Like donating blood, becoming an organ donor is truly a gift of life, just ask anyone who's received an organ transplant, or someone who's still on the waiting list.

In August, according to Secretary of State Ruth Johnson, a record-setting 44,000 state residents registered as organ donors. That's some 13,000 more than registered during August last year.

Johnson notes that this was the fourth consecutive month that registry sign-ups have increase by double digits.

By becoming an organ donor, the odds greatly improve for those whose lives depend on receiving a transplant.

Becoming an organ donor is a simple procedure. All you have to do is sign up at the Secretary of State website at www.michigan.gov/sos .

It wasn't all that long ago when the thought of transplanting vital organs was something out of a science fiction movie.

But ask the many, many recipients of a donated organ and they'll tell you this is hardly science fiction. It's a new lease on life that has given these recipients a new prospective on what the meaning of life is all about.

You won't find too many organ recipients that haven't given a million thanks to the more-often-than-not anonymous donor, their families and to the field of medicine that has made this possible.

Many of these recipients were born with conditions that have made it difficult for a vital organ to perform up to even the merest of standards.

Many others have found themselves in a rapid rush to find an organ donor.

We don't know if the day will come when we will find ourselves on a waiting list for a heart, kidney or lung.

We can only imagine the sense of hopeless for those whose waking moments rest on getting that call that a donor has been found.

--Allyce Westphal