

## Donate Life

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, AHNA Board members and friends joined with New England Donor Services and the Mark Twain House to celebrate the special place that organ donations hold in Hartford and especially here in Asylum Hill.

As regular readers of the AHNA News & Views will know, Georges Annan Kingsley spent the first five years of his life here in America in dialysis waiting for a kidney transplant. Despite that condition he created a lot of fine art and was an active member of the immigrant and refugee community. So after Georges received his



NEDS team, speakers and AHNA members

Kidney in October of last year, plans began for a celebration as well as a way to bring awareness to the community at large about the pressing need for organs for those in need of transplants.

While Georges' story centered on his need for a kidney, potential donations extend to many other organs as well. Hearts, lungs, livers and eyes are just a few of the opportunities that we all have to give the gift of life when our own life comes to an end. The important point is that that moment often comes without warning. Planning ahead is an especially good idea in this case. Signing up to be an organ donor is the best way to do this, and many of the organs that can be transplanted such as the heart can only come from someone who had died.

The one main exception to this is of course, the kidney. Nature provides us with two and yet we are able to live quite well with only one. As a result, a living donor of a kidney is an especially appreciated gift. It allows everyone concerned, the recipient, the hospital and surgeons the opportunity to prepare for the very best outcome.

The event itself was well planned. It began with an introduction by Mark Brevard, the Community Outreach Manager for New England Donor Services, who was followed by Alexandra Glazier, President and CEO of NEDS, and then Dr. John Rodis, President of Saint Francis Hospital, Asamoah Anane, Living Donor Coordinator at Hartford Hospital and Yvonne Matthews, AHNA Board member.

After their remarks came the testimonials, first by Georges Annan Kingsley, then Nancy Tyson-Alexander, Janis Wohnschlaeger and Andrew Jones. They were a combination of recipients of organs and the family members of donors whose organs given at the time of their passing were able to save lives.

At the end, was the unveiling of the beautiful photos of donors and recipients whose lives were changed by this program. Photos of the event can be seen at;

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/974oxVpAgyJESEBEA>