



Becoming an organ donor is easy!

JUST VISIT

richiesspirit.org/organ-donor

FOR INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO REGISTER IN YOUR STATE



Know the Facts:



There are over 112,000 people on the **organ transplant waiting list** in the U.S.



Approximately 2,000 of those awaiting an organ transplant are **children under the age of 18**.



38% of organ donors were **living donors** in 2019.



70% of patients **in need of a bone marrow transplant** are in search of an unrelated donor.

anyone can sign up to be an organ donor



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New York, NY 10150
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Richie's Spirit Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. All contributions are fully tax deductible as allowed by law.

Checks made payable to Richie's Spirit Foundation can be mailed to the address above. Donations are also accepted online at www.richiesspirit.org



Jordan (center) with Grammie and PawPaw at last year's Ten Year Anniversary Party in Dallas.

RSF salutes all of the frontline workers who have been fighting this pandemic. During a dark and turbulent time, organ donation continues to be a shining light of hope to those in need. Despite 2020's challenges, we continue to share Richie's story to promote organ donation to people all across the country. On behalf of the entire RSF team, thank you for keeping Richie's spirit alive for over 12 years!

First and foremost, I hope this newsletter finds your family safe and healthy.

As Covid-19 has put a renewed spotlight on everyone's health and well-being, Richie's Spirit Foundation continues to educate people about organ donation and support donor recipient families.

This summer, Richie and my grandfather - "PawPaw" as we call him - was hospitalized after testing positive for Covid-19. At 92 years old, our family was preparing for the worst which was made even more difficult not being able to be by his bedside. Miraculously, PawPaw fought the virus and was reunited with Grammie, his wife of 68 years, earlier this summer. Our family is so thankful to all of the doctors, nurses, and hospital staff who helped PawPaw.

RICHIESSPIRIT.ORG

Passing the spirit,

Jordan
Jordan Herskowitz
Executive Director

Q&A with Bridget Llull

Bridget Llull, RSF's Programs Intern and 2019 Significant Challenge College Scholarship finalist, works on RSF's education initiatives and Transplant Assistance Grants. She shares her thoughts on organ donation and her work with RSF:

What are you studying at Catholic University of America and why?

I'm a sophomore studying Psychology and Biology, with plans to become a Physician Assistant. After having scoliosis surgery at 14, my nurses and doctors inspired me to work in healthcare, and I would especially love to work in a children's hospital in the future.

In what ways have you been impacted by organ donation?

Organ donation has significantly impacted my entire family. Because of a genetic kidney disease, my mom, grandmother, and two of my aunts have all been given the gift of life through transplants. In 2013, my dad was a living kidney donor for my mom, after she waited over four years on the transplant waiting list. People who decide to register as organ donors really do make a significant difference for families like mine!

What has been the most rewarding part of your work with Richie's Spirit Foundation?

I've enjoyed a lot about working with Richie's Spirit Foundation, especially working to expand the Transplant Assistance Grants program. I have been in contact with several social workers to tell them about this great program, and it's extremely rewarding to see more and more families learn about, apply to, and benefit from these grants.

What do you wish more people knew about organ transplantation?

Some people don't register as organ donors because they are uncomfortable thinking about death, but your life doesn't have to end for you to save someone else's with organ and bone marrow donation. About 38% of last year's transplants were from living donors, and over 20,000 bone marrow/stem cell transplants were performed in 2017. It's easy to register as an organ donor and join the national bone marrow registry through information on richiesspirit.org.



The mission of Richie's Spirit Foundation is to promote organ donation to people of all ages through education awareness programs, grants to honor Richie's memory, and inspiring others to live with a positive spirit.

Transplant Assistance Grants Expansion

Transplant Assistance Grants provide financial support to families with a child waiting for, or who has recently received, a life-saving transplant. This year, Richie's Spirit Foundation expanded the successful program to include recipients of bone marrow and stem cell transplants in addition to organ transplant recipients. In 2020, the Transplant Assistance Grants program awarded \$13,000 to 24 families.

Nicholas, one of the grant recipients, received a life-saving stem cell transplant from his older brother last October after he was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. The Transplant Assistance Grant Review Committee - which comprises medical professionals, doctors, nurses, and those who knew Richie - answered these new calls for assistance, with the compassionate and generous spirit that Richie inspired. One committee member wrote, "Bone marrow and stem cell transplantation can be a miracle for patients. I believe that assisting these types of patients is consistent with our mission."



