



2010

MISSOURI QUALITY AWARD RECIPIENT

Mid-America Transplant Services

*Picture Ryan, who is only 16-years-old, an avid baseball player, and a beloved son, grandson, brother, and friend, and who is now in intensive care following a critical injury during a baseball game. After evaluating Ryan's injuries and performing lifesaving measures, the doctors have diagnosed conclusively that Ryan is brain dead. Machines keep his organs functioning while a team from Mid-America Transplant Services (MTS) talks compassionately to Ryan's family about donating his organs and tissues. On the most agonizing day of this family's life, they find the courage to say "yes." Ryan saved six lives that day, among them: A 3-year-old boy from Missouri, who received Ryan's left kidney, is now excited to go home with his family after being in the hospital since the day he was born; A 56-year-old father, an Amtrak worker from Illinois, who had been on the waiting list for four years before receiving Ryan's liver; A 9-year-old earthquake victim, who was airlifted to a Florida hospital with burns over 50 percent of her body, received tissue that helped keep out infection while her skin regenerated. The courage and generosity exhibited by Ryan and his family, and by all Donor Families, are the reason the employees of Mid-America Transplant Services come to work every day as a team, with compassion and integrity, to realize the Mission of the organization to **save lives through excellence in organ and tissue donation.***

At MTS, it all starts with the Mission. Rewritten in 2004 by employees, and revalidated in 2010, the Mission statement serves as a constant reminder that everyone who works at MTS can directly impact the life of another.

For 35 years, MTS has served as the regional organ and tissue procurement organization for eastern Missouri, southern Illinois, and northeast Arkansas, serving 4.3 million people. From its founding goal to assist in the coordination of kidney donations, MTS has grown to become a multi-faceted organization dedicated to saving lives and enhancing the quality of all donated organs and tissues currently available for transplant. Throughout its history, MTS has relentlessly pursued its pillars of Service, Innovation, Stewardship, and Growth to create a positive donation experience for Donor Families. For every donation opportunity, MTS acts as a responsible steward of their loved one's "gift of life" by coordinating the placement of the donated organs and tissues to the community for those in need.

The critical success factors for MTS include:



- A Mission-driven staff that is highly motivated and engaged in saving lives, and is supported by an organizational focus to attract, retain, and motivate outstanding employees who strive for exceptional performance
- A constant pursuit of innovation driven by visionary leadership and supported by a community-based Board of Directors
- Strong relationships formed through effective partnering and collaboration supported by ongoing survey feedback
- Customer-driven excellence promoted by a culture where organ and tissue donors are recognized as the true heroes

The Blueprint for Excellence serves as the composition for the MTS culture uniting the Mission, Vision, Values and Pillars to form the basis for how the organization is managed. In January 2008, MTS launched *We are MTS*, a cultural initiative designed to connect the hearts and minds of staff with the Blueprint for Excellence through a variety of communication and involvement opportunities. For example, the newest program allows staff members to share their personal connection to the Blueprint for Excellence at monthly staff meetings, which reinforces the connection between individual roles and accomplishment of the Mission. Such connections shape attitudes and inspire staff to demonstrate the core values and actively contribute to the Mission regardless of their position within the organization.

For MTS, the pursuit of excellence is intricately tied to people; the remarkable achievements experienced by the organization in recent years could not have been accomplished without the generosity of Donor Families and the hard work, passion, and dedication of the 105 MTS employees. As identified in the staff survey and validated through repeated survey cycles, the primary motivation for the MTS workforce is contributing to the Mission itself: saving lives. Staff Survey results in the Job Satisfaction dimension were recognized as the Highest in the Nation among 450-plus companies involved in comprehensive employee surveys conducted by an outside survey provider. MTS also ranked #1 in Highest Benefits Satisfaction in the same survey, and was listed as best-in-class for scoring in the top five percent of organizations surveyed for Strategy/Mission.

To enhance workforce engagement, MTS promotes two-way communication with staff by systematically utilizing “Rounding for Outcomes” on a monthly basis to gain knowledge about process effectiveness, available resources, peer recognition and needed clarification of key messages.

Another vital factor in the success of MTS can be attributed to the organization’s efforts to form collaborative relationships with valued partners like donor hospitals, transplant centers, and tissue processors. These effective partnerships provide the organization access to its customer, the Donor Family, and allow MTS to place the organs and tissue gifted to those awaiting a much-needed transplant. MTS also works closely with its partners to design and test new ideas and share industry best practices, which ultimately all contributes to saving more lives.

The constant pursuit of innovation at MTS is demonstrated by several “firsts” in the industry, including:

- Obtaining information from customers, partners, stakeholders and employees through surveys
- Integrating a 40-student classroom for education outreach, with Smart Board technology, into the organization’s main facility
- Incorporating unique staffing models with dedicated staff caring for the Donor Families
- Custom building a facility that houses three fully-equipped ORs for onsite organ and tissue recovery; clinical technologies and equipment include critical care, x-ray, and cardiac catheterization capabilities -- MTS is the first OPO in the country to have internal operating rooms for organ recovery resulting in benefits such as a significant financial savings, improved operating room scheduling and increased customer and partner satisfaction

MTS monitors performance through cascading metrics that have been established at the organizational, work system,

department, and individual levels, which are reviewed and discussed monthly to drive the outcomes needed for success. The Chief Executive Officer directs a leadership team composed of the Chief Operating Officer, directors, and managers. This flat organizational structure, in which the leaders are also the process owners, enables agility in decision-making and implementation of innovative ideas and process improvements. Organizational learning resulted in a realignment in 2007 that created a shift from a traditional departmental structure to a more horizontal, cross-departmental work system structure designed to better accomplish the work of the organization.

MTS’s performance improvement journey has led to increasingly greater organizational results as evidenced in the achievement of record-breaking results year upon year since 2006; most recently in 2009, celebrating the highest number of organ donations in the organization’s history. These results, however, are not based on sales and profits, but on the Mission of saving lives, which provides a clear focus for organizational activities and strategies.

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