

# THE BEST OF DONOR NETWORK WEST

2024 - 2025

Winter & New Year Recap  
**NEWSLETTER**

Written by Maxwell | Designed by Brooke

## New Year, Same Mission

Happy New Year, Donor Network West Community! We're thrilled to ring in the new year with the incredible community of team members, volunteers, donor families, transplant recipients, medical professionals, and all those who make the gift of life possible daily. Our Winter 2025 newsletter includes upcoming events within our DSA and recaps the incredible Rose Parade, a phenomenal holiday season consisting of Thanksgiving gratitude and holiday cheer. Enjoy reading and have a wonderful new year!



"Best of Donor Network West"  
Newsletter Library



"The future depends on what you do today."  
— Mahatma Gandhi



# SODA *Champions*

## Haley and Jennifer



*Jennifer (left) and Haley (right)*



*Haley hugs the Modesto Nuts Mascot*

Haley and Jennifer are two of the Stockton/Modesto region's high school Donate Life Ambassadors. The Lunar New Year is significant to them and their Chinese and Vietnamese communities as it is a time to honor their ancestors, spend time with family, and enter the New Year with good luck and well wishes. This Lunar New Year also marks their first year as Donate Life Ambassadors. In their time as Donate Life Ambassadors, they have joined events such as AAPI Night with the Stockton Kings, Stockton's Community Pow Wow, and helped with the creation of a Multi-Ethnic Donor Awareness Month display at a local library, to name a few. Most recently, Haley, Jennifer, and fellow peers have formed their high school's first SODA (Student Organ Donation Advocates) chapter to raise awareness of the need for organ and tissue donor registration. Haley and Jennifer recognize the importance of organ, eye, and tissue donation to save and heal lives, spreading Donor Network West's mission to their school and communities.

This Lunar New Year, just as they are gifted red envelopes from family, they plan to honor organ and tissue donors and celebrate the Gifts of Life that recipients receive with a red envelope display. The display will include red envelopes with stories of recipients who have received their life-saving and healing organ and/or tissue. Haley and Jennifer represent the younger generation of organ and tissue donation advocates and are excited to continue impact their communities in the New Year!



# Get to Know Our COO

## Chief Operating Officer

With over 20 years of experience in healthcare, I've dedicated my career to advancing the life-saving work of organ and tissue donation. In my current role at Donor Network West, I oversee clinical operations to ensure we meet our mission to honor the gift of life. Each day, we are focused on our goal to save as many lives as possible by connecting donors and their families with those in need of a transplant.

What fuels my passion is not just the mission but the people, from the donors who make a selfless decision to the families who find comfort in giving life to the incredible colleagues who make it all happen. I'm constantly reminded that relationships are the heart of everything we do. Those relationships help us weather challenges and celebrate successes, just like the relationships we build with each of you, our donor families, volunteers, team members, and community members, allowing us to extend our reach and impact and, in turn, save more lives.

**Fun fact:** My wife of 28 years, our 3 boys (including a set of twins), and now our 8 grandchildren have been my foundation throughout this journey. Their support and my work on both coasts and a long stint in Texas have strengthened my belief that strong relationships can achieve remarkable things.

- **Justin Johnson**



# LET YOUR LIFE SOAR



## The 2025 Donate Life Float at the Rose Parade

was a marvelous experience that truly honored donor heroes, donor families, and transplant recipients around the world! We witnessed families place their loved ones' florographs on the float, participate in an incredible week of celebrating saving lives and the new year, and witness a parade that gets better every year! Check out some of the highlights!



# The Results are in and Final!

Congratulations to our 2024 Holiday Card Art Contest Winners!



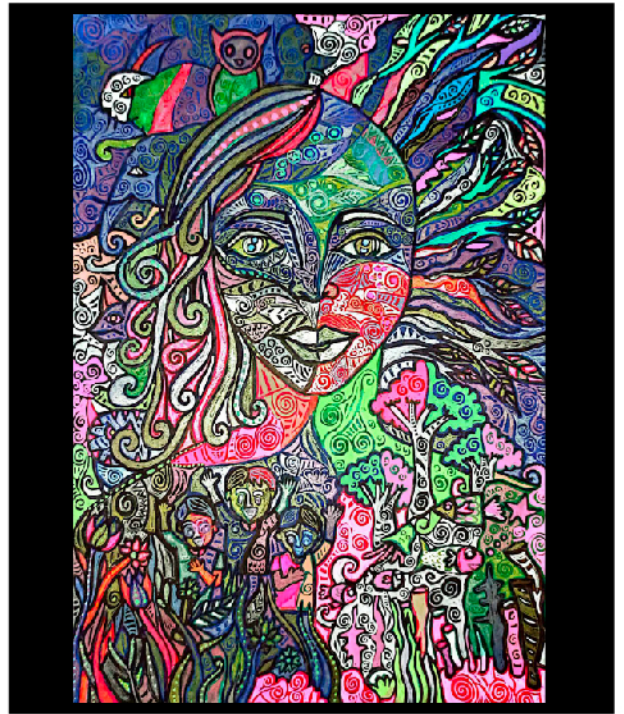
**Overall Winner:**  
Keiradee | Sanger West High School

