As procurement coordinator for Midwest Transplant Network, Melissa Roberts, RN, often talked with families about the importance of organ and tissue donation. She told them how a single donor could save or enhance the lives of more than 50 people.

she turned 30 she, too, would need an organ donation.

“In my job, I may have underestimated how poor the quality of life is for someone who is waiting for an organ donation,” Roberts said. “But when I became seriously ill from kidney failure, I learned firsthand how sick you can be.”

Luckily for Roberts, she was able to receive a new kidney and pancreas in October 2003, eight months after being placed on a transplant waiting list. Her double-transplant surgery was successfully performed at The University of Kansas Hospital. She is now well on her way to a full recovery and a life that doctors say can now include children for her and her husband, Aaron.

Within two weeks of her transplant, Roberts wrote a letter of thanks to her donor’s family. The Midwest Transplant Network forwarded the letter to the donor’s mother after she agreed to receive it.

Here is a short excerpt:

“I know what a rare gift this is, and I intend to live my life in a way that you and your family will be proud of.”

The favorite part of her job was following up with donor families, to let them know how their loved ones’ “gift of life” had helped others. She wanted to give donors’ families a sense of closure.

She never guessed that before

“...I owe this all to you. I have a second chance at life, and you have made that possible. I want you to know that the precious gift you have given me will not be wasted or abused. I will live the healthiest and fullest life I possibly can. I know what a rare gift this is, and I intend to live my life in a way that you and your family will be proud of.”

In February, Roberts received a five-page letter from her donor’s mother. In the letter, the mother told Roberts about her teenage son – who he was, what he enjoyed doing, all the little details of his life. Roberts hopes to someday meet her donor’s mother to tell her thank you in person.

“No a single day goes by that I don’t think about my donor and the incredible gift that he gave me.”

See related story on page 2.
April, National Donate Life Month, is an opportunity to increase awareness about the need for organ and tissue donations. There are more than 84,000 people in need of life-saving organ transplants and another 500,000 people who will need tissue transplants this year.

Mike Lower, RN, organ transplant manager at The University of Kansas Hospital, in partnership with the Midwest Transplant Network, urges everyone: “Talk to your family about organ and tissue donation. Talk to your family about donating life.”

**What You Can Do**

Family discussion is essential for donation to become a reality for those awaiting a transplant. Although hospitals are required to notify families of potential donors of their options, the legal next-of-kin must give consent. Many people do not realize that signing the back of their driver’s license is not enough to communicate their wish to be a donor.

**Donation at The University of Kansas Hospital**

The University of Kansas Hospital has joined Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson in his initiative to increase organ donation by participating in the Health Resources and Services Administration Organ Donation Breakthrough Collaborative.

The Collaborative has brought together more than 100 of the nation’s largest hospitals, 42 organ procurement agencies and other leading national organizations to share best practices, with the goal of increasing organ donations.

The hospital’s commitment to organ and tissue donation has resulted in many successful transplants. In 2003, 16 families chose to donate their loved ones’ organs at The University of Kansas Hospital. Because of their generosity, four hearts, seven lungs, 16 livers, nine pancreata and 30 kidneys were recovered to pass on the gift of life to others. In addition, 29 families donated transplantable tissues, enhancing the lives of hundreds of people. Another 100 families gave the gift of sight through eye donations.

The University of Kansas Hospital’s third annual Transplant/Donation Symposium, “Passing the Torch,” is scheduled for August 27. This annual conference is designed to provide current information on donation and transplantation practices for health care professionals. Look for more information in future issues of In The Center.

**Golf Tournament Benefits Kids**

The KU Children’s Center will benefit from funds raised at the eighth annual Molly and Matthew Kirse Golf Tournament, Friday, June 11.

The tournament will be held at the Adam’s Pointe Golf Club, 1601 N.E. R.D. Mize Road, Blue Springs, Mo.

