



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# WAITING FOR TRANSPLANTS, WASHINGTON RESIDENTS JOIN OTHERS TO HONOR DONATE LIFE MONTH

## *Alicia Foss waits for a lung transplant; Tanya Sloan did not get her transplant in time*

SEATTLE, WA. – (April 1, 2009) – Alicia Foss and Tanya Sloan were waiting for the same miracle on different sides of the state. Their miracle was their hope for a new pair of lungs. They were going to meet for the first time at a giving luncheon benefiting organ, eye, and tissue donation on April 30-- to honor Donate Life Month and the gift of donation. But Tanya didn't make it to Donate Life Month. She died on February 1, 2009. Alicia continues to wait and joins thousands of others across the nation on the transplant waiting list, as April's Donate Life Month calls upon all of us to make a difference.

Alicia, who lives in the Tri-Cities, was five weeks old when she was diagnosed with cancer. She underwent extreme treatments to get her well. Healed from cancer, she was able to live an active and "normal" young life, until she came down with pneumonia as a senior in High School. Her chest x-rays showed that one of her lungs was partially collapsed and both had tissue damage, accredited to the chemotherapy she received as a child. Alicia has continued to worsen. She is on oxygen all the time, can't walk without getting tired, has lost a massive amount of weight, and is working just to stay alive each day. Alicia's lung capacity is currently at 10%. Some days she can barely move. She has been waiting for almost 3 years for her second chance at life.

Tanya, from Seattle, was born with cystic fibrosis. She led a fairly normal, healthy childhood but also had her first battle with pneumonia her senior year in High School. She spent a long time in the hospital, and was admitted to the hospital several times the following year. This led to daily medications, exercises for the lungs, and frequent IV antibiotics. Then in the past few years, she began to require oxygen at night and eventually, could hardly walk to the corner without her oxygen tank. Taking a shower became physically exhausting. She had very recently said "I do still believe that I will see better days ahead of me, I just need to be patient and wait for them." Those better days in life never came for Tanya.

All across the city and state, Donate Life Month will be honored and celebrated-- Donate Life flags will fly at all five transplant centers and at many other hospitals in Washington, see the complete list below. The Governor will acknowledge Donate Life Month by sending a memo to all state employees providing 5 minutes out of their day to learn more about organ, eye, and tissue donation and to register their donation wishes. There will be a reception at the state Capital Building in Olympia on April 8 for all representatives, hosted by Donate Life Today. And Tanya's family and Alicia along with her family will join us for a giving luncheon benefiting organ, eye, and tissue donation on April 30th at 11:30 at the Seattle Marriott Waterfront.

**DONATE LIFE MONTH** is a national initiative held each April to heighten organ, eye, and tissue donation awareness and encourage everyone to register their donation wishes. There are more than 100,000 people on the national transplant waiting list. 18 people die each day waiting for transplants. Locally, over 1,600 people are waiting and not all of them will live to see the transplant they need.

But Alicia continues to have hope: once she gets her lungs, she says, “there are so many things I want to do... Just being able to go for a walk or a run ... I plan on traveling and even going skiing for the first time. What I really want is to someday have a family...My list just goes on and on.”

**There are three ways to be an organ, eye, tissue donor in Washington:**

- Register online at [www.DonateLifeToday.com](http://www.DonateLifeToday.com)
- Call toll-free at 1-877-275-5269 and request a brochure to fill out and return.
- Say ‘yes’ to donation when renewing your driver’s license. Residents who already have a heart on their driver’s license are automatically added to the Donate Life Today Registry.

The Donate Life Today Registry is managed by LifeCenter Northwest -- one of the 58 federally-designated non-profit organ procurement organizations (OPO) in the United States. By educating the community about the need and the importance for people to register their donation wishes, they hope to help the over 100,000 people waiting for a transplant. The Washington Donate Life Today Registry is a confidential database of donation wishes to be carried out at the time of death and accessed only by donation professionals. For more information, or to register your wishes, go to [www.DonateLifeToday.com](http://www.DonateLifeToday.com)

**Hospitals Flying Donate Life Flags:**

Harrison Medical Center  
Overlake Hospital Medical Center  
Providence Regional Medical Center  
Seattle Children’s  
St. Joseph Hospital, Bellingham  
St. Joseph Medical Center, Tacoma  
Swedish Medical Center  
University of Washington Medical Center  
Virginia Mason Medical Center

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