HOLIDAY CARD ART CONTEST RESULTS



**Age Group: 13 & Under Winner**

Swara | O. N. Hirsch Elementary School



**Age Group: 14 - 18 Winner**

Yesenia D. | UC Merced



**Age Group: 19+**

Sarah M. | San Jose State University



**Social Media Winner**

Maria Angelica Tejada  
St Dominic College of Asia

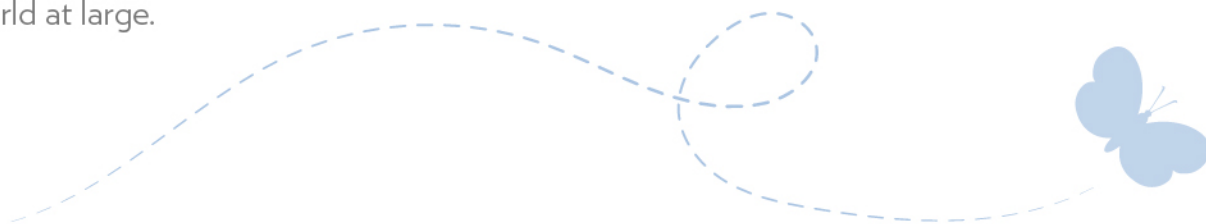
## Lunar New Year!

Welcome to 2025's Lunar New Year - The Year of the Snake (according to the Chinese Lunar New Year), kicking off January 29th for the 16-day Spring Festival! The Lunar New Year is a time for family reunions and hope. This holiday is celebrated across many Asian cultures and by billions across the globe, including Taiwanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese cultures. Each culture has its own traditions and celebrations. However, the grand consensus across all walks of life is that the Lunar New Year is a time for family and friends to come together and celebrate life, the coming of the new season, and those who have passed. Donor Network West wishes you a wonderful Lunar New Year! Stay tuned to our social media and internal email blasts to learn about some of our incredible community celebrating Lunar New Year!



## American Heart Month

February is American Heart Month, and will have the honor and privilege of sharing the inspiring and heartwarming stories of multiple heart transplant recipients and donor families. These individuals who have received a heart of gold, and donor families who are willing to tell the stories of their donor heroes are epic reminders of the power of the Gift of life, and what it does for our communities, and the world at large.



## Black History Month

Did you know that Historian Carter G. Woodson launched Black History Week in 1926 to recognize the significant contributions of African Americans during the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Abolitionist and writer, Frederick Douglass. It was expanded by congress to National Black History Month 50 years later!

We're proud as an organization to celebrate the incredible contribution the Black American community has made and continues to make in healthcare. In celebrating and learning about these critical healthcare heroes, we acknowledge the progress made and continue the essential conversation about the challenges the Black American community faces in receiving equitable healthcare.



## National Kidney Month

This National Kidney Month, we wish to raise awareness about the importance of Kidney Health and organ donation's impact on those affected by kidney disease.

We will share stories of hope, highlighting the incredible individuals who have received kidney transplants, the heroic donors who made it possible, information about kidney health, and ways to reduce risk for kidney diseases and maintain good health.

Join us in spreading the word! Together, we will make a difference.







