Fallen Ralston Firefighter Remebered with Honor Walk

[OMAHA, NEB., February 8th, 2019] It’s 2:30 a.m. A hospital hallway that would normally be still is filled by a community waiting to honor an Omaha-area hero.

The hero they’re there for is 39-year-old Brian Saathoff.

Brian came from a long line of firefighters and proudly served as a firefighter/EMT with the Ralston Volunteer Fire Department for more than a decade.

“He’s been a hero, that’s been his life,” said Paula Wallace, Family Support Coordinator with Live On Nebraska.

Brian began his career as a volunteer firefighter right out of high school and has served with two other volunteer departments.

“That’s why he got up in the morning every day,” said Paula. “And so, for him to be honored [with an honor walk] is really perfection.”

Family members, friends, firefighters from four different communities, Live On Nebraska and CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center staff lined the hospital’s hallway. More than 100 people paid tribute to Brian as he was transported to the operating room to save lives through organ and tissue donation.

“He was the type of person that brings everybody together,” said Kevin Eischeid, Fire Chief of RVFD. “Brian was always about helping others and putting his family first. With his passing and still being able to help others is huge.”

For another member of the Ralston department, Brian’s donation is especially meaningful. Mike Bramhall received a double-lung transplant in 2016.

“I got chills,” Mike said of learning that Brian would be a donor. “In my mind, it was just crazy that in the same small fire department, someone got a transplant and just a few years later another team member is donating.”

“It fits Brian,” said Mike.

The honor walk is just one of the ways Brian’s gift of organ and tissue donation was commemorated. A Donate Life flag was raised in his honor and flew outside of the hospital during his stay there.
Additionally, Live On Nebraska gave his family a teddy bear with a recording of Brian’s heartbeat and presented them a donor medal with the inscription “Generosity Transforms the World.”

Brian’s heart, kidneys and liver will save multiple lives. Bone, skin and other tissues have the potential to heal an additional 100 people in the future.

“That hall was lined with people that care about him. And every single person that is going to receive an organ has a lobby full of people that are hopeful,” said Paula. “You can’t count the number of people impacted by every single organ.”

More than 113,000 Americans are waiting for a lifesaving organ transplant. To register as an organ and tissue donor in honor of Brian, visit LiveOnNebraska.org.

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Rooted in humanity, Live On Nebraska is dedicated to transforming lives through organ and tissue donation. We are a conduit for transplantation, partnering with hospitals in Nebraska and Pottawattamie County, Iowa to facilitate the recovery of organs and tissues from those who choose to donate life. We work round the clock to provide hope and healing to donor families and recipients, and to end the wait for more than 100,000 Americans in need of a lifesaving transplant. Learn more about our mission and register as a donor at LiveOnNebraska.org.