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### **American Living Organ Donor Fund Provides Model for Organ Donation Reform**

**Washington, DC** — In a TEDMED talk slated for release this Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, Sigrid Fry-Revere will explain the innovative ideas behind a new charity that has made more life-saving kidney transplants possible in a month than some government-funded Organ Procurement Organizations have in the same period — at a fraction of the cost.

While organ procurement organizations focus on finding viable organs from deceased donors — a process that can cost upwards of \$50,000 each — transplants from living donors can save more lives, for far less money. The American Living Organ Donor Fund facilitates these transplants by reducing the financial burden of friends and relatives who want to donate, but cannot afford the associated expenses it may be illegal for insurance to cover.

Founded by Fry-Revere and healthcare entrepreneur Mike Mittelman, the ALODF made it possible for Melissa Brinks to donate a kidney to her brother Keith without going into financial ruin. “What they are doing for donors is amazing and life-changing,” says Brinks, a native of Carroll, Iowa. “Without the ALODF, I could have lost my house, by not being able to make payments. They made it possible, not only for me, but for my brother as well.”

March 12 is World Kidney Day, a fitting time to remember that over 120,000 Americans are now on a waiting list for an organ donation, and thousands will die before they ever receive one. “TEDMED is honored to have Sigrid deliver such a powerful talk as part of our program,” said Nassim Assefi, Director of Stage Content. “We are extremely proud to share her talk with the world on this important day, highlighting Sigrid’s tragic experience with lives lost and her inspiring stories of lives saved through organ donation.”

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Although living donors could help 90% or more of those waiting for a transplant, [they face an average of \\$5,000 in expenses to donate an organ, and sometimes as much as \\$20,000](#). U.S. government programs exist to help the poorest donors with travel and lodging expenses, but rarely anything else. None cover what for many donors is the greatest expense: unpaid leave for the 4 to 8 weeks it takes to recover after giving an organ.

The ALODF, a 501(c)(3) IRS approved charity launched in December 2014, helps people cover lodging, travel, lost wages, and other expenses associated with donating organs of all types. On a small, private scale, it is implementing what countries like Israel, Australia, and Ireland have done at the national level, making organ donation easier and saving thousands of lives.

In another typical case, the ALODF provided Camille Hernandez of San Diego with money to pay her rent while she recovered from surgery after she set off an 18-person donor chain. And in another case, where a wife donated a kidney to her husband, the ALODF's assistance prevented the couple from defaulting on their mortgage.

Also motivated by the issues discussed in her TEDMED talk, Fry-Revere, created Stop Organ Trafficking Now!, an organization that lobbies Congress to pay more attention to the rights and needs of living organ donors.

“What seems to matter most to living organ donors isn't benefits, like tax credits or life insurance,” says Fry-Revere, “but having a way to pay all their donation-related expenses as they occur. My friends Steve and Maurie suffered because the U.S. makes it difficult for donors to afford the costs of saving lives, and they didn't have to die. We don't want to inflict their fate on hundreds of thousands of other kidney disease patients, and we don't have to.”

After a successful launch campaign on Charitable.org, which raised **\$17,000** and helped save 34 lives, the ALODF will [start another fundraising campaign](#) beginning on World Kidney Day and lasting throughout April, which is Donate Life Month.

The marketing and communications firm [lambic](#) is representing ALODF *pro bono*.

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The American Living Organ Donor Fund is a 501(c)(3) public charity. All donations are 100% tax deductible, and every penny from this campaign goes directly to help living organ donors. All charity overhead is covered by the Center for Ethical Solutions.