

# BECOME A KIDNEY DONOR

GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE



**Save a life  
It's in you**

## Erma's Legacy of Hope

The life force of Erma was always optimism and hope. It sustained her throughout her family life and her career – and drove Erma in the later years when she was ill. She was convinced that out there, somewhere, were people so selfless and families so compassionate they would commit to the ultimate act of love – a gift of life.

Her words were, “The real heroes and heroines are the patients who are hanging tough and the donors who are faced with hard decisions and give humanity a good name. We are about preserving life. It is indeed a gift.”

The Erma Bombeck Project carries Erma's vision forward. While non-living donors are the mainstay for the majority of organ transplants, The Erma Bombeck Project's goal is to also raise awareness and increase the number of living donors.

It's a tall order to be sure. But so is the need. We urge you to register to be an organ donor, and share the message of living donation. Save a life. It's in you.

[www.ErmaBombeckProject.org](http://www.ErmaBombeckProject.org)

 /ErmaBombeckProject



## HISTORY

Erma Bombeck (1927 – 1996) was a nationally syndicated humor columnist for 30 years, author of twelve books, freelance writer, and a regular on “Good Morning America” for 11 years. Diagnosed with polycystic kidney disease in her 20’s, Erma was a board member of the Arizona Kidney Foundation from 1977 to 1980. In 1980, Erma and the AKF Women’s Board started the annual Authors Luncheon that has grown into one of the largest such events in the country.

Erma began peritoneal dialysis in 1993. She received a kidney transplant from a deceased donor on April 3, 1996 and died of ensuing medical complications 19 days later.

To honor her memory and foster her legacy, Erma’s family formed The Erma Bombeck Organ Donor Awareness Project to promote the benefits of organ donation. Now simply known as The Erma Bombeck Project, the focus remains on continuing awareness of organ donation registration, while educating the public about the option of living kidney donation.



## FACTS

- Thousands of people receive kidney transplants every year, yet **12** people die every day waiting for a kidney because of the critical shortage of donors.
- The average wait for a kidney transplant is **4** years.
- Long delays can affect transplant **success**; worse, waiting patients' health can deteriorate, disqualifying them from receiving a transplant.
- In 2010, fewer than 17,000 kidneys were donated for over 90,000 anxiously waiting patients.
- Today, more than **1,750** Arizonans are still waiting for a kidney.

## Information You Should Know Before Becoming a Living Kidney Donor

A newly transplanted kidney begins removing toxins from the recipient's body within hours, with results that are immediate and profound. The recipient's recovery time is shortened, and many other health complications due to kidney failure are reversed or slowed. Their energy returns, and they no longer need to schedule life around a dialysis machine.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a living donor you must be in good general health and free from serious health risks. Routine tests are performed to determine a potential living donor's physical and mental health, as well as compatibility with the transplant recipient.

For the donor, surgery is performed laparoscopically, which greatly shortens recuperation and lowers risk. Typically, the recipient's insurance covers the donor's medical costs for the procedure and related testing. If a living donor should ever need a kidney later in life, they will be given top priority.

The number of Living Kidney donations has increased by 200% over the past twenty years. To date, there have been more than 107,000 living kidney donors who have given the Gift of Life. If you are considering becoming a living kidney donor, it's important to educate yourself about the donation process, required testing, financial considerations, risks and recovery.

### What is Paired Kidney Donation?

Living donors do not need to be blood-related or even blood-type compatible. Paired donation is when one incompatible donor/recipient pair is matched with another donor/recipient pair facing the same incompatibility situation. Thus, the donor of the first pair gives to the recipient of the second pair and vice versa. This simple exchange concept has now expanded to multiple donor/recipient pairs and even more humanitarian donors.

If you want to donate to a loved one but do not match, paired donation may be an option for you.

To learn more about paired donation, visit:  
[www.paireddonation.org](http://www.paireddonation.org).

“When my friend Roger said yes to donating a kidney to me, it changed my life!”

**Matt Bombeck**

*Living Kidney Donation Recipient*

“My wife Shari's gift of her kidney changed not one life but three – Shari's, my son's and my own.”

**Andy Bombeck**

*Living Kidney Donation Recipient*

“I gave a kidney thinking it would change someone else's life, and it did, but it changed mine even more. The experience was one of the most gratifying in my life and today, Jeff (my recipient) and Christy are part of my family. I would do it again in a minute.”

**Karny Stefan**

*Living Kidney Donor*

# HOW CAN I DONATE MY KIDNEY?

## TWO WAYS TO DONATE

### **Non-Living Kidney Donation Register Today – Save a Life**

A non-living kidney donor means that after you have passed away, a doctor can remove your kidneys for transplant purposes.

Ninety percent of Americans say they support organ donation, but only 33% actually take the steps necessary to be a donor. In fact, only 37% of Arizonans are registered as non-living organ donors, which is well behind many other states including Utah's 72% and Montana's 76%.

New legislation requires donors to be registered in the Donate Life database, so even if you've registered in the past, please visit [www.azdonorregistry.org](http://www.azdonorregistry.org) to register, or call (602) 222-2200 for more information.

### **Living Kidney Donation – Share Your Spare**

As organs, kidneys are unique in that they can be transplanted from a living donor. More importantly, the transplant success rate for living donor kidneys is much higher than for non-living kidneys – 95% after two years. And the average life span of the kidney is 20 years.

Imagine how critical this is for the almost 90,000 men, women and children desperately needing life-saving kidney transplants.

The intrinsic value of being a living kidney donor cannot be over emphasized. Many living kidney donors consider their "giving while living" to be the most deeply meaningful deed they will pursue in their lifetimes.

**Register Online  
Become a Donor**

## LEARN MORE ABOUT LIVING KIDNEY DONATION

[WWW.ERMABOMBECKPROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.ERMABOMBECKPROJECT.ORG)

[WWW.AZKIDNEY.ORG](http://WWW.AZKIDNEY.ORG)

[WWW.NKF.ORG](http://WWW.NKF.ORG)

[WWW.UNOS.ORG](http://WWW.UNOS.ORG)

[WWW.KIDNEYREGISTRY.ORG](http://WWW.KIDNEYREGISTRY.ORG)

[WWW.TRANSPLANTLIVING.ORG](http://WWW.TRANSPLANTLIVING.ORG)

[WWW.PAIREDDONATIONNETWORK.ORG](http://WWW.PAIREDDONATIONNETWORK.ORG)

[WWW.LIVINGDONORSONLINE.ORG](http://WWW.LIVINGDONORSONLINE.ORG)

[WWW.PAIREDDONATION.ORG](http://WWW.PAIREDDONATION.ORG)