Registration and breakfast begin at 7 a.m., with a shotgun start at 8 a.m. Sponsorship opportunities are available and range from $30 to $10,000. The “early bird” individual entry fee is $130 if you register by June 1.

The annual golf tournament was begun by John and Jennifer Kirse in honor of their two children, Molly and Matthew, who died in infancy. The tournament has raised more than $262,000 over the past seven years. This year’s goal is $27,000.

For more information, contact Linda Schuck at 8-6301.
Take Time for “Family” and a Free Lunch

Don’t make lunch plans for Tuesday, April 27. Instead, at 11 a.m. drop by Battenfeld Auditorium and Francisco Lounge for a free hot dog, some popcorn, a soft drink and a brownie. Shake the wing of Jay Doc and Jay Nurse. Enjoy the live music of an upbeat jazz trio.

While you’re having a good time, you’ll discover a significant way to help the university, the hospital and the people we serve.

During this special event, university and hospital employees will kick off the annual KU First Family Campaign. Donald Hagen, MD, KUMC executive vice chancellor, and Irene Cumming, president and chief executive officer of The University of Kansas Hospital, will speak, along with Mike Wall, vice president for medical development at the KU Endowment Association. They’ll be joined by staff members who will discuss why and how they have made gifts to the university or hospital through the Family Campaign.

You’ll also discover how to support the causes that are near and dear to your heart, such as student scholarships, new medical equipment or your department’s special projects.

Can’t make it to the party? Visit the Family Campaign table outside the cafeteria. Representatives will be there Monday-Friday, April 26-May 7. Everyone who participates in the campaign will get a free gift – a carabiner flashlight.

For more information or to make a donation, contact KU Endowment Association at 8-5249. KU Endowment is a partner in philanthropy with the university and hospital. Gifts count toward KU First: Invest in Excellence, the third and largest fundraising campaign for KU and its affiliates.

Don’t miss this chance to get a free lunch, a free gift and to make a difference in your life and the lives of those at work.

Breast Center Offers Mammograms at Work Day

The University of Kansas Hospital wants KUMC employees to benefit from the same state-of-the-art diagnostic resources and advanced patient care as its patients.

That’s why the Breast Center will provide a special day for hospital and university employees to have clinical breast exams and mammograms on Friday, May 7. Appointments must be scheduled in advance for 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. or 2:30-5 p.m. by calling 8-3442. If you have specific questions about the Breast Center, contact Joni Bialek-Wood, mammography manager, at 8-3415.

This is not a free service; employees’ insurance providers will be billed for the screening. However, if you are a full-time hospital employee participating in one of the hospital’s employee health plans, the co-pay will be covered by the Hospital Supplemental Plan. The procedure should take about 30 minutes.

“We’re trying to make this annual routine exam for women over the age of 40 convenient and easy to fit into their work schedules,” said Lori Ranallo, RN, diagnostic care coordinator.

The Breast Center is located on the ground floor of the hospital, across from the Information Desk. The newly designed Breast Center, which is accredited by the Food and Drug Administration and the American College of Radiology, has two mammography suites featuring the latest equipment.

Barbara Trickle, registered mammography technologist, demonstrates the hospital’s new digital mammography unit.
Heart Walk Team Captains

KUMC team captains for the American Heart Association’s Heart Walk attended a citywide luncheon April 13 at the Westin Crown Center Hotel. To date, KUMC is the citywide leader, raising $16,783 and recruiting 473 walkers. In attendance were:

(front) Gwen DePriest, Kansas Masonic Cancer Research Institute;
(second row) Jessie Charpentier, RN, Unit 56; Patty Corkill, Radiology;
Theresa Jackson, Medical Records;
Paula Gangel, Volunteer Services;
(back row) Carie Lawrence, RN, Unit 54; Brian Selig, RN, Emergency Department; Debbie Volts, RN, Unit 56; and Matt Doughty, Printing and Mail Services.

