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November is National Donor Sabbath month, celebrating the interfaith support of organ donation as an act of generosity and compassion that saves the lives of others.

There are 110,000 people waiting nationally for a transplant and nearly 10,000 right here in New York, many of whom may be your congregants, family, and friends. New York also has an organ shortage resulting in longer wait times for those on the transplant waiting list. On average, a New Yorker dies every day waiting for the organ transplant that could have saved their life.

Religious leaders are encouraged to affect positive change by being outspoken that organ, eye and tissue donation saves lives and extends the blessings that are given to us. By educating our communities we can encourage more people to say yes to donation and give the gift of life to someone who desperately needs it.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP**

**There are many ways your congregation can support and celebrate the lifesaving power of organ donation. Any of the efforts listed below will go a long way in doing something meaningful for those in need of a transplant.**

* Share a message in support of organ donation during a sermon.
* Allow someone from your congregation, or another member of the community, who has been affected by organ, eye and tissue donation (a transplant recipient, someone waiting for a transplant, or the family member of someone who was an organ donor) to share their story during a sermon. If you would like to request a speaker to share their story, please submit a request here: <https://bit.ly/357DmgG>
* Say a prayer for those waiting for a transplant, transplant recipients, and the family members of organ donors during service.
* Feature a message in support of organ donation in your bulletin.
* Send a newsletter to your congregation.
* Write and submit an article supporting organ and tissue donation to your local newspaper.
* Post about organ donation on your social media handles and add LiveOnNY.org **as a link on your website** as a resource for congregants to access further information.

Below you will find resources to help you communicate the importance of organ, eye and tissue donation with your congregants. Please let us know how else we can be helpful.

**Resources**

**Support for Organ Donation**

Organ donation is not prohibited by religious law, according to the Hindu Temple Society of North America. Donation is considered an individual’s decision. There are many references that support organ donation in Hindu scriptures. Daan is the original word in Sanskrit for donation meaning selfless giving. It is also third in the list of the ten Niyamas (virtuous acts). Life after death is a strong belief of Hindus and is an ongoing process of rebirth.

"Organ donation is in keeping with Hindu beliefs as it can help to save the life of others."

— Mr. Om Parkash Sharma MBE, President, National Council of Hindu Temples

**Suggested Newsletter Content**

**Organ Donation is a Honorable Act**

The Hindu faith is rooted in compassion and charity and the idea that Hindus should do whatever they can to eradicate the suffering of others.



“We are never prohibited from any form of charity, including the donation of one’s body,” says Hindu Temple Society of North America President Uma V. Mysorekar, MD, FACOG. “Hinduism is a way of life with a strong belief in life after death and the laws of Karma, good and bad actions. The soul, unlike the body, is eternal.”

Followers of Hinduism are expected to live a virtuous life and share the belief that all life is sacred and should be loved and revered. According to Dr. Mysorekar, the concept of organ donation in the Hindu faith is not new.

“Since time immemorial, the verses of the Vedas from our sages have reinforced the concept of donating our bodies,” she says. “If a sage was passing by, he would have thought, ‘I have two legs … this person doesn’t have any legs … let me give him one of mine.’ It was that simple.”

Dãna, in Sanskrit, means generosity and giving. In fact, it is on the list of the ten Niyamas, or virtuous acts, therefore the faith considers giving someone a second chance at life to be an honorable act.

“If Hinduism is a way of life, we can give a portion of ourselves to others. When we give charity by way of our bodies, it is an act that serves not the individual, but humanity at large,” says Dr. Mysorekar.

To learn more or to sign up to be an organ donor, please visit LiveOnNY.org.

**The Facts About Saving Lives**

* Organ donation is often possible even with certain health conditions.
* There is no age limit to be an organ donor - the oldest donor in New York was 93 years old.
* The organ donation process follows strict guidelines to ensure fairness and equity.
* Because organ donation saves lives, major religions celebrate it as a final act of kindness.
* Registering as an organ donor does not change your medical care.

**Share on Social Media**

National Donor Sabbath month celebrates the interfaith support of organ donation as an act of generosity and compassion that saves the lives of others as shared in this short video: <https://bit.ly/2IEtzav> #NationalDonorSabbath #LiveOnNY

Organ donation is an act of generosity that helps save the lives of others by giving the gift of life. #NationalDonorSabbath #LiveOnNY



**Suggested Bulletin Text**

November marks Donor Sabbath, a time when we recognize the importance of organ donation. Organ donation is an incredible act of generosity and charity. One person can save up to eight lives and leave a lasting legacy. Nearly 10,000 of our fellow New Yorkers are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant and there are not enough donors. Please consider signing up to save a life. To learn more, visit LiveOnNY.org.

**Suggested Prayer**

**The Strength to Give: A Prayer for Organ Donation**

Rock of Ages, Almighty God...

give us strength!

Give strength to those awaiting transplantation,

whose bodies betray them,

whose spirit abandons them, waiting, hoping, praying...

for the gift of life.

Give strength to the relatives and friends

of those awaiting transplantation,

who dearly love them,

who steadfastly care for them,

waiting, hoping, praying...

for the gift of life.

Give strength to the grieving families

considering organ donation.

Help them find comfort in the power

to end the wait,

to fuel the hope,

to answer the prayers...

by saying ‘yes’ to the gift of life.

Rock of Ages, Almighty God,

give our loved ones the strength to Live On...

through the miracle of transplantation

and the legacy of organ donation.