

## Be an organ donor

Ontario set a new record for organ donations last year that helped save more than 1,000 lives, an agency for organ, tissue and transplant donations said recently.

Trillium Gift of Life Network, which co-ordinates deceased donations in the province, said there was an 18 per cent increase in organ donations from the year before.

Ronnie Gavsie, the president of Gift of Life, said publicly disclosing hospital donation performance has been “a game changer.”

“We have learned that you treasure what you measure and when hospital performance is made transparent, hospital performance has improved,” Gavsie said.

Gavsie also attributed the increase in donors to greater pickup by hospitals contributing to the donor system. Now the large majority of Ontario hospitals with a ventilator—only those who die on a ventilator can become donors—are part of the program, she said.

Ontario suffered a setback in its program last fall when Health Minister Eric Hoskins revealed a glitch in the online system had affected nearly 60,000 registrants.

The glitch was fixed and Service Ontario sent out letters to notify donors of the problem so they could re-enter their information online, but Gavsie said only 18,000 people have re-registered.

Credit must also be given to the vocal advocates who have stepped up in recent years to raise the issue in society’s collective consciousness—lung transplant recipient and Cambridge teen Kayla Baker, who died little more than a year ago, among them.

It’s their stories, their voices and their struggles which make this such a personal issue for so many of us. To help save one or more lives, visit [www.beadonor.ca](http://www.beadonor.ca).

### WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to [www.theifp.ca](http://www.theifp.ca))

The province is considering ways to curb speed limits and are looking at four options. Which do you prefer?

- maintaining the current 50 km/h default speed limit (61%)
- permitting municipalities to set their own default speed limit inside their boundaries or specific neighbourhoods (29%)
- changing the law to reduce that limit to 40 km/h (7%)
- allowing municipalities to set their own default speed limit of 50 or 40 km/h (3%)

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## Letters to the editor

### Firefighter hiring is not fair: reader

Re: Fire Master Plan approves full-time staffing at HQ by March: Jan. 15, 2015.

As a longtime Georgetown resident I was happy to hear that the 2014 Fire Service Master Plan, calling for the continual hiring on average of two full-time fire department members through 2031, has been approved.

I do however have concerns around the hiring of these new firefighter positions.

It is known that Halton Hills only hires for full-time positions from out of their volunteer firefighter ranks. When the volunteers are hired, applicants with Pre-Service Fire Fighter Training (college level) are most often overlooked for fear that they will leave and join another fire service.

Every time an individual applies to be a volunteer on the Halton Hills Fire Service they must complete the Firefighter Services of Ontario Screening Test at a cost of \$350.

This out of pocket fee is non refundable if a person is not hired.

I am aware of individuals in the community who not only have Pre-Service Training, but who have gone on to take advanced training in the fire fighting and first aid fields, and who not only meet but exceed the eligibility criteria and yet have been passed over repeatedly during the volunteer hiring process.

Anyone who has chosen to invest in their future by taking Pre-Service Fire Training at a college level should not be penalized.

Where is the logic in this?

As a taxpayer, I am concerned about the transparency and accountability in the hiring process for our volunteer firefighters.

Judging by the conversations I have had in the community lately, I am not the only one with these concerns.

Paul Dickinson

### What happened to outdoor rinks?

The NHL hockey outdoor Winter Classic game makes me wonder why we don't have more outdoor ice

rinks.

It is an opportunity for kids to learn to skate and they are inexpensive to maintain.

Say what you will about Canadians, too polite, donut lovers, but don't forget our outdoor skating rinks.

We skated on a frozen pond or a sheet of ice in a backyard.

Our love of hockey and skating remains the truly great Canadian experience.

These are memories that remain with many us for a long time.

Vince Last

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