

# 2013 VOLUNTEERS

## Zac's Challenge: 1,045 and counting

by Justin Phelps, Mid-America Transplant Services

Learn more about Zac's Challenge at [ZacsChallenge.com](http://ZacsChallenge.com).

With the help of family and friends, the Wildhabers have added 1,045 people to the organ and tissue donor registry through a program called Zac's Challenge, which was developed after Amy's son, Zac, died in a tragic car accident and passed away on Valentine's Day in 2012. He saved five lives and enhanced countless more through his family's selfless decision to donate his organs and tissues.

“As a mom, your biggest fear is that your child will be forgotten.”

– Amy Wildhaber

*Zac Wildhaber*



“Initially, Zac's Challenge was a God send,” she said. “It allowed us to focus some energy in a positive manner, and that was huge. Now it's a good way to build his legacy. I was thinking about this the other night: Zac's legacy is probably more than most people will aspire to in a lifetime, and he's 17.”

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The program's aim is to raise organ donation awareness by encouraging people to join the organ and tissue donor registry with the help of Mid-America Transplant Services. By accepting Zac's Challenge, an individual sets a goal to help five more people join the registry. The idea is to create a huge pyramid of newly informed and registered individuals, and the vision has evolved significantly. The Wildhabers and many family and friends have hosted more than 25 events in and around Union, Mo., where the family resides.

As an emergency department nurse at Missouri Baptist Sullivan Hospital, Amy's role includes assisting with education, including the hospital's annual organ and tissue donation education program. After working on the program one day after Zac passed away, she came home and told her family, “We're planning this education and I'm thinking about sharing Zac's story to assist with it.” Her husband, Troy, and two children, 21-year-old Megan and 16-year-old Rob, were quickly on board. “I thought we could set a goal,” Amy said. “So we went for 1,000.”

As of June 6, 2013, about 1,045 people had signed up through Zac's Challenge from 10 states.

*Troy and Amy Wildhaber*

