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Contact: Brianna Barnes  
860-367-6187 (mobile)  
[Brianna.Barnes@TrinityHealthOfNE.org](mailto:Brianna.Barnes@TrinityHealthOfNE.org)

## **Saint Francis Hospital Opens Donate Life Room for Families Considering Organ Donation**

*In partnership with New England Donor Services, it is the first Donate Life Family Room in the U.S.*

HARTFORD, Conn. (April 25, 2022) – Saint Francis Hospital, a member of Trinity Health Of New England, has partnered with New England Donor Services (NEDS) and Katie’s Foundation to open a *Donate Life Family Room*, the first of its kind in the United States. The room will offer a quiet, comforting, and private space for families of potential organ donors to have the delicate discussions surrounding organ and tissue donation.

“The *Donate Life Family Room* is an extraordinary addition to our hospital,” said Thomas Burke, BPharm, MBA, President of Saint Francis Hospital. “I am so proud of our partnership with New England Donor Services, as well as our clinical teams who facilitate the donation process with our patients and their families. Organ and tissue donation is incredibly important and saves thousands of lives each year. I cannot express my gratitude enough to those patients and families who make the decision to donate.”

The centerpiece of the *Donate Life Family Room* is a Donor Memorial tree mural, with each leaf representing a patient at Saint Francis who saved or healed lives with their organ or tissue donation. The room includes soft, natural lighting, natural earth elements, and calming colors, allowing families to have a peaceful place to consider the opportunity for their loved one to help others through the gift of life. The Family Room will also provide a comfortable space for families to gather as their loved one’s life saving donation proceeds.

“New England Donor Services staff provide support and information to the families of potential organ donors as they consider making a life-saving gift through donation and transplant,” said Alex Glazier, President and CEO of New England Donor Services, the federally-designated Organ Procurement Organization serving the New England region, including Connecticut. “A peaceful space in which to have these conversations supports the well-being of family members and highlights the importance of donation as a caring community.”

“Katie’s Foundation, in memory of Katie Kupec, is honored to support the renovation of a donor family room and memorial donor tree at Saint Francis Hospital,” said the Kupec Family. “May these be a tribute

to those who have given life through organ donation, a comfort to those suffering loss, and a symbol of hope to remind us of the delicate, yet beautiful, interconnectedness of life.”

David Shapiro, M.D., Chief Medical Officer and Organ & Tissue Donation Champion at Saint Francis; Heather Harris, Hospital Relations Coordinator for NEDS; and Steven Averhart, Director of Family Services at NEDS, collaborated to create a space of unity, diversity, and equality.

“This space now represents all individuals who gave the ultimate gift of life through donation at Saint Francis,” said Dr. Shapiro. “Families from all experiences will feel included, and the cultural, religious, and community needs of each person will be represented. Donors and their families at Saint Francis are a beacon of hope for all those in need of life saving organ donation. Families who utilize this space will never feel alone in their donation journey.”

So far in 2022, Saint Francis has had three organ donors with 14 organs recovered. Of those 14 recovered, 11 were successfully transplanted into recipients, including a lifesaving heart and double lung transplant. Receiving this transplant from the same donor means better chances of long term function. In 2021, Saint Francis had 13 organ donors. From those 13 donors, 40 organs were recovered and 34 were successfully transplanted. Six organs were used for education and research by the organ procurement organizations, which allows for even more lives to be saved in the future.

For more information on organ donation and to register as a donor on the National Donate Life Registry, please visit [RegisterMe.org](https://www.registerme.org).

### **About Saint Francis Hospital**

Saint Francis Hospital has been an anchor institution in Connecticut since 1897. Saint Francis is a member of Trinity Health Of New England and Trinity Health, one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic health care delivery systems in the nation. Saint Francis Hospital, a Level 1 Trauma Center, is a 617-bed hospital, a major teaching hospital, and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other Saint Francis entities include the Comprehensive Women’s Health Center, the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, the Smilow Cancer Hospital Yale-New Haven at Saint Francis, Trinity Health Of New England Medical Group, and Community Health and Well Being, which includes the Curtis D. Robinson Center for Health Equity, the Joan C. Dauber Food Pantry, and the Greater Hartford Family Advocacy Center. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @SaintFrancisCT

### **About New England Donor Services**

New England Donor Services is the not-for-profit organization that coordinates organ and tissue donation in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, the eastern counties of Vermont and Bermuda. Through its federally designated organ procurement organization, New England Organ Bank (NEOB), and its centralized tissue donation services operation, NEDS serves thousands of donor families each year who have generously made the decision to donate and honors the wishes of those who registered as donors and gave the gift of life. Responsible for one of the 57 OPOs that make up the nation’s donation system, NEDS works with nearly 200 hospitals and serves 14 million people in our region, screening nearly 50,000 potential donor referrals annually. Working sensitively with the donor families, NEDS staff leads donation authorization discussions, maintains medical support of potential donors, coordinates recovery surgeries, allocates organs according to the national transplant waiting list and directs transport of organs to transplant centers and tissues to processors. Learn more about NEDS at [www.neds.org](https://www.neds.org)