



THE INSIDER

FRONTLINES

MAY 2010

USAID Organ Donors Give the Gift of Life

By Brittany Jackson

Sara Rasmussen-Tall was working at USAID offices in Bamako, Mali, in 2007 when she heard news that her brother, Geoffrey Rasmussen, needed a kidney within a year. Geoffrey had been sick for quite a while—he had suffered from a degenerative disease since he was a teenager. Without a second thought, Rasmussen-Tall offered her own kidney.

“It was an automatic decision of the heart. Not much time or effort had to go into thinking about it,” said Rasmussen-Tall, now a social protection team leader at USAID offices in Kinshasa, Congo.

She was able to take 30 days of paid leave to travel to Japan for the surgery—where her brother lives with his family—because of a policy that encourages federal employees to become organ donors.

The Organ Donor Leave Act, which took effect in 1999, gives U.S. government employees up to 30 days of paid leave each year to recuperate from organ donation, in addition to annual and sick leave. Before the act was passed, employees had only seven days of paid leave for organ donation.

“When a colleague told me about the Organ Donor Leave Act, I was even prouder to be an American,” said Rasmussen-Tall, who, almost two years after the surgery, has complete kidney function and only a few light scars that mark the place of her incision.

The act was a part of the Clinton administration’s efforts to increase organ donations nationwide, President Bill Clinton said after signing the bill into law a little over a decade ago.

For Steve Hadley, a program adviser in USAID’s Bureau for

Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade in Washington (EGAT), the new law was welcome support for his decision to donate.

The Organ Donor Leave Act, which took effect in 1999, gives U.S. government employees up to 30 days of paid leave each year to recuperate from organ donation, in addition to annual and sick leave.

It’s been nearly four years since Hadley gave a kidney to his brother-in-law, Baird Brown. Brown’s health was deteriorating rapidly; he had severe kidney disease and was on dialysis, Hadley said.

Hadley took four weeks leave to undergo surgery in May 2006. Brown is now back to normal, busier and more active than anytime before the surgery, Hadley said. “It’s remarkable to me that you can save someone else’s life by giving up something you don’t need.”

It was an early September morning last year when Judy Payne, an e-business adviser for EGAT, entered an operating room at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md. The avid runner and hiker had come to anonymously donate one of her kidneys to someone the hospital team selected as a perfect match, using a database of potential recipients, all waiting for a much-needed transplant.

“Thousands of people die on the wait list for kidneys every year,” Payne said. “I did it because I found out that people can live healthily without a kidney; I wanted to do good.”

Payne had done plenty of research about organ donation before the surgery. She had even found support in virtual donor buddies she met online who were also altruistic donors—those willing to give an organ to anyone in need, rather than just a friend or relative. And a colleague told Payne about the Organ Donor Leave Act, a benefit that Payne said helped in the donation process.

She spent three days in the hospital, and within four days of the surgery, Payne was up and walking about 30 minutes a day.

A tiny scar, a new friendship with her kidney recipient, and increased attention to personal health serve as lasting reminders of her organ donation. Now Payne, who in the past has run 12 marathons, is working toward her next endeavor: trekking up to 16,000 feet in Bhutan.

There are plenty of potential donors and even potential recipients within the USAID family, Payne said.

“People should consider donation when it fits in their



Sara Rasmussen-Tall, pictured with her husband, Aliou Tall, donated a kidney to her brother in 2008.



Judy Payne anonymously donated her kidney last September.

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WHERE IN THE WORLD...

