

**DONATING FOR LIFE**  
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**Organ Donation has been on my mind a lot since the sudden loss of Lauren Renee Miller, a beautiful soul; whose family is also very special to me.**



According to the Department of Health and Human Services/U.S. Government Information on Organ Donation and Transplantation in 2017 24,770 lifesaving transplants were performed nationally. Although 95% of Americans support organ donation; only 54% are actually registered as donors. Of those who are donors, only 3 in 1,000 donors die in a way that allows for organ donation. As of August, 2017 there are 114,000 + on the national transplant waiting list. 20 people die every day without a transplant and every 10 minutes a new patient is added to waiting list. These statistics are startling to me; however, there are success stories.

The Miller family, I spoke of earlier, made the decision that their dear sister, granddaughter, niece, cousin and friend was able to live on through organ donation. According to KODA a perfect match for the organs are located prior to the organs being harvested because they are only viable for a short period of time after being removed. It was comforting to her grandparents, Ray and Nancy Miller, to know that something good came of Lauren's tragedy. Because of this donation 4 individuals were given a second chance at life. Her kidneys went to two females, whose ages are 33 and 45, both lungs went to a 28 year old female and her liver went to a 59 year old male. According to KODA/Kentucky Organ Donor Affiliates, all transplants were successful and the recipients are doing well. It is the Miller families hope that someday they will be able to meet with the recipients. This will only be arranged through KODA if both the donor family and recipients desire to meet.



At Lauren's visitation there was a medal lying beside her that I asked about. It was given to the family by KODA; and the information contained with it stated, "This medal was created to honor the extraordinary compassion demonstrated by families of donors in the face of their tragic loss. It also serves to honor the life-giving generosity of donors themselves." After further research I found that President George W. Bush signed into law the Stephanie Tubbs-Jones Congressional Gift of Life Medal Act (HR 7198) on Tuesday, October 14, 2008. HR 7198 created a commemorative medal for organ donors and their families, recognizing the brave act of organ donation. A Congressional Medal is an award bestowed by the U.S. Congress; and is one of the highest civilian awards in the United States. The award is given to individuals who perform an outstanding deed or act of service to the security, prosperity and national interest of the nation.

**I was so glad for the family that Lauren's organs were a perfect match for 4 persons on the waiting list. The recipient families were able to have a wonderful holiday season thanks to the Miller families generosity. The families of those who received lifesaving gifts for the holidays were sure to be rejoicing for their loved ones.**

**According to Donate Life Indiana 3,882,854 are registered as donors in Indiana; with 99% of those who are registered doing so at the BMV. The next time you go to renew your license consider donating for life.**