

Point Pleasant Man to be Honored in Rose Bowl Parade

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POINT PLEASANT, W.Va (WSAZ) -- A Point Pleasant family is paying tribute to their son's gift of life as a tissue and cornea donor, 16 years after he passed away.

For the fourth year in a row, The Center for Organ Recovery and Education (CORE) is sponsoring a memorial florigraph portrait that will appear on Donate Life's float during the 125th Rose Parade, scheduled for January 1 in Pasadena, California.

The florigraphs, photographs made of flowers, in this year's parade honor 81 organ, cornea and eye donors.

One of those honored in this year's parade is Kevin Boyles from Point Pleasant. Boyles was 22-years-old when he passed away in 1997 of an undetected heart condition. Family and friends say he was a senior at West Virginia University studying forestry

The florigraphs are made in Pasadena, then sent around the country for family members to put

the finishing touches on the portraits.

A ceremony was held Thursday at Pleasant Valley Hospital for family members to finish decorating Boyles' floragraph.

His mother Annette says in one word, her son was beloved. She said he was loving, affectionate, loved playing sports, hunting, fishing, WVU and the Mountaineers.

Boyles said of her son, "He did not hesitate to show his love of life, love of living, his love of his friends and his family."

Kevin Boyles was an organ donor and had just updated his license six weeks prior to his passing, renewing his pledge to donate his organs. Two people who were blind can now see through his eyes. Many others received life-saving or life-enhancing tissue transplants because of Kevin.

"The float serves as a memorial to organ and tissue donors and a platform for donor families, living donors, and transplant recipients to inspire the world to save and heal those in need of the gift of life," Annette Boyles said.

Living donors, donor families, and transplant recipients also take part in each year's parade, riding, or walking alongside the float.

Boyles is one of 81 donors who will be honored in this year's parade and his family says while it is a time to honor him, it's about so much more. "This is not just about Kevin. We want the world to know that it's also about the 120,000 people who are on the waiting list. It's about the 18 that die every day waiting for an organ, and stressing the importance of registering to be a donor," Annette Boyles said.

According to Boyles, pictures have always been a large part of their family and her husband Kenny says you can never have too many. "Creating this picture of Kevin allows us to hug him with our hearts and I believe it will help to inspire the world to save and heal those in need of the gift of life," Annette says.

"When an individual makes the pledge to become an organ, tissue and cornea donor, they make a Pledge for Life. At CORE, our work is inspired by individuals like Kevin who said 'yes' to donation. This selfless act has enabled his legacy to live on and for others to have a second chance at life," said Susan Stuart, president and CEO of CORE. "We are proud to honor Kevin and recognize his family for their son's life-saving gifts, and are pleased that West Virginia will be represented in this year's Rose Parade."

Donate Life America chose the theme of "Light Up the World" for this year's Rose Parade float. Individuals and families touched by donation and transplantation radiate with gratitude and renewed life thanks to the gifts of the donors. Illuminated lanterns on the Donate Life float will be adorned with the memorial floragraph portraits, whose gifts of life shine a light on us all.

The parade airs on January 1, 2014 at 11 a.m.

Nationally, more than 120,000 people are awaiting an organ transplant. At least 18 will die each day without receiving one, including two from CORE's service area. For every person who donates their organs, tissues and corneas, up to 50 lives can be saved or dramatically improved.

<http://www.wsaz.com/news/headlines/Point-Pleasant-Man--to-be-Honored-in-Rose-Bowl-Parade-234686081.html>