



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS:

Tania Llavaneras
323-354-6619

tlavaneras@onelegacy.org

Hilary Czarda
804-377-3584

hczarda@DonateLife.net

**Donate Life America to Honor Air Force Pilot on the
2018 Donate Life Rose Parade® Float**

*Family, Air Force Officials and Members of His Squadron Join in
Special Recognition Ceremony at Edwards AFB Showcasing how Donation can Help
Make a Difference in the Lives of Many*

(Edwards AFB, Calif. –

December 18, 2017) – Donate Life

America joined efforts with the U.S. Air Force to honor Major Benjamin “Chex” Meier on the 2018 Donate Life Rose Parade® Float, which will be part of the 129th Annual Tournament of Roses Parade® in Pasadena. Now in its 15th year, the Donate Life Rose Parade Float is part of a national effort of more than 50 organizations that have teamed up to

deliver the simple, lifesaving message that the kind and generous act of becoming a donor helps save and heal lives.

Air Force officials joined Major Meier’s family in a ceremony at Edwards AFB where his squadron finished the decorating of his Floragraph. The squadron added the word “Chex” on his uniform and signed the back of his portrait. This floral portrait, made of dried flowers, seeds and spices, will be placed on the Donate Life Rose Parade Float, to honor Major Meier’s memory and lifesaving gifts.



Major Benjamin “Chex” Meier’s family gathers with his 31st Test and Evaluation Squadron at Edwards Air Force Base in California to help decorate Major Meier’s floragraph that will be placed on the Donate Life 2018 Rose Parade Float to honor his memory and lifesaving gifts of organ donation.

(More)

“Mayor Benjamin Meier saved the lives of many through his service as an Air Force pilot,” said David Fleming, president and CEO of Donate Life America. “We are grateful to partner with the Air Force to honor Major Meier’s memory as not only a war hero, but also as a donor who helped save and heal the lives of many more through organ, eye and tissue donation.”

Major Benjamin “Chex” Meier always wanted to be an Air Force pilot. He succeeded in his goal, flying combat missions over Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya and saving many dozens of ground troops from hostile fire while under fire himself. His heroic actions earned him the 2013 U.S. Air Force in Europe Daedalian award.

In 2015, while on his morning run, Chex was struck in the head by the mirror of a passing truck. He was declared brain dead less than 24 hours later. He was able to donate his heart, lungs, liver and kidneys, saving the lives of five more people. Ben is survived by his wife, two young sons, and two sisters and their families as well as his parents, who will forever miss him.

This year’s float entry, *The Gift of Time*, reflects the parade’s theme of “Making a Difference,” by celebrating the kindness of people throughout the world who are making a positive difference in the lives of others. Perhaps no act is more emblematic of this than becoming an organ, eye and tissue donor: A single organ donor can save the lives of up to eight people and improve the lives of as many as 75 more by donating their corneas and tissue.

“The ultimate gift anyone can give is *the gift of time*,” said Tom Mone, chairman of the Donate Life Rose Parade Float committee and CEO of OneLegacy. “We are deeply grateful to all of our Donate Life Rose Parade Float sponsors, who are helping us spread the word about the importance of donation on one of the biggest stages in the world, the Tournament of Roses Parade. Our sponsors’ continuous and unconditional work within their communities empowers organ, eye and tissue recipients as well as donor families to share their stories and inspire others to register.”

The Gift of Time float depicts a vibrantly colored, tropical backdrop that dates back to the ancient civilizations of Mexico. It celebrates the gift of life as transplant recipients sit against stone carvings reflecting the strength they have gained from their donors to continue and thrive on life’s journey. The float will also feature floragraphs honoring 44 donors who have made life possible. Eight living donors and recipients will walk alongside the float carrying baskets of fruit and flowers in celebration of the renewed life they have shared with one another and the world.

(More)

As one of the world's most visible campaigns to inspire organ, eye and tissue donation, the Donate Life Rose Parade Float inspires viewers to help the over 1 million people in need of organ, eye or tissue transplants each year. Register today to become an organ, eye or tissue donor by visiting DonateLife.net.

For additional information about the Tournament of Roses Parade, please visit the official website at www.tournamentofroses.com.

About Donate Life America

Donate Life America (DLA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization leading its national partners and Donate Life State Teams to increase the number of donated organs, eyes and tissue available to save and heal lives. DLA manages and promotes *Donate Life*SM, the national brand for the cause of donation; motivates the public to register as organ, eye and tissue donors; provides education about living donation; manages the National Donate Life Registry at RegisterMe.org; and develops and executes effective multi-media campaigns to promote donation.

#

(Editor's Note: The float rendering is below.)

