Donate Life Club
Advisor Handbook
2019-2020
Introduction

ConnectLife is Western New York’s only organ, eye, tissue, and community blood center. In an effort to educate young adults about the need for donation, the Donate Life Club was established in 2004. The Donate Life Club is a ConnectLife sponsored, multi-disciplinary program that assists groups of students at area high schools in the planning, development, and implementation of a campaign to increase awareness about organ, tissue, and blood donation among their peers. The Donate Life Club program provides the education necessary for students to make a difference in their home and school communities while inspiring more people to register as donors and establishing donation as a cultural norm.

Students involved in the Donate Life Club have an opportunity to develop leadership and communication skills, as well as earn up to 25 volunteer hours per year. Involvement in the Donate Life Club provides students with skills they can apply in future academic and work related activities. This club also allows students the opportunity to establish themselves as members of the community through promoting a blood drive, running a donor registry drive, and volunteering at outreach events.

We have rebranded! Unyts is now ConnectLife
We’re excited to announce that Unyts is now ConnectLife! More than a name change, we’ve evolved our brand to better tell the story of how we serve the community and to illuminate the impact our donor network is making on the lives of our neighbors in need.

Why ConnectLife? Because it’s what we do; we connect families and communities through the gift of organ, eye, tissue and blood donation. As Donate Life Club members, we will ask you to help us educate your school and home communities about this change.

Amanda Farrell is responsible for the oversight of the Donate Life Program. Should you have any questions or concerns, she can be reached at afarrell@unyts.org or 716.529.4417.
**About ConnectLife:**
ConnectLife helps people help others. As a federally designated not-for-profit organ procurement organization and community blood bank, we save and enhance lives through organ, eye, tissue and blood donation. ConnectLife works to assist donor families, coordinate the donation process and provide schools, businesses and community partners with the knowledge needed to make life-saving and life-enhancing decisions. We have routinely helped to secure higher rates of donation across our region than the national average.

The community blood center at ConnectLife is an integral part of our region’s medical community, providing the best blood products possible when hospitals are in need. We are able to react and quickly and efficiently provide blood needed to save someone’s life. ConnectLife is the primary supplier of blood products to Kaleida Health, ECMC, Brooks Memorial Hospital, Brooks - TLC Health Network, Eastern Niagara Hospital, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Olean General Hospital, Bradford Regional Medical Center and Wyoming County Community Health System. This accounts for over 75% of the blood needs in WNY. Our network and success have gone hand-in-hand, and as a result, ConnectLife has been able to spread the message that donation is vital – and donation saves lives.

**ConnectLife Mission:**
We are committed to educating the community, inspiring donation and connecting lives.

**ConnectLife Vision:**
ConnectLife envisions a future where blood is available for all in need, we decrease the number of deaths of those waiting for a transplant, innovative tissues enhance quality of life and advance cutting-edge research, every donor and donor family is honored, and employees are empowered and motivated to realize their highest potential in service of our mission.
Student Benefits:

- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**
  Students experience the opportunity to establish themselves as giving members of the community through character education and support of donation awareness campaigns and blood drives. Students have the opportunity to co-present to Board, PTA and Faculty meetings.

- **COMMUNITY SERVICE**
  Students receive up to 25 community service hours for being involved with the Unyts Donate Life Club and are given the chance to participate in a variety of other service-based opportunities. Students also have the opportunity to volunteer, gain additional service hours and intern with ConnectLife.

- **SCHOLARSHIPS**
  Scholarship opportunities are available to students who participate in Donate Life Club activities.

- **CAREER EXPLORATION**
  Students encounter a variety of professionals via field trips, in-classroom presentations and job shadows – including Allied Health Professions, Marketing & Communications, Business Administration/Finance and Social Work.

- **ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS**
  The experiences that students are given in the program better prepare them for future success! From service opportunities to campaign planning, students become key ambassadors and establish a foundation of demonstrated leadership and management skills.

- **REPUTATION & COMMUNITY IMPACT**
  A collaborative partnership between your educational institution and ConnectLife is a winning combination! Together, we can enhance and save lives in the Western New York community.
Advisor Benefits:

- **New curriculum** each year to engage students through their entire high school careers.

- **Step by step instructions** on how to plan and facilitate club activities.

- **Networking opportunities** including a kick-off tour.

- **Staff support** from a ConnectLife Representative to help you implement the modules.

- **Educational resources** to help you and your students learn and teach others about organ, eye, tissue and blood donation.

