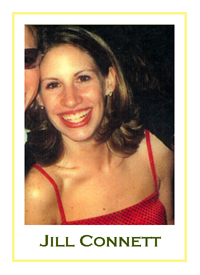
**NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH – Local Stories 2014**

**Melody & Carol - Colorado Springs, CO**

*Donor mother & recipient of daughter’s liver*

**On May 24, 2003, Melody Connett’s 24-year-old daughter Jill suffered unsurvivable injuries in an auto accident. Jill and Melody had spoken about donation, and Jill had the heart on her license, indicating she was registered as an organ and tissue donor. Because of the extent of her injuries, only her liver could be recovered for transplant.

“Donor Alliance explained practical things, such as what would happen to her body and how long she could stay on the ventilator,” recalled Melody, a 59-year-old banker. “They also explained that six months after the donation, I could try to contact her recipient by sending a picture and letter to Donor Alliance. They would forward it to the recipient and, if the recipient so desired, the recipient could respond to Donor Alliance and we could meet.

“I waited the six months and sent a letter and picture of Jill. Each night I hoped there would be a reply in my mailbox, but there was not. Thinking maybe my letter had been lost, I tried a second time, but got no answer. All I wanted to know was if the transplant had been a success. After receiving no response to my second letter, I assumed that either the transplant had not been successful or the recipient simply didn’t want to be bothered, so I gave up.”

The following year, Melody ran in Donor Alliance’s signature event, the Donor Dash 5K (honoring organ donors, recipients and those waiting), with her cousin Linda and friend Kay. In 2005, Melody formed a team, “Jill’s Fighting Snappers,” to honor Jill, and had 10 blue and green t-shirts printed for her teammates with Jill’s photo on the back. Each year, Jill’s Fighting Snappers grew until it was 33 people strong in 2007 and in 2012 grew to over 75 people.

While walking the course, in 2007, Melody’s friend Deb saw a woman and her daughter walking in white shirts with computer photo printouts of Jill pinned to their backs. The woman, Carole Pirri, was Jill’s liver recipient.

**Pull out quote:** "When Carole crossed the finish line, we hugged and cried for a long, long time. Then she went to each team member and hugged them, too. It was truly a Hallmark moment,” said Melody.

Carole and Melody are now great friends and speak together on behalf of organ donation; they celebrate the Donor Dash as their anniversary. Carole accompanied Melody to Pasadena, CA in 2009 to help decorate the Donate Life float and Jill’s floragraph.

“Margaret Mead once said ‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world…indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.’ It is time for us to step up and make a difference…*be a verb*, not an adjective…and get this done," said Melody. "Register now and discuss donation with your family!”