To sign up for the walk or to check out how much money is being raised by various departments, go to www.heartwalk.kintera.org/kc.

New ED X-Ray

Kim Smith, manager, Radiology, operates a new X-ray machine in the Emergency Department (ED). The new machine means ED patients no longer have to be transported to Radiology for X-ray procedures, saving approximately 7,000 trips per year. New Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS) capabilities, also recently installed in the ED, allow physicians to immediately view images as soon as technicians scan the plates. This is the first of a two-part program for upgrading imaging services in the ED. The second phase will be the installation of a CT scanner in the ED, which is scheduled for late June.

JayDoc Run

Jennifer Bacani, a second-year medical student, rode a mini-bike at the inaugural JayDoc Free Clinic 5K run/walk on April 18.
Governor Sebelius painted the picture of an emerging “health care crisis” during her State of Health Care in Kansas address April 13 in the School of Nursing Auditorium. Her address was part of an event recognizing the 20th anniversary of the Department of Health Policy and Management.

Polls have repeatedly shown that the long-term availability and affordability of health care tops most Americans’ list of concerns. And both large and small businesses are struggling to provide health insurance for their employees.

Governor Sebelius pointed to trends that indicate an emerging health care crisis:

- Eighty percent of the uninsured live in households where at least one adult is employed.
- More than 60 percent of the uninsured lack coverage for more than a year.
- Steadily escalating premium costs are stifling wage growth.
- Consumers are paying more but getting less as employers are forced to trim benefits to maintain coverage.
- Consumers’ out-of-pocket costs are going up.

Sebelius said she will lay the groundwork for a major health care initiative next year. This year, she has created the Governor’s Office of Health Planning and Finance, directed by Bob Day, and charged it with bringing together providers, insurers, state agencies and advocates to propose initiatives that will:

- Reduce administrative complexity in the health care system.
- Make the system more transparent to the public by making information about cost and quality more widely available.
- Use the state’s purchasing power to control costs and improve quality.
- Provide real assistance to small employers who want to offer coverage to their workers.

Sebelius said she also intends to use the purchasing power of the state to influence the market – to both control costs and enhance quality. The state of Kansas, through Medicaid and the State Employees Health Plan, purchases more than $1.2 billion of regular medical services every year.

“We’re also looking into ways that we can employ a pay for performance model. In other words, we would measure the quality of care and set reimbursement rates accordingly,” Sebelius said.

“We must also develop a comprehensive workable wellness policy to improve the health of all Kansans.”

Currently, the governor’s office is determining ways to provide small employers with financial incentives to offer affordable coverage for their employees.

Her office is also continuing to battle with the Centers for Medicare-Medicaid Services over reimbursements to the state for a host of costs. These include millions of dollars that are at stake for The University of Kansas Hospital.

“Last week, I sent a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, urging him to help me resolve the current disputes in a way that allows us to maintain basic and essential services to some of Kansas’ most vulnerable citizens,” she said.

“During the remainder of my term, I intend to be aggressive on health care issues – whether it’s fighting for fairness in federal reimbursement policies or seeking innovative ways to control administrative costs and assist small employers.”

See related story on page 6.
KUMC Observes Cover the Uninsured Week

There are nearly 44 million Americans living without health coverage. Nearly 8.5 million are children.

The goals of “Cover the Uninsured Week,” April 26-May 3, are to reverse this disturbing trend, elevate this issue on the national and local agendas, educate Americans about the problem and provide information to assist those who are uninsured.

KUMC’s Departments of Health Policy and Management, Family Medicine, Preventive Medicine and Health Information Management are sponsoring a number of events to increase awareness. All KUMC students, faculty, employees and the public are invited.

• Monday, April 26: Press event at JayDoc Free Clinic, 340 Southwest Blvd., Kansas City, Kan., noon-1 p.m.

• Tuesday, April 27: Information booth and video, outside the cafeteria, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

• Wednesday, April 28: “Showdown at the Country Buffet,” dramatic interpretation illustrating health and social conflicts associated with a lack of health insurance, Wahl West Auditorium, noon-1 p.m.