- **Advisor stipends** for their commitment to this program. Advisor stipend checks will be delivered in increments and are contingent upon the completion of the Donate Life Club modules outlined in this handbook.

- **Supply checks** to help your club members run a valuable awareness campaign to educate your school community about organ, eye, tissue and blood donation.
Setting up your 2019-2020 Donate Life Club:

☐ School commits to participate by identifying two Donate Life Club co-advisors and returning a signed advisor commitment contract.

☐ Advisors meet with their ConnectLife Representative to review the new modules and club expectations. *(This can be done on your tour of our new headquarters.)*

☐ Advisor commitment is signed by both advisors and school administration and returned to your ConnectLife Representative.

☐ Recruit 5-25 students to participate as club members and schedule your first meeting.

☐ Secure a tour date with your ConnectLife Representative.

☐ Stay in communication with your ConnectLife Representative each month.

Community Service Hours

- Students can receive up to 25 hours for participation in club activities.

- There may be opportunities for students to earn additional hours by volunteering with ConnectLife at organization-sponsored and community events.

- It is up to advisors to validate community service hours. ConnectLife will provide a blank letter that advisors can fill in for each student.
Awards and Recognition

- All club members and advisors are invited to participate in an annual mid-year celebration at Ali’s Rally. This is our way to thank you for helping us raise awareness about organ, eye, tissue and blood donation. **The Mid-Year Celebration will take place in March 2020.**

- ConnectLife honors Donate Life Clubs with awards at our annual mid-year celebration. Past categories have included: Kindness Matters, Making an Impact, Philanthropy, and Most Creative.

- ConnectLife sponsors scholarships for graduating seniors who have been active club members and/or blood donors.

- Selected sophomores and juniors can be nominated by their advisors to attend the Connect Life leadership summit in May. **Nomination Deadline: Friday, April 3, 2020.**

- ConnectLife is happy to provide participation certificates for all senior club members whom advisors wish to recognize at school award ceremonies. This can be a great opportunity to personally award scholarship checks as well. Kindly let your ConnectLife Representative know by sending the names of students you want recognized at least two weeks prior to the event.
Donate Life Club
2019-2020

Advisor Meeting with ConnectLife Staff
This is a mandatory meeting during which your ConnectLife representative will provide you with the information you will need to run a successful Donate Life Club. **This 30-minute meeting needs to be completed by September 27, 2019.** It can be done at your school or while you are at our headquarters for a tour or you can set up a time to meet with your ConnectLife representative prior to your tour.

Module 1 – Let’s Get Started!

A) **Form your Club:** Recruit 5-25 students

B) **Submit Your Club’s Roster**

C) **RSVP for tour.** Tours run from 9am-12:30pm at our new headquarters located at 4444 Bryant & Stratton Way, Williamsville NY 14221. Tours are available from September-January. Please set up your tour date ASAP as availability is limited.

D) **Marketing Training:** We have rebranded! We will educate you and your club members regarding the reason for this and how to promote our new name, ConnectLife! As club advisors and members, we will ask you help us spread awareness about our life-saving mission and our new name/logo.

E) **Complete your Calendar of Events and order your Club Supplies.** While on your tour, you and your club members will learn about their roles as Donate Life Club members as well as hear from ConnectLife staff who will educate them on the most up to date industry-related information regarding organ, eye, tissue and blood donation! To ensure you leave prepared we will help you fill out the below forms so you have all the knowledge, materials and action plan necessary to run a successful club:

1) Calendar of Events Worksheet

2) Supply Check Budget Form

3) Online Order Form

Please complete all steps of this module by December 20, 2019.
Module 2 – Service Project

A) Research something in your school and/or community where as club members you can make a difference by helping others. Decide what and when you want to complete your service project.

B) Email your Service Project idea and details of what you will do to your ConnectLife representative.

C) Write a reflection on what you did and how it made an impact. Email reflections to your ConnectLife representative.

Module 3 – Donor Registry Drive and National Blue & Green Day Competitions!

A) Donate Life Registry Drive Competition. In an effort to promote a culture of donation, each Donate Life Club member is asked to talk their friends and families about signing up on the New York State Donor Registry. Each club member is challenged to get at least 5 donor registry cards filled out.

B) Club advisors will collect the completed Registry Cards and return them to their ConnectLife Representative. The Donate Life Club members and advisors that collect the most registry cards will be awarded a prize! Completed Registry Cards need to be turned in to your ConnectLife Representative no later than May 29, 2020.