FEBRUARY 14, 2010 – MARCH 13, 2010

PROMOTED

Todd H. Amani

Mission Director

Peter Argo

Deputy Mission Director

Kevin L. Armstrong

Deputy Mission Director

Erica Bigelow

Contract Specialist

William R. Brands

Mission Director

Alfreda Brewer

Supervisory Regional Development Officer

Robert M. Clay

Director HIV/AIDS

Cathleen M. Conley

Program Analyst

Marcelle K. Davis

Staff Assistant

Carleene H. Dei

Mission Director

Aubrey D. Eaton

Supervisory Director Higher Education Program

Barbara Ellington Banks

Supervisory General Development Officer

Kay J. Freeman

Deputy Mission Director

Susan Kosinski Fritz

Deputy Mission Director

Alonzo L. Fulgham

Chief Operating Officer

Richard S. Greene

Supervisory Health Development Officer

Nonie Hamilton

Social Science Analyst

Robert G. Hellyer

Director

Karen R. Hilliard

Mission Director

Shanon M. Krause

Contract Specialist

Edward T. Landau

Director

Sarah Ann Lynch

Supervisory Program Officer

Dana R. Mansuri

Deputy Mission Director

Lisa McCabe

Program Analyst

Peter R. Natiello

Senior Development Advisor

Patricia L. Rader

Mission Director

James B. Sanford

Comptroller

Carrie Thompson

Director

Bradley Wallach

Supervisory Regional Development Officer

Mark A. White

USAID Representative

Pamela A. White

Mission Director

Kimberly T. Wiggins

Accountant

Robert J. Wilson

Mission Director

Robert E. Wuertz

Supervisory General Development Officer

REASSIGNED

Kimberly Bostwick

COMP/NE/OJT to COMP/FSLT

John P. Brady

COMP/FS/REASSIGN to Colombia

Jeff R. Bryan

DROC to Ukraine/ORMM

Robert R. Camilleri

FA/COO/PM/PPM to FA/COO/PM

Charlene B. Chase

M/FM/P to M/CFO/P

Michael J. Crosswell

FA/GF to FA/GF

Carol J. Dabbs

FA/GF to FA/GF

Barbara Ellington Banks

Haiti/HRD to HR/FSP/SP

John G. Ellis

FA/GF to FA/GF

Kevin Christopher Fox

COMP/NE/OJT to COMP/FSLT

Ricki Ann Gold

ME/TS to ME/MEA

Corey Andrew Hancock

COMP/NE/OJT to Peru/JOS

Michael H. Hryshchshyn

Pakistan/PFNP to COMP/FSLT

Juno Lawrence Jaffer

COMP/NE/OJT to Uganda/JOS

Angela Jeffries

FA/GF to FA/GF

Selam Kebrom

COMP/NE/OJT to Senegal/JOS

Carla M. Komich

EGAT/PAICO/PI to Africa/EA

Alexander C. Lane

COMP/NE/OJT to COMP/FSLT

Frederick E. Machmer

COMP/FS/REASSIGN to Afghanistan/OD

Brian Mehle Martalus

COMP/NE/OJT to DROC/JOS

Roslyn Matthews

FA/GF to FA/GF

Scott S. McKissock

FA/PFNP to Asia/SPO

Stephen P. Menard Jr.