Naja, age 15, was awarded a Transplant Assistance Grant after she received a life-saving bone marrow transplant.

"RSF's Grant has been helpful in covering the cost of daily meals and other necessities during the hospital stays. No one really looks at those costs, but ... eventually it takes a toll on the pocket. We are grateful for the support we have received on this journey towards a healthier and better life for Naja."

- Mother of Naja, 15, Bone Marrow Transplant Recipient

2020 WINNERS



Vince Domingo



Maggie Conlon



Hassan Javed

College Scholarships

Richie's Spirit Foundation awarded \$5,000 in college scholarships to three impressive students who, like Richie, demonstrate leadership, character, and initiative. The winners were selected from a pool of nearly 2,000 applicants nationwide.

Vince Domingo *First Place* | Home Town: Mission Viejo, CA | College: UC Santa Barbara
Born with rare eye disorders causing visual impairment and misalignment, Vince Domingo experienced ableism, bullying, and isolation throughout his childhood. After immigrating to the United States at age 10, Vince chose to connect with his community by studying psychology, and volunteering at a nursing home for those with mental disabilities. He is committed to serving those who suffer from trauma, challenges, and illnesses.

Maggie Conlon *Runner Up* | Home Town: Brookfield, WI | College: Butler University
Maggie Conlon spent the first two years of her life battling cancer. Maggie grew up self-conscious of a lisp caused by the remnants of the muscle cancer under her tongue, until she found her confidence in public speaking. From as young as eight years old, Maggie has been sharing her story proudly, and with grace. Whether raising funds for cancer research, or advocating for important legislation in DC, Maggie uses her skills and experience to make a big difference.

Hassan Javed *Honorable Mention* | Hometown: Avon Park, FL | College: Columbia University
Motivated by his childhood experiences of abuse, divorce, and financial insecurity, Hassan Javed is driven to improve the economic, political, and social forces that impact individuals. Hassan founded a peer-to-peer mentorship program to increase graduation rates at his high school and continues to lead with passion and curiosity.

Passing the Spirit Virtually



Break a Sweat with RSF

Richie's Spirit Foundation's Young Professional Network gathered virtually this summer for an energizing class with Rowgatta Fitness Studio. The event raised over \$400 for the Transplant Assistance Grant program.



Scholarship Award Ceremony

Scholarship finalists shared their incredible stories live during a virtual award ceremony, where the RSF community and College Scholarship judges celebrated this year's recipients.

What People Are Saying

"I am so honored to have been a recipient of this award, and I will do my best to honor the spirit of Richie as I continue to give back to the community. Thank you for helping me accomplish my dreams of becoming a nurse. I appreciate this award more than anything."
- Anna Martin, 2019 Scholarship Recipient

"Since this pandemic, I haven't been able to work the way I need to because many people at my job get sick and I need to stay healthy to protect my daughter. I stay home to take care of my family. Receiving the Transplant Assistance Grant funds is a great help."
- Mother of Ty'yahna, 17, Heart Transplant Recipient

Growing Up Jordy Pordy: The Revival

In May, Richie's Spirit Foundation produced the virtual revival of *Growing Up Jordy Pordy*. The hilarious and heartwarming autobiographical one man play was written and performed by RSF Executive Director, Jordan Herskowitz. Herskowitz narrated a powerful story about growing up as the forgotten middle child with his two brothers suffering from Cystic Fibrosis and his family's journey with organ donation. *Growing Up Jordy Pordy* explores the themes of self-identity, family, religion, and the overall strength of the human spirit.



Eleven years after debuting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, more than 700 audience members enjoyed Herskowitz's award-winning play and the lively post-show talkback from the comfort of their homes. Richie's Spirit Foundation connected a community, during a time of isolation, around the story that inspired the RSF mission.

"With a story that is so inspiring, we really appreciated being part of it," one viewer said after the performance. "We hope your brother's memory continues to be a blessing for your family. I will definitely be supporting this amazing foundation that was created in Richie's memory."



In 2019, Richie's Spirit Foundation raised
\$23,014.24
from 225 donors,

increasing donor participation
by over 20% from the year before.

This year, Richie's Spirit Foundation nearly doubled funding for our Transplant Assistance Grant program. 20 families from across the country were awarded a total of \$13,000 for expenses incurred by their child's transplant.

thank you for your support!