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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Donate Life Ceremony 2022**

**WADENA, Minn. – April. 05, 2022** – Tri-County Health Care welcomed guests to another Donate Life ceremony on April 5. Typically, this event would be held in the Garden of Hope, followed by a flag-raising, but it was moved to the indoor courtyard due to inclement weather. The event was organized by Lois Miller, RN and Cardiac Rehab Manager at Tri-County Health Care.

After a kickoff address by Miller, LifeSource Representative Barb Nelson-Agnew took to the podium. She explained the importance of organ donation with the help of a special bee mascot. The bee danced and encouraged the crowd to sign up for organ donation. According to Nelson-Agnew, the bee represented the giving power of nature itself and was the perfect mascot to drive home just how vital organ donation is to our society.

This year's ceremony included two keynote speakers, Julia Snyder, a living organ donor, and Dawn Kemper, an organ donation recipient. The pair walked the small crowd through their journeys with organ donation.

In 2011, Kemper found out that she suffered from polycystic kidney disease, a genetic disease that causes cysts to form on the kidneys. In 2014, she contracted a severe kidney infection that led her to be placed on dialysis. She was able to recover from the infection and get off dialysis. However, hope was short lived. In 2016, after meeting with a nephrologist, Kemper was informed that she might need to be placed on dialysis due to her declining kidney health. Kemper needed a new kidney.

Snyder is a living organ donor, which means she is willing to donate organs or tissues while still living. During her tearful speech, she explained that she had never suffered from any health complications in her life. After the death of a close friend who was also an avid believer in organ donation, Snyder set out to be an advocate for the cause.

After a failed attempt to donate to her nephew, she was introduced to the National Pair Exchange for organ donation. This system helps recipients get paired with donors faster after experiencing compatibility issues. This pairing is how Snyder and Kemper met. The pair participated in a cross transplant with an unknown donor in Georgia. Essentially, Snyder wanted to donate a kidney directly to Kemper, but they were incompatible, so

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Snyder donated a kidney to the individual in Georgia and Kemper received a kidney from the Georgia donor. This process is also known as a “kidney swap.”

“The most amazing part was watching Dawn become healthy again,” remarked Snyder. The pair shared their story and hoped that others would consider organ donation. At the end of the ceremony, guests draped the Donate Life flag from a railing on the second floor, drawing another Donate Life ceremony to a close.

To learn more about Tri-County Health Care’s Garden of Hope or how to become an organ donor, please visit [TCHC.org/patients-and-visitors/organ-donation](https://TCHC.org/patients-and-visitors/organ-donation).

### **ABOUT TRI-COUNTY HEALTH CARE**

Tri-County Health Care is a private, not-for-profit health care system based in Wadena, Minnesota. It offers care services such as primary health, surgery, cancer care, diagnostic imaging, obstetrics, orthopedics and rehabilitation. Tri-County Health Care operates a hospital and medical clinic in Wadena, and serves the counties of Wadena, Todd and Otter Tail through five satellite clinics and two physical therapy clinics in Bertha, Henning, Ottertail, Sebeka and Verndale. Visit [TCHC.org](https://TCHC.org).

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