COMP/NE/OJT to Indonesia/JOS

Matthew E. Mills

COMP/NE/OJT to RSC/JOS

Christopher Darrouze

Nardi

COMP/NE/OJT to Colombia/JOS

Sam F. Nassif

COMP/NE/OJT to RDMA/GDO

Mei Mei Peng

COMP/NE/OJT to Tanzania/JOS

Alder B. Phillips

COMP/NE/OJT to Nepal/JOS

Justin C. Pressfield

LPA/CL to FA/COO

Robert Rhodes

Africa/DP/POSE to COMP/FSLT

John T. Rifembark

EGAT/AG/ATGO to HR/FSP/SP

Rebecca M. Robinson

Uganda/PPD to Uganda/JOS

Juan Carlos Rodriguez

Uganda /PPD to Uganda/JOS

Christopher D. Saenger

COMP/NE/OJT to Ecuador/JOS

Trisha A. Savage

COMP/NE/OJT to Caucasus/JOS

Donald A. Sillers

EGAT/PR/PASSN to EGAT/EG/EPG

William K. Slater

COMP/FS/REASSIGN to COMP/FSLT

Scott R. Stiens

M/CIO/BSE to FA/COO/PM

Roger Kattirath Sydney

COMP/NE/OJT to RDMA/JOS

Karen L. Towers

Africa/WA to LAC/RSD

Paul Anthony Vaca

COMP/NE/OJT to West Bank/Gaza/JOS

Paul E. Weisenfeld

Peru/D to COMP/FS/REASSIGN

Rebecca R. White

COMP/NE/OJT to Philippines/JOS

Carol A. Wimbish

Datcher
M/CFO/P to M/CFO/P

RETIRED

Kurt Aldwin Clark

Gerald Florkowski

C. Grant Morrill

Natasha Rosenberg

John S. Waggoner

Andrew Winters

MOVED ON

Robert F. Buzzard

Agrimiro Campo

Hector Cerpa

Alberto Cevallos

Cathleen M. Conley

Al Elgendy

Kenneth C. Ellis

Rixby J. Hardy

Barry J. MacDonald

Ana M. Meehan

Reena Patel

David J. Rinck

Sashi E. Selvendran

Michelle Shirley

Mark Silverman

Amy Sink

Tamra Thompson

IN MEMORIAM

Jeannetta Wilson Black, 89, died Dec. 10, 2009, in Bethesda, Md. A retired desk officer, Black first joined the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research in 1946, supporting the Austrian Peace Treaty; then preparing policy papers for the assistant secretary for economic affairs and for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. In 1962, she worked for newly created USAID as officer in charge for Guinea, Laos, Mali, and Thailand until her retirement in 1972. She was a

graduate of Vassar College and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Black worked at the MIT Radiation Laboratory during World War II. She was married to Robert B. Black, former USAID Foreign Service Officer.

Ray David Cramer, 80, died Feb. 8 in Dallas, Texas. In 1965, Cramer joined USAID working in the auditor's office. He traveled to various countries during his 18-year career as regional inspector general for audits. He retired from USAID in 1983. Cramer

graduated *cum laude* from Rider University, receiving his bachelor's degree in commerce. He served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean conflict.

Leonard M. Durso, 88, died April 2 in Springfield, Va. Durso, a former deputy director for USAID's Asia bureau, worked for the State Department and USAID for 31 years. He retired in 1980. Durso was a graduate of Georgetown University.

Laura L. Gale, 99, died March 28 in Freehold, N.J. Gale

came to Washington before World War II and, by 1942, was working as a secretary for the Navy in Panama. She later worked in Shanghai for a United Nations relief organization and in Greece helping administer the Marshall Plan for the U.S. Economic Cooperation Administration. Gale joined the State Department in 1958 and was assigned to Libya before joining USAID upon its formation in 1961. She worked for USAID in Spain and Africa before retiring in 1974.

Gordon K. Prouty, 87, died April 10 in Falls Church, Va. Prouty joined USAID in 1961 overseeing food aid projects. He served in Central America, South America, West Africa, and Vietnam before retiring in the 1980s. Prouty was a 1945 graduate of Colgate University in New York. He earned his master's degree in foreign affairs from Clark University in Worcester, Mass., and a master's degree in food science from Cornell University in New York. Prouty was a Navy veteran of World War II. ★

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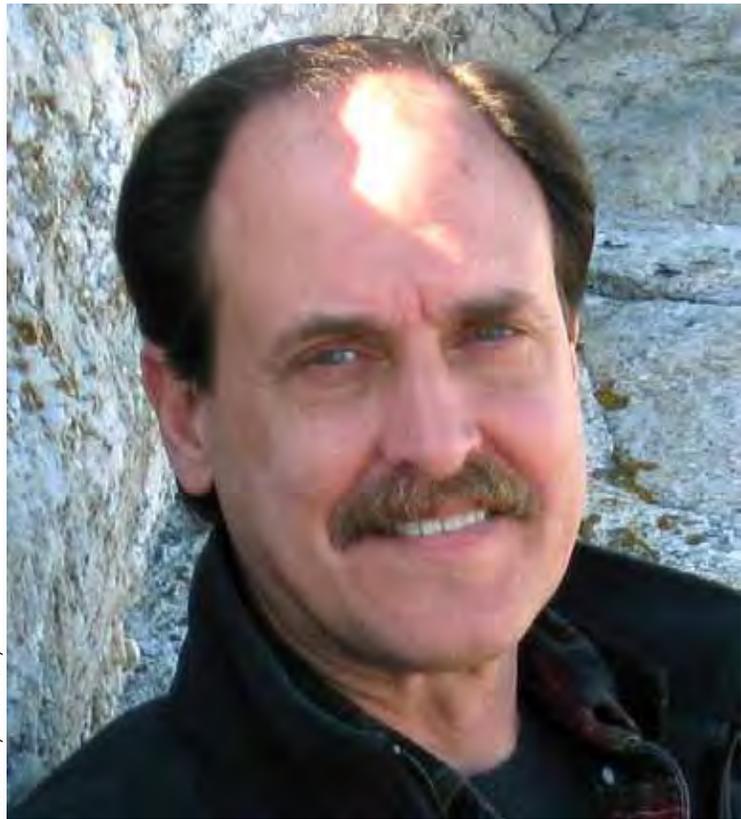


Photo courtesy of Steve Hadley

Steve Hadley gave a kidney to his brother-in-law who suffered from a severe kidney disease nearly four years ago.

lives,” she said. “It’s something that can be done. You can be healthy.”

