

GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE: BECOME AN ORGAN DONOR

I first realized how momentous it was that my friend John (who comments occasionally as "Gunner") would have a lung transplant when he called me on a Friday evening to tell me he had gotten the call from the hospital. Here he was, I thought, utterly dependent on oxygen, unable to walk more than 25 feet without a rest. He'd go into the hospital, get put to sleep, and—if all went well—wake up with the ability to breathe. It all went really well for John; within weeks he was back at home, healthier than he had been since I met him in 2004.

I wanted to give John an opportunity to tell his story. I thought it might encourage any of you who have considered becoming an organ donor. You could save the life of someone like John.

The Gift of Life provides some details about the pressing need for donors:

- 98,000 men, women, and children are awaiting a life-saving transplant.
- 103 people in one 24 hour period or 37,595 every year are added to the national waiting list— that's one person every 13 minutes.
- 17 people per day or 6,205 per year die due to a lack of available organs for transplant.

The process to become a donor is fairly simple. In MI, for example, you can sign up at the MI organ donor registry. In VA, you can sign up at the VA DMV website or Save7Lives. In NY you sign

up with the Department of Health. And you should always talk with your family so they know you want to be an organ donor.

Find out how to become an organ donor in your state.

John will try to join the comments in case you've got questions for him.