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La Villita's students with Gift of Hope. Learn important lessons of life. Gift of Hope and Our Lady of Tepeyac Celebrate Event.

CHICAGO (May 1, 2012) - April marked the ninth celebration of National Donate Life Month, a time to recognize the generosity of the organ and tissue donors who encourage Americans to register as organ, eye and tissue donors. This year's event was held in conjunction with National Organ and Tissue Donor Month to encourage Americans to register as organ, eye and tissue donors. The event was held at Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary School, located at 2235 S. Albany. More than 90 per cent of students at Our Lady of Tepeyac are Latino.

With April coming to a close last Friday, Gift of Hope hosted a National Donate Life Month event in conjunction with "Children's Day", which is traditionally held on April 30th in many Latin American countries at Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary School, located at 2235 S. Albany. More than 90 per cent of students at Our Lady of Tepeyac are Latino.

Raiza Mendoza, Gift of Hope's Hispanic Public Relations & Community Outreach Coordinator, explained that according to UNOS*, proportionally more Latino children are in need of organ transplants in comparison to other minorities.

In numbers this means that nationwide there are 532 Latino children on the waiting list, compared to 375 children in the African American community. "Through this we want to bring this message to the Latino community for people to register as a donor and give them hope to continue living," said Mendoza.

She also said that although only those over 18 years of age can register as donors in the Illinois Organ Donor registry, anyone from a newborn baby to an elder can donate organ and tissue and save lives. Therefore, she said the purpose of the event was to also encourage children to share the message with their parents.

Peter Trumblay, Principal of Our Lady of Tepeyac Elementary School delivered an emotional message to his students during the National Donate Life Month event, "we may not have thought of this before, may never have spoken of this in the family, but it is time to know how a decision now, can save children's lives like yours."

Claudia Sanchez, an eighth-grader, said, "Gift of Hope is a very good organization that has helped me decide that when I turn 18 years old I will register as a donor to help people who do not have anyone to donate to them." She said she would share the news with her parents that evening.

In a show of support for the event, students from fourth through eighth grade made acrylic paintings that explained the importance of organ donation to the rest of their classmates.

"Seeing these paintings that are the result of creative work of these students and their positive comprehension of organ donation is a great lesson for everyone as they saw the importance of giving and helping the needy more than anything else," said Mendoza, who at the end of the event provided gifts including a branded Gift of Hope green t-shirt for all students.

Join the Illinois Organ Donor Registry, it only takes 30 seconds. You can now sign to be an organ donor through Facebook. And also show in your status that you are an organ donor. On your "Timeline" go to "Life Event", select "Health and Wellness" and choose "Organ Donor". You can also visit www.giftofhope.org/spanish or call (630) 758-2744. (SOURCE: Gift of Hope)

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