The Office of Personnel Management doesn’t have available estimates on the numbers of federal employees who have taken organ donor leave since the law went into effect. As of late March, more than 106,000 people across the United States were waiting for life-saving organ

transplants. For Rasmussen-Tall, this statistic alone is enough reason to donate.

“I absolutely urge others to donate,” she said. “The needs are huge and the lists and times to wait are very long. You’re directly saving someone’s life and enhancing your own.”

For more information on how to become an organ donor, go to www.organdonor.gov. ★

WHAT’S IN OUR BLOGS AND HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN

By Rob Noyes

USAID has begun a blog highlighting details of the Agency, the Administrator, the bureaus, and our offices overseas.

IMPACTBlog, which is publicly viewable on the Internet at <http://blog.usaid.gov/>, serves as a place to identify important USAID events and policies.

For Agency employees, the more private intranet blog is also available at <http://blogs.usaid.gov/>. Here, employees can read current posts and create and publish blogs of their own.

The intranet blogs include subject matter such as “insurgency, extremism and terrorism,” the Development Experience Clearinghouse, social media, and bureau-specific blogs like Europe and Eurasia. There are even personal blogs—Adriana, Chris, and Mike all have one. Almost anything goes on the intranet blogs, and most are written to inspire discussion and interaction.

If you’d like to create a blog, head over to <http://blogs.usaid.gov/>, log in to your USAID account, and click the “start a blog” link at the top menu. Or just go to <http://blogs.usaid.gov/sign-up/>. All the instructions for creating and customizing your blog are listed with pictures at the “start a blog” link.

USAID has more great stories to tell than space allows in *FrontLines*. Everyone would still like the benefit of your experience. We hope to see you soon in the blogosphere. ★

Knowledge Services Center Holds Open House

The Knowledge Services Center hosted an open house at the USAID library April 28. The center, located on the mezzanine of the Ronald Reagan Building, offers a range of resources accessible to USAID development professionals as well as the general public.

At the open house, visitors were able to tour the library and meet members of USAID’s knowledge management staff and get research tips from the center’s research services team.

Staffers even gave one-on-one virtual tours of the new Development Experience Clearinghouse website, USAID’s online database of Agency documents over the past 50 years. The revamped site, which will be launched later this year, will offer options to upload and share documents on several social media sites including Facebook.

For more information on USAID’s Knowledge Services Center, go to www.usaid.gov/km/ksc.html. ★



Photo by Patricia Adams, USAID

Anne Marie Spevacek, a senior research analyst with USAID’s Knowledge Services Center, right, speaks with a visitor during an open house for Agency employees April 28. The center provides a range of hands-on and online services to employees and is open to the general public.



Photo by Patricia Adams, USAID

USAID’s chapter of Blacks in Government held a ceremony at Agency headquarters in Washington April 15 to install three newly elected officers: Lawrence Williams as president; Brigitte Tolbert as second vice president; and Vanessa Prout as secretary. Pictured (from left): Williams, Tolbert, National BIG President J. David Reeves, Prout, and former USAID-BIG President Melvin Porter.

IN-HOUSE NEWS

USAID HOSTS FIFTH ANNUAL TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY

More than 120 children of Agency employees crowded the USAID lobby in the Ronald Reagan Building April 22. With smiling faces and right hands raised, the energetic youngsters were sworn in as Agency “employees” for the day by Administrator Rajiv Shah.

“I promise to learn about making the world a better place,” the group said before a host of admiring parents as they kicked off the Agency’s annual Take Your Child to Work Day.

The children bounced between sessions at Agency bureaus that included a chance to be an on-camera reporter in the “Helping Shelter Haiti” exhibit; a tour of the security and badge office; a celebration of Earth Day, *Schoolhouse Rock!*-style; an arts and crafts session; planning a trip to Asia and the Middle East; a lesson in starting a small business; and a live video conference with children who participated in Take Your Child to Work Day in USAID offices in Liberia.

