



Office of
Jason Crowell State
Senator

The Crowell Connection



Senator Jason Crowell – Serving Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry, and Scott Counties.

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Giving the Gift of Life through Organ Donation

April is National Donate Life Month, and residents looking for a true story of tragedy providing the gift of life for others need only to take a drive here in Southeast Missouri. On Route B between Highway 34 and Route UU, they will see a sign honoring the memory of Aaron McKinney, a 15 year old young man who died from a car crash on that stretch of road. While recovering from the same crash in the hospital, Aaron's mother Dani Dunn made the decision that, from her tragedy, others could receive of the greatest gifts one person can give to another.



The Aaron McKinney Memorial Highway Dedication ceremony was held on February 9, 2008.

Organ, tissue, and blood donation is a selfless act that requires you to literally give of yourself for the sake of another. In Missouri, the number of people willing to donate has risen. Since 2006, the number of people on the state registry has increased from 2.1 million to 2.4 million. Currently, more than 1,250 Missourians are on the list awaiting an organ transplant. After a death,

an authorized hospital official can access the organ donor registry to determine if that person wanted to be an organ and tissue donor, but the family ultimately makes the final decision.

Aaron McKinney knew that, should anything happen to him, he wanted to give the gift of life. His mother honored those wishes by donating her son's two kidneys, his

pancreas, and his liver. He also gave two people the gift of sight and was a tissue donor for between 50-75 other people. In this way, Aaron's goal of helping people while he was alive was able to continue after his passing. His mother came to me last year and asked if it would be possible to name the stretch of highway where the accident took place in honor of her son. I was proud to play a very small role in making sure Aaron McKinney's memory will continue to remind drivers of the importance of safe driving and the second chance one can give through becoming an organ donor.

National Donate Life Month is intended to celebrate the generous efforts of citizens such as Aaron and his family who have donated organs, tissue, marrow, or blood. The event also works to encourage others to consider giving such a gift to those in need. To become an organ donor, you should: fill out the organ donor information on the back of your driver's license, become a member of Missouri's Organ Donor Registry, and tell family members you want to be an organ and tissue donor.

No one wants their family to have to go through a tragedy, but the story of Aaron McKinney and National Donate Life Month remind us of the potential gift of life that we can all provide. If you would like to join Missouri's Organ Donation Registry or would like more information visit <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/OrganDonor/> or call 888-497-4564.



Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.senate.mo.gov/crowell>.

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