• Thursday, April 29: Information booth and video, outside the cafeteria, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

• Friday, April 30: “Covering the Uninsured … Is There a Solution?” Don Wilson, president, Kansas Hospital Association, Clendening Auditorium, noon-1 p.m.

• Monday, May 3: “Why is My Patient Still Uninsured?” Andrew Allison, PhD, Kansas Health Institute, G013 School of Nursing, noon-1 p.m.

• Tuesday, May 11: “The Role of Safety Net Clinics in Serving the Uninsured,” Karla Finnell, executive director, Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved, G013 School of Nursing, noon-1 p.m.

For more information about Cover the Uninsured Week, go to www.covertheuninsured.org.

Campus activities will be held prior to the national week, May 10-14, in order to better coincide with students’ schedules.

Nursing Professor Appointed to NIH Roadmap Project

Lauren S. Aaronson, RN, PhD, professor, KU School of Nursing, has accepted an invitation from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to be senior advisor for the Roadmap for Research Project in the Office of the Director for the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR).

The Roadmap Project was established to identify major opportunities and gaps in the nation’s health care research program. The goals of the program are to overcome obstacles and accelerate the pace of discovery in the life sciences, promote rapid translation from laboratories to patients and back, and develop innovative research approaches.

Aaronson will focus on increasing NINR involvement and visibility on Roadmap initiatives across the NIH campus and facilitating involvement of the national nursing research community in Roadmap initiatives.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity to learn more about how the National Institutes of Health work to support medical and health-related research and to contribute to increasing nursing research at the national level,” Aaronson said.

Aaronson will serve as a senior advisor to Patricia Grady, PhD, director of the NINR and co-chair of the NIH Roadmap Interdisciplinary Research Teams Initiative. As Aaronson attends to her duties at the NIH, she will continue to teach several courses in the SoN using distance education and alternative scheduling.

“We congratulate Dr. Aaronson on this honor and for so ably bringing the KU Medical Center closer to the National Institutes of Health,” said Karen Miller, PhD, RN, dean of the KU Schools of Nursing and Allied Health.
Urology News

Benyi Li, MD, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Urology, has been awarded a second Department of Defense grant for $532,580. Over a three-year period, Li and his team of researchers are working in the area of hormone-refractory prostate cancer.

By using a new technology that allows Li to turn off certain genes with small pieces of gene-specific RNA (siRNA-mediated silencing), his team hopes to find a way to regulate and stop the growth of this late-stage and often fatal prostate cancer.

Physician/Scientist Seminar

Robert D. Simari, MD, a cardiologist with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and a graduate of the KU School of Medicine, will speak Monday, May 3, at noon in Rieke Auditorium. His presentation will be on “Gene Therapy Approaches in the Treatment of Cardiovascular Disease.”

Simari’s interests include atherosclerosis, cardiovascular gene transfer, interventional cardiology, vascular biology and molecular medicine/cardiovascular research.

Heart Walk Fundraiser

The University of Kansas Hospital’s Departments of Admitting, Outpatient Registration, Virtual Registration and Cash Office are sponsoring a fundraiser for the American Heart Association’s Heart Walk. If you buy a meal April 26 and 27 from 5-8 p.m. at Bob Evans Restaurant, 91st and Metcalf, Overland Park, Kan., 10 percent of the bill will go to the Heart Walk.

New Board Members

The KU School of Medicine’s Women in Medicine and Science Program announced its newly elected board members:

- **President (2004-06):** Kim Templeton, MD, associate professor, Orthopedics
- **Vice President:** Shilpa Buch, PhD, research associate professor, Microbiology
- **Secretary:** Karin Porter-Williamson, MD, assistant professor, Medicine
- **Treasurer:** Andrea Charbonneau, MD, assistant professor, Medicine
- **Wichita Representative:** Suzanne Hawley, PhD, MPH, research assistant professor, Preventive Medicine and Public Health

A reception honoring the new board members will be held Tuesday, May 11, 5-6 p.m. in Clendening Foyer.

