves transplanting complex structures containing nerves, bones, skin and tendons and depends on the re-growth of nerves for function. Transplanted limbs require nerve regeneration to feel and function and as such recovery following a



*Mayo Clinic's Hand Transplant Team*

transplant requires many months. During this recovery time intense physical therapy is needed.

Other forms of VCA include face transplants and laryngeal transplants. These organs come from deceased individuals- the organ donor. For the organs to be donated the family of the deceased individual have to specifically approve such donation beyond the approval for solid organ donation. That is, for example in Minnesota, designating donor status on the drivers license will not be considered by the local organ procurement organization as consent to donate one or both hands or face. A separate consent is needed.

Mayo Clinic has a long tradition of bringing the latest of therapies to the aid of patients in need. The Clinic has a strong microsurgery team that performs complex reconstructive procedures on hand injury victims as well as reattaching severed limbs. There is also long standing and deep experience in solid organ and bone marrow transplantation. With this background it became a natural extension to combine the various expertise available in a multi disciplinary team to offer hand transplantation as a treatment option for victims of hand amputations. The Mayo Clinic program has begun evaluating patients in September of 2010. It is the first program in the United States to offer hand transplantation in the clinical care of patients. Patients will not have to be enrolled in experimental protocols to benefit from this form of therapy.

Not every patient with an amputation may want or can receive a transplant. There is an extensive evaluation process that aims at assessing the risks to the individual from the immunosuppressant medications as well as their ability to cope with the intensive physical therapy and medication regimens that follow transplant. Strict adherence to these regimens is essential for a good outcome. Although transplantation may not be the best option for some patients, many will benefit from this new innovation.

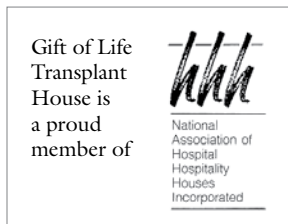
## GIFT OF LIFE TRANSPLANT HOUSE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Gift of Life Transplant House is to provide transplant patients and their caregivers with high quality, affordable accommodations in a supportive, home-like environment.



GIFT OF LIFE TRANSPLANT HOUSE  
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Rochester, Minnesota 55902

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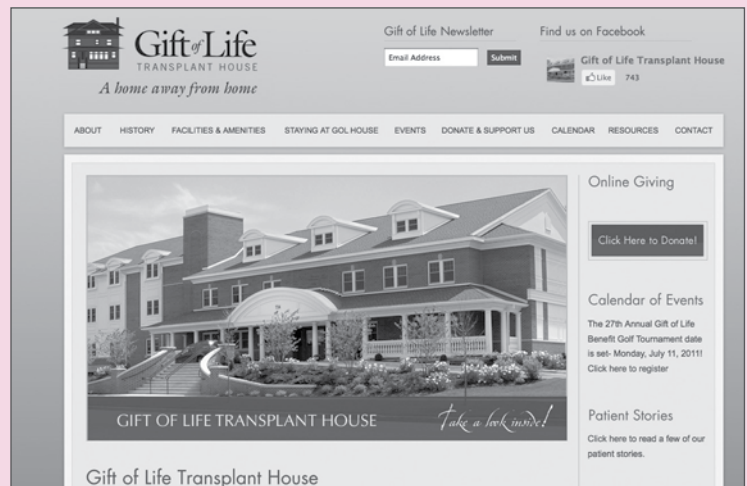
## New Web Site Debuts!

### Bigger, Better, Bolder!

It's new, it's exciting, and it looks AWESOME! We have redesigned our web site and there are lots of new features for you to check out.

- Monthly Highlights
- Patient Stories and Testimonies
- On-line Donation
- On-line Registration for Gift of Life Events
- Information about Volunteer Opportunities or Hosting a House Dinner
- And much, much more!

We invite you to take a look. You'll find us at:  
[www.gift-of-life.org](http://www.gift-of-life.org)



If you are a Gift of Life patient, past or present, and would like to share your story along with a photo or two, please contact us at [office@gift-of-life.org](mailto:office@gift-of-life.org). We would love to hear from you.



## A Lasting Tribute...

Honor a loved one, remember a friend, thank a donor, or acknowledge a special event by purchasing a TRIBUTE PAVER for placement in the Peace & Healing Memorial Garden. Cost is \$100. A message of up to 72 characters can be printed. Visit our web site at [www.gift-of-life.org](http://www.gift-of-life.org) and click on the Donate tab at the top. Print off the paver form and return it with payment to the address indicated.