

MERRY CHRISTMAS



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Rose Parade Float Celebrates Gift of Life Through Organ Donation

Arnold Family's Story Comes Alive in Floragraph

Omaha - Tiff and Barb Varney were proud but surprised when their son Thomas Varney V, affectionately known as "Moose," came home with a red heart sticker attached to his Nebraska driver's license, indicating he'd made the decision to become an organ donor. This was a mature move for a 16-year-old, they reasoned.

Little did the Varney's know that fate would soon step in, allowing Moose to carry out his wishes.

At the age of 21, Moose Varney suffered a tragic gunshot wound to the head at the hands of an armed assailant. Tiff remembered Moose wanted to give the gift of life to others by donating his organs, so that's just what the family did.

"The timing of the Rose Parade coincides with the anniversary of Moose's death,

so it's always a difficult time for us," says Barb. "But knowing he was chosen to be honored in a floragraph has been a good feeling. I can't think of a better way to honor him."

The gift of life is the subject of a breathtaking float at the 121st annual Rose Parade, taking place on New Year's Day, 2010, in Pasadena, California. Thanks to the Nebraska Organ Recovery System (NORS) and Donate Life, an alliance of local and national organizations dedicated to inspiring all people to donate life through organ, eye and tissue donation, Moose's story will be celebrated on the Donate Life parade float, which is themed "New Life Rises." It's a message that reaffirms the good that comes from the decision to donate organs to those in need.

Moose Varney's photo will be

one of 77 "floragraphs" on the float, representing 77 people across the country that became organ and tissue donors. In some cases, the organ recipients will ride along on the floats. Moose's parents also will travel to Pasadena to take part in this nationally televised spectacular.

Floragraphs, according to Rose Parade officials, are artistic, life-like portraits created with organic materials including flowers. The float will feature a phoenix, the mythical symbol of life coming out of the ashes of death, rising from a bed of flames into the sky. The phoenix's tail feathers are adorned with dozens of floragraphs that depict loved ones who gave life to those in need. In addition, donors across the country will be memorialized in a garden of roses dedicated



COURTESY PHOTO

Barb Varney works on Moose's floragraph, which is an artistic, life-like portrait created with organic materials including flowers and pureed in blenders, then used to paint the portrait.

through the Donate Life Family Circle program, with each rose vial carrying a personal message of love, hope and remembrance.

Sadly, more than 105,000 people in the United States now await a life-saving organ transplant. Almost 20 people die each day in this country waiting for the organ they so desperately need to save their lives.

According to Nebraska Organ Recovery System (NORS) spokesperson Stephanie Lochmiller, organ donation creates a lasting impact, far beyond the surgical procedure itself.

In Moose's case, five individuals were touched by his gift of life through organ donation. Barb and Tiff received a

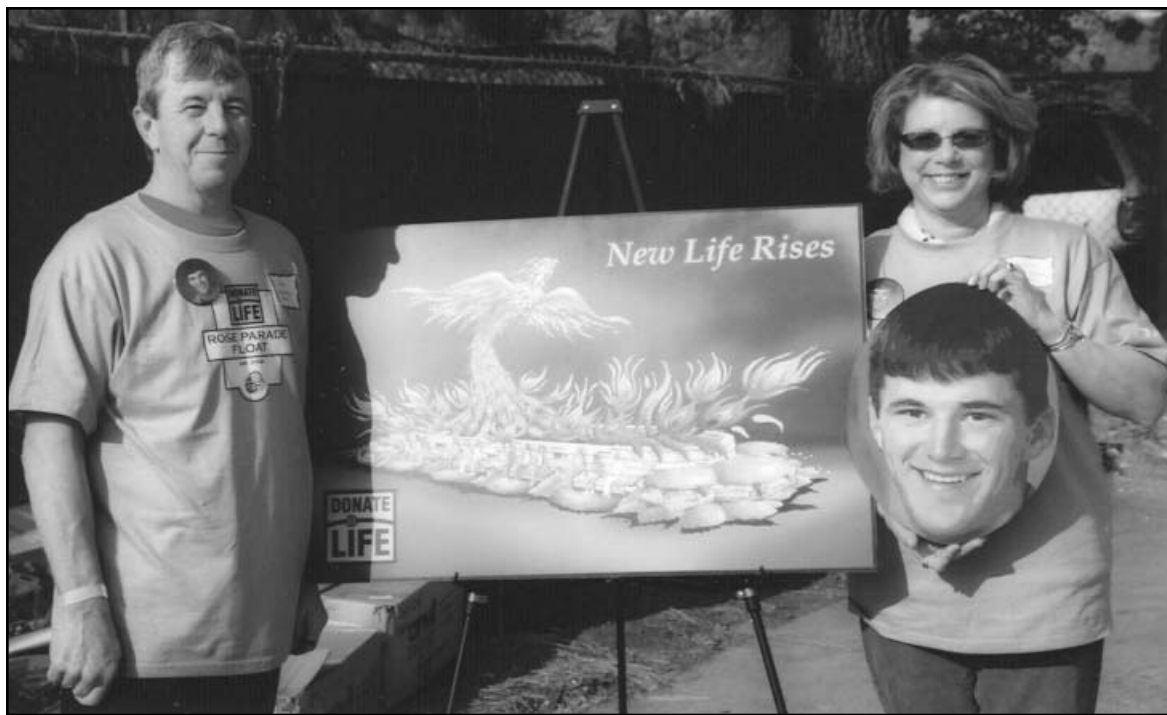
letter from one of Moose's kidney recipients that provided their family with a sense of satisfaction.

