Richmond Resident Among Donors Honored in 2024 Rose Parade

Virginia Beach, Va. (Dec. 28, 2023) – A 13-year-old Richmond girl who restored sight for two Virginians as a cornea and tissue donor will be featured in the Rose Parade in Pasadena, Calif., on Jan. 1.

Clarke Danielle "Dani" Reese tragically passed away in 2007 following a sudden medical emergency. Her parents, Mike and Donnetta, were devastated at the loss of their only child – but they were supporters of donation, and they knew Dani would want to help others. "The only thing that gave us hope is that some good would come out of her death," Donnetta Quarles-Reese said.

Dani's gifts will be honored with a floragraph, a portrait of plant materials, on a Rose Parade float. LifeNet Health, the Organ Procurement Organization for most of Virginia, is a sponsor of the float. The goal is to raise awareness and build support for donation.

"Dani helped so many others through her family's selfless decision," said Debbie Hutt, Director of National Donor Family Services for LifeNet Health. "Her mother, Donnetta, has become a spokesperson for donation. We are honored to shine the spotlight on Dani this year."

Dani was an eighth-grade honor student when she passed away. She was a Girl Scout and an aspiring performer who loved acting and dance. Classmates admired her independent spirit, Quarles-Reese said. "Dani was a special child. She touched so many lives in her short 13 years. She was selfless."

Quarles-Reese believes that Dani's story will inspire others to sign up as donors. "I'm hoping they see that goodness and kindness she exuded, and that they would do it too."

Tragically, Quarles-Reese lost her husband and Dani's father, Mike, to a stroke 10 years after their daughter's passing. He also became a tissue donor.

Quarles-Reese has worked to build support for donation within the Black community as part of LifeNet Health's One Hero initiative, which addresses disparities in donation and transplantation.

More than 2.5 million tissue transplants are performed each year, providing healing for people suffering from traumatic injuries, debilitating conditions, and life-threatening illnesses. One tissue donor can help more than 150 people.

Organ donation is also crucial. There are over 100,00 men, women and children waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant in the U.S. – including more than 2,800 in Virginia. One donor can help save the lives of up to nine people. Signing up as a donor is a fast, easy process at RegisterMe.org. You can also register at the DMV.

The Rose Parade, in its 135th year, is a New Year's Day tradition for millions in America and throughout the world. Viewers can watch the parade starting at 11 a.m. EST/8 a.m. PST. The Donate Life Float has been part of the parade since 2004.

Dani is the seventh LifeNet Health donor to be honored in the parade.

About LifeNet Health
As a global leader in regenerative medicine, LifeNet Health continues to push the boundaries to give healing every advantage. The organization offers groundbreaking transplantation and cellular solutions that support healthcare providers and power the work of scientific researchers. This forward-focused approach has improved life for millions of patients, all while honoring donor heroes and their families. Learn more at www.lifenethealth.org.

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