C) Participate in National Blue & Green Day. National Blue & Green Day will take place in April. On this day, OPO’s across the US color their towns blue & green to help bring awareness about the importance of organ and tissue donation!

   a) Get creative! Encourage your school community to wear blue and green to help bring awareness about organ, eye and tissue donation. Take a photo and post on social media and tag ConnectLife OR send photo to your education rep.

   -OR-

   D) b) Share a picture with your ConnectLife representative of a poster, bulletin board, info table etc promoting Blue and Green Day and Donate Life Month.

Prizes will be awarded for creativity and teamwork.

National Blue & Green Day photos need to be posted on line and sent to your ConnectLife Representative no later than April 30, 2020.
**Module 4 – Blood Drive**

A) **Set a blood drive date with your ConnectLife Representative.** Secure date(s) and details of your school’s drives. *All school blood drives should be complete by June 12, 2020.*

B) **Run a blood drive** in your school. Your club will be responsible for all aspects of the blood drive including planning, recruitment, pre-drive education, and day-of drive assistance.

C) **Blood Drive Boot Camp.** Host a meeting and invite your ConnectLife Representative who will educate you on how to best prepare for a successful drive! *Your Blood Drive Boot Camp needs to be completed before your school’s first drive.*

**Module 5 – Awareness Campaign**

A) **Week-Long Awareness Campaign.** Educate your school community about organ, eye, tissue and blood donation. Many schools choose to run their FULL mission campaign (Donor Registry and Blood Donation) around their blood drive; however, you can run this anytime throughout the school year.

B) **Supply Check**
Your club will be provided with a $400 supply check that you can use towards materials needed for your week long campaign. Ask your ConnectLife representative for ideas on how to use these funds to help spread awareness. In addition to these funds, you will be given club t-shirts and incentives that you can use to engage your school and home communities.

**Module 6 - Share your Heroic Story!**

A) **Highlight the work you have done.** Secure a date to present to: ConnectLife staff, School Administration, PTA, local Government Officials OR another group you feel would benefit from learning about the need for donation/transplantation and blood donation. During this presentation you should explain what your club did to raise awareness about organ, eye, tissue and blood donation. (How did you run your club? Who did you educate? What was the impact?)

B) **Invite your ConnectLife Representative to attend this final presentation.**

***Please Note: Final Presentations can be done as soon as you have completed modules 1-5 but must be completed no later than June 19, 2020.***
C) Return Supply Check Receipts:
Copies of receipts equal to the amount of your supply check and reimbursement of any remaining funds are due by June 19, 2020. They can be mailed to ConnectLife (4444 Bryant & Stratton Way, Williamsville NY 14221 Attn: Amanda Farrell or emailed to afarrell@unyts.org. Checks can be made out to ConnectLife. Please enclose your budget form along with your receipts.

Annual Events:

Ali’s Rally & Donate Life Club Mid-Year Celebration!
The Alison Gerlach Memorial Foundation will host the Donate Life Club Celebration at Transit Bowling Lanes (7850 Transit Road, Williamsville NY 14221). This mid-year celebration will offer students the opportunity to be recognized for their efforts and also allow them the opportunity to obtain new ideas to bring back to their schools. Scholarships and awards will be given. *Collaboration among students is encouraged to demonstrate strong leadership skills.*
You and your club members are invited to attend this event for free! All we ask is that each school creates a collage of what you have done to help bring awareness about donation to your school community. You can include photos of your current or past awareness campaigns, Blue and Green Day, random act of kindness or anything else you want to highlight. **On the collage, please include your school’s name and a paragraph or two about what you have done, or plan to do as a Donate Life Club. We will showcase these collages at the event for all to see!**

Raise the Bar: WNY Leaders of Tomorrow
We will be hosting our 4th Annual Raise the Bar event in May, 2020. This leadership summit is for selected Sophomore and Junior students who have participated in Donate Life Club sponsored events at your school. Attendees will be given tools to continue developing the skills needed to be a successful leader in high school and beyond.