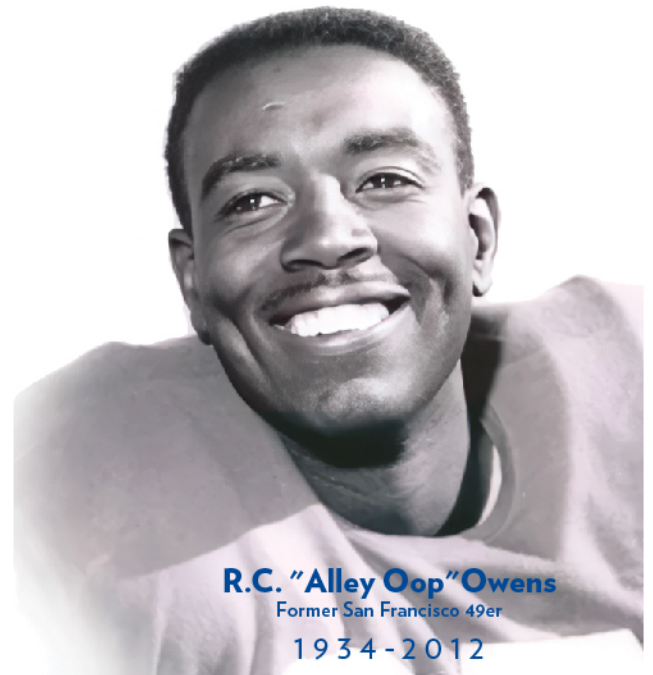
**MONDAY, JUNE 30th, 2025**  
**BLACKHAWK COUNTRY CLUB**  
**Lakeside Course**

599 Blackhawk Club Drive, Danville, CA 94506

**11:00am** Arrival | **12:00pm** Shotgun Start | **6:00pm** Dinner Reception

Join us for the 2nd Annual Chipping Away for Hope Golf Tournament, honoring the life of R.C. Owens, aka Alley Oop, a 49ers legend and kidney transplant recipient.

Hosted by the Donor Network West Foundation, Executive Director Bubba Paris, and NFL friends, this event supports Donor Network West's lifesaving mission, bringing hope to those impacted by organ and tissue donation in Northern California and Nevada.



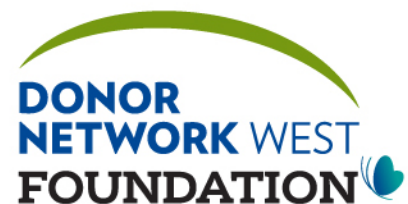
**R.C. "Alley Oop" Owens**  
Former San Francisco 49er  
1934-2012



[ChippingAway4Hope.org](http://ChippingAway4Hope.org)



Sponsorship Form



# It's time to celebrate you!

*Join us to connect with fellow Ambassadors in your region, meet new Ambassadors, hear directly from DNWest staff, and enjoy a meal together. We can't wait to see you there!*

*Join us for an Ambassador*

# APPRECIATION BRUNCH

## Bay Area

January 25th: 11am-2pm  
Lokanta: 443 Main St, Pleasanton, CA

## Stockton

February 8th: 11am-2pm  
Market Tavern: 236 Lincoln Center,  
Stockton, CA

## Reno

February 1st: 11am-2pm  
The Shore Room: 1 S Lake St, Reno, NV

## Fresno

February 22nd: 11am-2pm  
Campaigna: 1185 E Champlain Dr,  
Fresno, CA

**[Click here to RSVP](#)**

# Lanyards are in!

## Spanish and bilingual lanyards

I'm thrilled to share our new Spanish and bilingual lanyards, designed to help people feel more at ease by choosing the language they're most comfortable with during interactions.

This initiative is deeply personal to me. Growing up as a Latina in a state with few people who looked like me or spoke my language, I've always been passionate about supporting those struggling with English. These lanyards represent a way to bridge gaps, creating a more welcoming environment and helping us educate more people about organ donation, which is central to our outreach.

I've already worn these lanyards at events, and the response has been inspiring. More people have stopped by our booth, noticed the lanyards, and expressed excitement about how we're working to make a difference. It's amazing to see how such a simple tool can foster connections and improve engagement.

For now, the lanyards are available internally for those certified in Spanish by our organization. Some will also be distributed to ambassadors, managed by our Volunteer Manager.

Looking ahead, we hope to expand this initiative to include more languages, making our outreach even more inclusive and accessible.

Together, we're breaking barriers and building stronger connections, one conversation at a time.

- Nat Quiros



**Lanyards are available internally for those certified in Spanish by our organization.**

**Please reach out to:**

**Nat Quiros**  
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 (Nevada)

**Leo Hernandez**  
 lhernandez@dnwest.org  
 (Fresno)

**Sal Torres**  
 STorres@dnwest.org  
 (Bishop Ranch)

♥ **follow @mydnwest on social media** ♥  
**and don't miss a beat!**



There are plenty of events and celebrations that we're privileged to be a part of! The best way to stay updated on everything we have going on is to follow us on social media @MyDNWest across all platforms! Our Instagram is a fantastic place to start, or maybe you enjoy Facebook. Either way, we're everywhere, and we'll see you there!

