

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)



Jordan Cox, a junior public relations major, and Carissa Coon, a senior accounting major, volunteer at the organ donor table on Wednesday in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union. The tables were open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday along with 10 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. Wednesday, allowing students to sign up to be organ donors. (Heather Holm/The Daily Eastern News)

Organ donation gives gift of life

Registered, new donors urged to sign up

By: James Roedl/Staff Reporter

Posted: 10/8/09

Some Eastern students are giving their hearts away, literally.

Carissa Coon, a senior accounting major, is asking Eastern students to register as organ donors in the six-week program, "EIU Campus Challenge with Donate Life Illinois."

The campus challenge, which runs Oct. 5 to Nov. 26, will sign up new organ donors, and help current organ donors ensure they are properly registered at a table set up in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union.

A table will be set up Mondays and Wednesdays one week, and alternating Tuesdays and Thursdays the next week. This week the table was up Monday and Wednesday.

Coon's interest in organ donation started when her brother received a heart transplant at age three.

Her interest has been renewed because her brother at age 20 now needs a heart and kidney transplant, he's been on the list for six weeks.

Because of this, Coon realizes the deep importance of organ donation.

"You're giving the gift of life to someone who could desperately use the organs," Coon said.

Coon, who wants to spare another family the hardships her family has had to endure, has teamed up with her

sorority Delta Delta Delta to put on the program.

The challenge posed by Donate Life Illinois is to register the most students; with awards given to two schools, the school that signs up the most students, and the school that signs up the highest percentage of the student body.

The awards, though, are not the point of the program since donate life says more than 100,000 people nationwide are waiting for a transplant.

According to Donate Life Illinois, more than 4,700 people are waiting for transplants in Illinois.

Coon said almost anyone can donate and just a few things disqualify someone from donating, such as having had a transplant and a few diseases.

She also said one organ donor can save or improve the lives of 50 others.

The Donate Life Illinois Web site reports 60 percent of adults in Illinois are registered organ and tissue donors.

But because of a law passed in 2006 where a new donor registry was started, some people who think that they are registered organ donors may not be.

Coon said some people will not donate because of myths associated with organ donation. The most common myth Coon has heard is doctors won't work as hard to save an organ donor. She said this is false because hospitals don't know a patient's status until after he dies.

Another common myth is organ donation is against a potential donor's religion, which is not true, Coon said.

Others are afraid that if they donate their organs they won't be able to have an open casket funeral, but Coon said all signs of organ donation are covered by the burial clothing.

Cori Clouston, a junior sociology major, is helping Coons sign up students in the campaign.

"I think [the] donate life campaign is a good cause, it is the gift of life. I've seen what it can do for families," said Clouston, who upon reading recipient stories made her want to do more.

James Roedl can be reached at 581-7942 or jmroedl@eiu.edu.

© Copyright 2009 The Daily Eastern News