Please identify one or two students who will benefit from this great opportunity. Visit our website for more details regarding the event and the nomination form. **Nominations can be submitted any time before April 3, 2020.**
Scholarships:
Thank you to our high school partners for supporting ConnectLife and helping to spread our mission across WNY. Because of you, thousands of young people in our community are saving lives. Whether it is through enrollment on the NYS Donor Registry, blood donation to our community blood bank, or awareness building on the need for donation and transplantation, they greatly impact the lives of many. In recognition of your efforts ConnectLife is happy to be able to offer a scholarship program for the 2019/2020 school year. Below are the scholarships available this year:

1) ConnectLife Donate Life Club Scholarship Program

Thank you to our high school partners for supporting ConnectLife and helping to spread our mission across WNY. Because of you, thousands of young people in our community are saving lives. Whether it is through enrollment on the NYS Donor Registry, blood donation to our community blood bank, or awareness building on the need for donation and transplantation, they are having a huge impact on the lives of many. In recognition of your efforts ConnectLife is once again offering a scholarship program for the 2019/2020 school year.

Scholarship Guidelines:

EVERY school that:
- Holds 2 ConnectLife blood drives and
- Hosts 1 donor registry drive (Completed registry cards and reflection worksheet must be returned to our office.)
Will receive a $500 scholarship

EVERY school that:
- Holds 3 or more ConnectLife blood drives and
- Hosts 1 donor registry drive (Completed registry cards and reflection worksheet must be returned to our office.)
Will receive a $750 scholarship

Scholarship Rules

Your high school shall determine the scholarship recipient(s). We will provide you with an application for students to complete and then ask you to select your winners by turning in a scholarship nomination form. All scholarship nomination forms must be returned to our office no later than Friday, April 17, 2020.
Your high school’s total scholarship award may be split into increments of $250 and awarded to multiple students.

The scholarship recipient(s) must be a graduating senior and an active participant in your high school’s ConnectLife Donate Life Club and/or blood drives.

The scholarship will be forwarded to an accredited college/university on behalf of the recipient for use toward his/her higher education and applied for the fall 2020 semester.

If you do not have a graduating senior worthy of these scholarship funds, you can use these funds towards your awareness campaign and/or end of the year celebration for your club members.

We ask that you invite your Education Representative to your school’s end of the year Awards Ceremony so we can present your student scholarship recipient(s) with a certificate of excellence.

2) Ali’s Rally Book Scholarship:

Background
On February 2, 2003, Alison Gerlach’s life came to a sudden and tragic end. Only seventeen years old and a senior at Williamsville South High School, she was an outstanding athlete and a well-loved student. Upon her death, Ali’s family chose to honor her memory by contributing her organs to other needy children and adults as a reflection of her unselfish love. In this memory and to continue to bring the gift of life to others, the Ali’s Rally Foundation (www.alisrally.org) was born.

Since its formation, Ali’s Rally has raised over $335,000 for ConnectLife. Those funds are specifically designated towards Conneclife’s Donate Life program, a school outreach program with the objective of continuing to make Western New York aware of the need for organ, eye, tissue and blood donation. In life, Alison Gerlach brought life and happiness to those she loved. In death, she has given life and happiness to many she never knew but who will be forever in her debt.

Graduating seniors, who have been a member of the Donate Life Club, are eligible to apply.
To apply, complete an essay that describes “What have you learned and how has participating in the donate life program impacted your life?”
What can you expect from your ConnectLife Representative?
At ConnectLife, our core values are Communication, Accountability, Respect, and Engagement (CARE). Here is what you can expect from our staff and volunteers.

- **Communication** We are here to help you schedule modules, answer questions, address concerns, and to provide you with any resources you may need for your campaign and other club activities. Contact information for your assigned representative is below.

- **Accountability** We will be punctual for all modules and appointments with you. Your time and your students' time are valuable and we recognize this and will do all we can to best accommodate your schedules. If there is ever a time that your assigned ConnectLife Representative cannot attend a meeting, another representative will be scheduled to attend.

- **Respect** We will always treat you and your students with complete respect.

- **Engagement** Your ConnectLife Representative is available to come to any meetings that you have with your club. We recognize the fact that you will have more meetings than the required modules with us in order to develop a successful campaign. If you would like your ConnectLife Representative to be at any extra meetings, contact them in advance and they will be in attendance.

Finally, please contact your ConnectLife Representative with any questions/concerns. We look forward to working with you and your club members!
To help us meet your needs, please provide your contact information below:

Name _______________________________ School ______________________

E-mail ________________________________

Cell Phone ______________________________

Work Phone ______________________________

Other Phone/E-mail ________________________________

My preferred method of communication is: ___E-mail       ___Text       ___Phone Call

___Other (please explain)