

The Daily Illini

University gets second place in Donate Life Campus Challenge

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Two thousand sixty-nine Illinois college students have just saved the lives of 51,725 people in the country.

As a part of the Donate Life Campus Challenge, in which Illinois universities competed to sign up the most organ donors, the University gained 393 new donors on the Illinois registry, giving it a second-place finish after the College of Dupage. Helping the cause was Lauren Zabrin, sophomore in LAS, who used her own story to motivate other students to get involved.

"My cousin received a heart transplant," Zabrin said. "My family was obviously very active during that time with organ donation because if she hadn't found a heart she wouldn't be here anymore. I've grown up knowing that organ donation is a very important cause and my whole family is very adamant about it."

Zabrin's connection to the cause encouraged her to get other members of her sorority, Alpha Omicron Pi, to get involved in the Campus Challenge and spread awareness for the need to register to be an organ donor.

"We set up a booth on the Quad for a week and we ended up getting 186 people, and that was added to the whole-school total," Zabrin said.

Zabrin and the members of Alpha Omicron Pi sorority also spread the word by e-mailing houses to sign up to register and bringing registration cards to other houses. She said the Greek community was very receptive to helping out.

"U of I did a great job with the Greek houses and getting people energized about it and using Lauren's cousin as a connection," said Diane Eikenberry, the Donate Life Illinois Campus campaign manager. "It's a really organized community and all of them are really about helping other Greeks out."

Zabrin said she believed her personal connection to the organ donation cause was what brought a lot of people to sign up to be donors, especially those in her sorority.

"I think within my house, a lot of people knew me so they were willing to help," Zabrin said. "I know every girl worked at least one hour at our booth, which was really important to me because

I could see that they wanted to support me."

President of the University's chapter of Students for Organ Donation Erin Kasper said she believed the Campus Challenge was very successful in spreading the word about the need to register to donate, since a change in registration rules in 2006 now requires each organ donor to manually register instead of just signing the back of a driver's license.

"A lot of people we came up to didn't know there was a new registry, and just spreading the news about the Web site, even just talking to people about it helps us to see what people are thinking and help answer any questions," she said.

Eikenberry said she agreed that the Campus Challenge was a success, and that she hopes that success will spread outside of the Illinois college campuses.

"The purpose of the Campus Challenge is to raise awareness of organ donation and show how easy it is to save someone's life," Eikenberry said. "What U of I did and all the other colleges did was really put a human face on this issue."