

Senate Resolution No. 1302

**BY:** Senator MARTINS

**COMMEMORATING** the 50th Anniversary of Gift of Life  
International on September 13, 2025

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to organizations and individuals who have demonstrated significant contributions to the health and well-being of people around the globe; and

**WHEREAS,** Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Gift of Life International, to be celebrated at its Golden Jubilee Gala on Saturday, September 13, 2025, at the Uniondale Marriott in Uniondale, New York; and

**WHEREAS,** This milestone event marks the 50th Anniversary of Gift of Life International, a global network of affiliated organizations that has provided lifesaving cardiac care to more than 62,000 children in 80 countries across five continents since its inception in 1975; and

**WHEREAS,** The Golden Jubilee Gala is expected to be the largest gathering of Gift of Life partners ever, bringing together affiliates, like-minded global partners, generous donors, compassionate volunteers, and dedicated Rotarians to both celebrate the past and inspire the future of pediatric cardiac care; and

**WHEREAS,** The evening will recognize and honor the exceptional contributions of St. Francis Hospital and The HeartGift Foundation, both of which have played vital roles in supporting Gift of Life International's life-saving mission; and

**WHEREAS,** Gift of Life International was founded by Robbie Donno, whose visionary leadership and compassionate spirit laid the foundation for an organization that would grow from a local effort into the world's largest NGO providing cardiac care to children in the emerging world; and

**WHEREAS,** The organization's journey began in 1975 when Grace Agwaru became the first child to receive life-saving heart surgery through the Gift of Life program; today, she serves as a powerful ambassador and living testament to the transformative impact of this mission; and

**WHEREAS,** Throughout its extraordinary history, Gift of Life International has marked numerous milestones including the formation of its official not-for-profit structure in 2003, the treatment of its 10,000th child in 2008, and the implementation of a sustainability-focused strategy in 2009 which enabled a dramatic expansion of its global impact; and

**WHEREAS,** By 2018, Gift of Life's core programs in Uganda and El Salvador reached sustainability, allowing local healthcare systems to

provide ongoing treatment to children in need without external support;  
and

**WHEREAS,** Despite global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Gift of Life International continued to rise to the occasion, providing care to over 3,400 children in 2020-2021 and exceeding that number in subsequent years-including treating a record 5,003 children in 2023; and

**WHEREAS,** Today, a child receives care through the Gift of Life network every 99 minutes, a staggering achievement that underscores the scale and efficiency of this global humanitarian effort; and

**WHEREAS,** The Golden Jubilee Gala will not only honor this profound legacy of healing but will also shine a spotlight on the children whose lives have been saved-some of whom will be present to share their journeys and inspire hope for the future; and

**WHEREAS,** It is the custom of this Legislative Body that when organizations of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be recognized and applauded by all citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Gift of Life International, and to express heartfelt appreciation for five decades of life-saving service to children in need around the world; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Gift of Life International.