



Media Release
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Entertainment icons urge you to be a hero

Jann Arden, Paul Brandt, and Russell Peters support organ donor registration

MONTREAL – Inspired by people they each know who have been directly affected by kidney failure, Canadian entertainment icons Jann Arden, Paul Brandt and Russell Peters encourage all Canadians to register to become organ donors in a new public service announcement released today by The Kidney Foundation of Canada for National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week.

These stars share the grim facts about kidney failure and organ donation. Of the 4,500 Canadians on the transplant waiting list, more than 77% are waiting for a kidney. Recent statistics indicate 25% of the people who died while waiting for organs were waiting for a kidney — and the need for kidneys far exceeds the supply. The Kidney Foundation of Canada wants to change that, and is aiming to increase kidney transplant and organ donation by 50% by 2020.

"One of my best friends had a lung transplant and years later, a kidney transplant," said Ms. Arden at the recent filming. "She's alive today because of organ donors. She was so happy to hear that I was doing this to help bring attention to the need for more donors."

Registering only takes a few minutes through the various provincial registries. Although 90% of Canadians polled indicate they are willing to be organ and tissue donors, registry numbers don't reflect that. One registered organ donor could help up to eight people.

"There is a desperate need for donated organs. By raising awareness, our goal is to reduce the wait times and help more people to get the life-changing transplant they need," said Paul Kidston, Kidney Foundation of Canada National President. "People need to have this conversation with their loved ones and make their wishes known."

Kidney failure can happen to anyone at any time. Each day in Canada, 15 people are told their kidneys have failed. There is no cure. Dialysis and transplant are the only treatment options.

"Everyone has the power to change a life forever," said Mr. Kidston. "By registering as an organ donor, a simple process that takes about two minutes, you can become the hero someone is waiting for."

On average, kidney patients wait 3.9 years before a donor kidney is found. It's not a good news story for everyone as 30-40% of people on the wait list will never get the kidney they need. An additional 25,000 people undergoing life-sustaining rigorous dialysis treatments don't even make it onto the wait list. Only 43.2% of dialysis patients survive at least five years.

Watch the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4Z9kfYXl5s> and take action now by visiting www.kidney.ca to find out how to register in your province.

Living donation rates across the country continue to grow with nearly as many living donors as there are deceased donors in Canada annually. Latest available statistics reflect 553 living organ donors compared to only 592 deceased organ donors in Canada. A living donor can help one person through the donation of a kidney or a portion of the liver.

A recent campaign in Quebec to raise awareness of living donation features well-known businessman and former star of television's *Dans l'œil du dragon* Gaétan Frigon, whose spouse Hélène Héroux donated a kidney to him. The public service announcement has been widely distributed and is featured on a website explaining the donation process: <http://www.donatingakidney.ca/testimonials>

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The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the national volunteer organization committed to reducing the burden of kidney disease through funding and stimulating innovative research; providing education and support; promoting access to high quality healthcare; and increasing public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.

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