Likewise, Barb has sent both kidney recipients letters to tell them about Moose and about how he is being honored at the parade.

According to NORS, more than 28,000 lives are saved each year in the U.S. through organ donation.

"When he came home with his first driver's license, Moose told us that he checked the organ donation box and we told him we thought it was a good idea and that we were proud of him," says Barb, who, along with Tiff, own and operate a funeral home in Arnold, Nebraska.

"Since we have the funeral home, he was probably more aware of organ donation than most kids his age."



COURTESY PHOTO

Tiff and Barb Varney display Moose's floragraph, one of 77 organ donors who will be featured on the "New Life Rises" float design. The float will be in the 121st annual Rose Parade, taking place on New Year's Day, 2010, in Pasadena, California.

New Year's Eve Celebration Planned at Community Center

Only a Few Days Left to Buy Tickets

Monday, December 28 is the final day to purchase tickets for Arnold's New Year's Eve Celebration featuring professional hypnotist Tim Heuertz. Advanced tickets are necessary to enjoy the entire evening beginning with a cocktail hour at 6:00 p.m., followed by a catered dinner at 7:00 p.m.

Lundgren's Catering has planned the menu and will be serving smoked pork loin with barbecue or spicy honey mustard sauce, mashed baby red potatoes, a choice of bacon green beans or chukwagon corn, a multi grain dinner roll and dessert. A cash bar will be available for the entire evening.

The highlight of the evening is sure to be the professional hypnosis stage show to begin at 8:50 p.m. Hypnotist Tim Heuertz has promised Arnold a memorable and interactive

show that will entertain and amaze. Organizers are pleased that good natured community members such as Rick Beshaler have agreed to be among the 15 volunteers to be hypnotized.

Adults of all ages and generations will enjoy this evening of entertainment. Dress for the evening will be semi-formal with appropriate attire ranging from evening dresses to church wear to jeans.

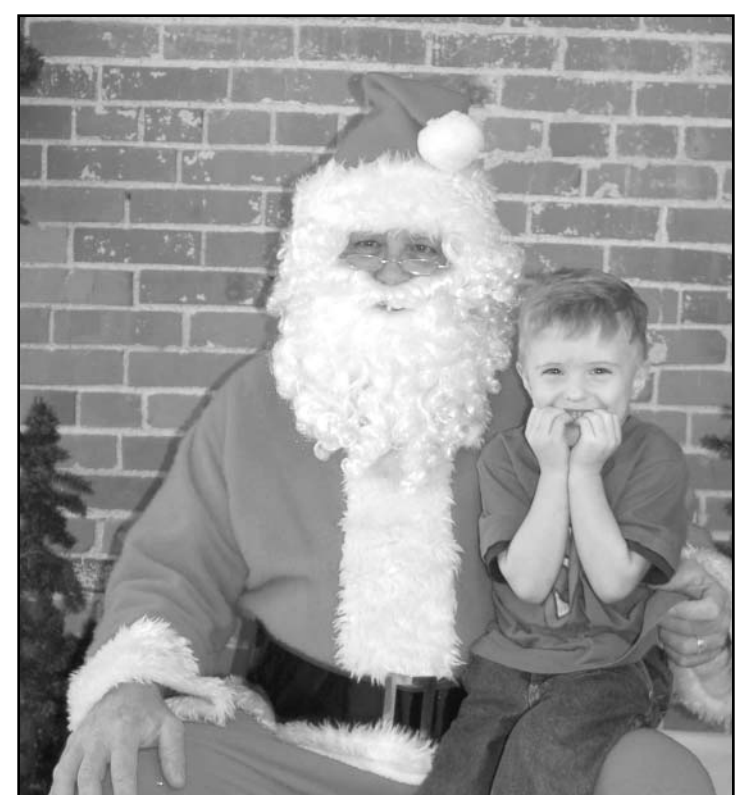
Advanced tickets are required to attend the entire event and are available for purchase at Round Two Clothing, Classic Coyotee, Arnold Insurance Agency, First State Insurance and Nebraska Farmhouse Antiques. Cost is \$25.00 per ticket and includes a catered dinner, professional hypnosis stage show and dance. Tickets will be available until Monday, December 28. Proceeds will

benefit the Arnold Fire Department and the Rialto Theatre.

Admission to the show and dance portion of the evening (no dinner) is \$15.00 and will be available for purchase at the door that evening from 7:45 to 8:15 p.m. Because of the need to eliminate distractions during the hypnosis show, doors will close at 8:25 p.m. and will re-open following the show for the dance.

Lighting Contest Winners

Lighting contest winners were announced Monday by Chamber. Winners in the residential category were: Betty McDowell, Brad Downings, Stan Urbanovskys and Betty Yeagain. Business lighting winner was Nebraska Farmhouse Antiques.



COURTESY PHOTO

Santa's Visit

William Moninger, son of Chris and Debby Moninger, can hardly contain his excitement, as he sits on Santa's lap to have his picture taken at the Rialto Theatre on Saturday. Santa made his annual visit as part of the Chamber-sponsored "Santa, Shoppin' and Movie Day." The event gave moms and dads a chance to shop at home while their kids enjoyed a movie at the Rialto Theatre. This year, local amateur photographers took pictures of the children on Santa's lap for a small fee.