The Women in Medicine and Science Program is dedicated to fostering equality in the academic community by promoting excellence through leadership, mentoring and community involvement. It is open to all faculty, residents and students in the SoM. The program offers a monthly speaker program and a regional conference. If you are interested in joining, contact Julie McCollum at jmccollum@kumc.edu.

Friendship Inn Event

Friendship Inn, a home away from home for out-of-town families whose loved ones are receiving treatment at The University of Kansas Hospital, is sponsoring its first annual Taste of Hospitality Wine Tasting Fundraiser.

The event will be held Tuesday, April 27, 6:30-9:30 p.m., Leawood South Country Club. Tickets are $65 per person for the event that will include silent and live auctions. For more information and registration, contact Chuck Andres at 913-782-8298.
Classifieds, etc.

Automotive:
1997 Honda Passport, 4 x 4, white, automatic, AM/FM/CD player, 81K, $6,500. 816-405-1654.
1983 Chevrolet Caprice Classic, 4-door, body and interior rough, runs OK, $500 OBO. 816-686-5141, leave message.

For Sale:
4721 Wyoming, 3 blocks east of State Line, walk to KUMC, 3 BR, 1 BA, 2-car garage, newer HVAC, hardwoods, WBFP, park view, $169,500. 816-561-4415.
FSBO, 3723 Jefferson, near KUMC, Valentine/Roanoke neighborhood, 2-story, 3 BR, 1/2 BA, newly remodeled, hardwood floors, full basement, new 100 amp service, newer roof, generous backyd, $169,000. 913-645-2900.
Red Ox chipper/pulverizer/shredder, 6 hp Briggs & Stratton engine, electric push-button start, 3" capacity, brand new, never had gas or oil in engine, 4 pneumatic tires, tractor tow bar, $1,000 OBO. 913-706-5274 or e-mail mark@kc.rr.com for pictures.
Kenwood 100w stereo receiver, $100; Kenwood home 5-CD changer, $150; Sony cordless phone/answering system, $50; Technics 5-speaker surround system, $50. 913-831-9813.

For Rent:
2 BR, 2 BA duplex, KUMC area, 1906 Lawrence Ct. (off State Line), basement, washer/dryer hookup, fireplace, kitchen, dining room, office, garage, $736/mo. 913-461-3812.

Wanted:
Reliable roundtrip ride to KUMC from 32nd and Metropolitan, KCK, M-F, flexible day shift, beginning May. 913-262-6681.
Energetic, loving student to care for 1-year-old daughter in Fairway home, Fridays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., starting June 18, 1-year commitment and child-care experience preferred. 913-262-7517.

“Now I know what my students mean when they complain about their backpacks being too heavy.”

Coming Up

Friday, April 23
- Neurology Grand Rounds, “If the Wreck Fits – Courtesy of Your Friendly Local Auto Repair Shop,” William Nowack, MD, associate professor, Neurology, 8:30-9:30 a.m., 1563 hospital.
- Psychiatry Grand Rounds, “Conceptualizing Anxiety,” Douglas Geenens, DO, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Sudler Auditorium.
- Financial Reporting Department’s ticket sales for 50 great prizes to benefit the Heart Walk, 6:30-8 a.m. and 11 a.m.-1 p.m., outside the cafeteria.
- Clinical Lab’s Heart Walk silent auction, festive baskets valued $50-$100, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., outside the cafeteria.
- Kansas Speedway ticket sales to benefit the Heart Walk, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m., outside the cafeteria.

Tuesday, April 27
- Family Campaign kick-off event, 11 a.m., Battenfeld Auditorium.
- Cover the Uninsured Week information table, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., outside the cafeteria. Also on April 29.