“The best thing I did was [attend] the Asian sector

[session],” said Daniel Hibbert, the 14-year-old son of Lisa Hibbert-Simpson, a press officer in the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs. “I got to learn about the different countries...I had a fun time and it was a good learning experience.”

Zoraida Crespo-Gross, 9, said that she “learned that the Red Sea is not red.” She also learned recycling by using a straw and piece of paper to “make a little flag.”

The daughter of USAID protocol chief Luigi Crespo, Zoraida said she learned what her father does at work: “You throw parties and do different events. Sometimes it is like a meeting.”

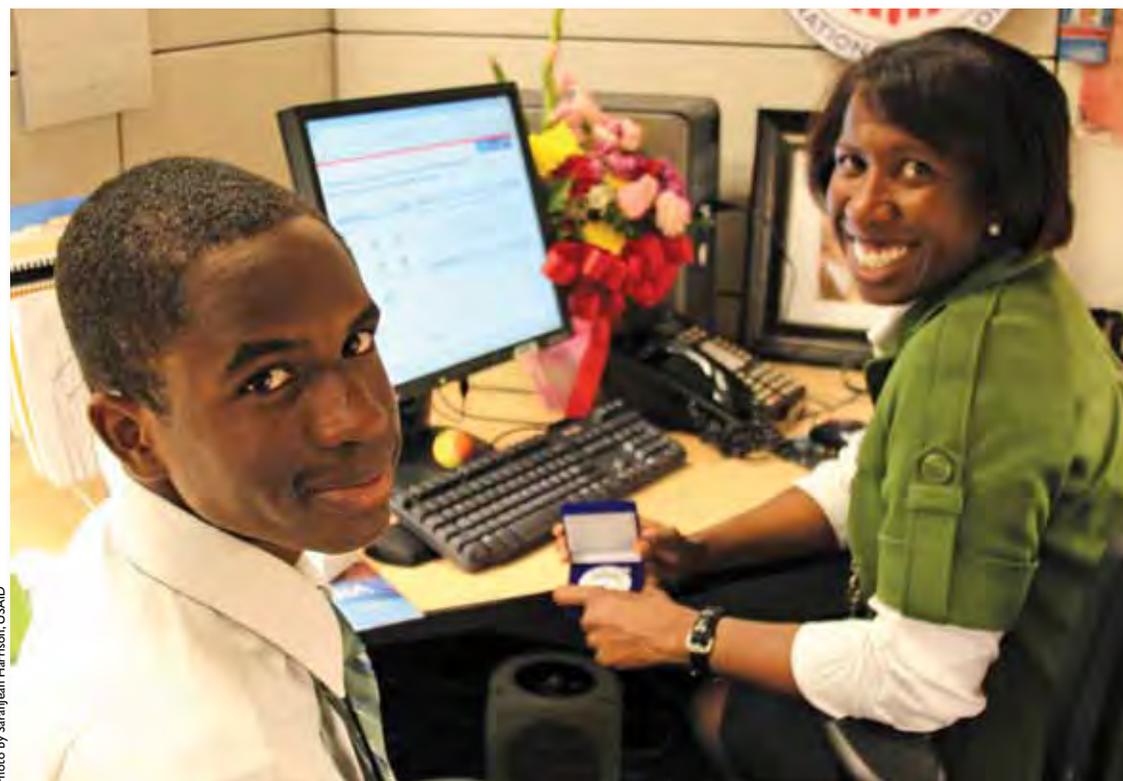
The day concluded with a final session where children with winning raffle tickets received gift cards to McDonald’s, Toys R Us, Best Buy, and Chuck E. Cheese’s. *Sesame Street*’s Abby Cadabby—the show’s first female muppet character in 13 years—paid the kids a special visit. Past celebrity guests have included Nickelodeon’s SpongeBob SquarePants and D.C. United Mascot, Talon.



Administrator Rajiv Shah swears in kids as employees for the day.

Human Resources Assistant Belinda Sholas called the event a wonderful and enriching experience. “It will surely live on in the memories of all of the children who participated,” she said.

This is the fifth year the Agency has hosted Take Your Child to Work Day. ★ — B.J.



Lisa Hibbert-Simpson and son Daniel Hibbert on Take Your Child to Work Day.



Sajan Shah reports live from the “Helping Shelter Haiti” exhibit.

Photo by Sarahjean Harrison, USAID

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Photo by Patricia Adams, USAID