



Philip Dhanens in his Garces Memorial High School football uniform with his parents Paul and Diane Dhanens on senior night.

PHOTO BY DIANE DHANENS

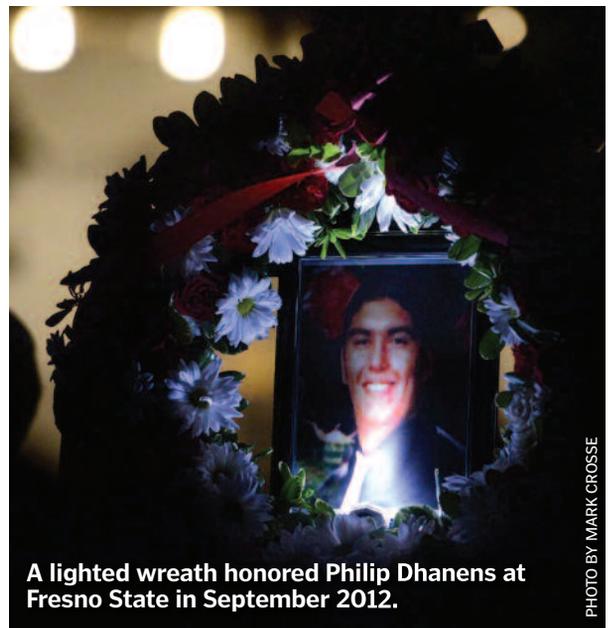
THE NEVER-ENDING STORY

Fresno State, Bakersfield native's legacy lives on

By Kelly Damian

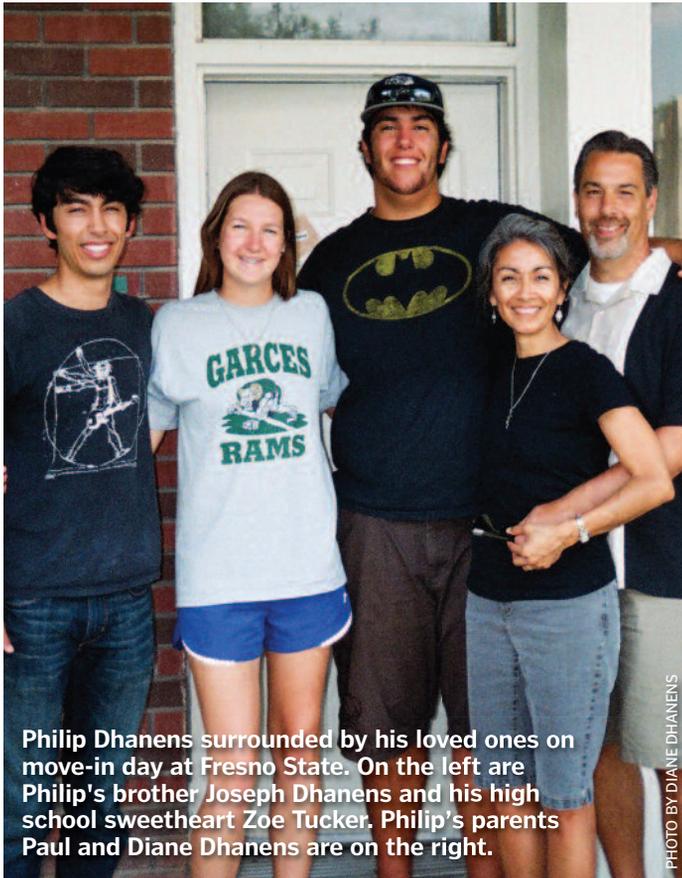
Philip Dhanens was a big guy with a big heart. Funny, personable and never inconspicuous at 6 feet 5 inches and 310 pounds, he was an incorrigible joker with an observant sense of humor that could reduce his older brothers to tears and get priests laughing during Mass. When he started college at Fresno State in the fall of 2012, his parents, Diane and Paul Dhanens, could never have anticipated the heartache that would follow.

On Aug. 31, 2012, Philip and 13 other young men who wanted to join Theta Chi fraternity were shut in a room with eight bottles of hard liquor. They could not leave, they were told, until all the alcohol was consumed. On Sept. 2, with his parents by his side and his last rites received, Philip was offi-



A lighted wreath honored Philip Dhanens at Fresno State in September 2012.

PHOTO BY MARK CROSSE



Philip Dhanens surrounded by his loved ones on move-in day at Fresno State. On the left are Philip's brother Joseph Dhanens and his high school sweetheart Zoe Tucker. Philip's parents Paul and Diane Dhanens are on the right.

PHOTO BY DIANE DHANENS

cially pronounced dead. The cause of death was alcohol poisoning.

A LIFE-CHANGING DECISION

In the midst of despair, the Dhanens made a decision that would change the course of dozens of people's lives. They decided to donate Philip's organs and tissues.

Philip's grandfather, Jerry, received a donated kidney in 1992, freeing him of dialysis for the last 15 years of his life. Jerry often wished he knew the young man who gave him his kidney, and he prayed for him every day.

"To see our son reciprocate, that's an amazing thing," Diane said.

Philip's heart, kidneys, liver, corneas, skin, bone and tendons were all donated. When the Dhanens left the hospital, they did so knowing their son had saved lives and helped others. It made the loss a little easier, Paul said.

LESS THAN ONE PERCENT

Approximately 23,479 Californians are on a waiting list for an organ. Many will die waiting even though more than 11 million Californians are registered organ donors.

A person's name on a donation registry does not automatically guarantee that his or her organs can be donated. Most viable donors are victims of head trauma, brain aneurysm or stroke. When a brain death is verified, the hospital will contact an organ

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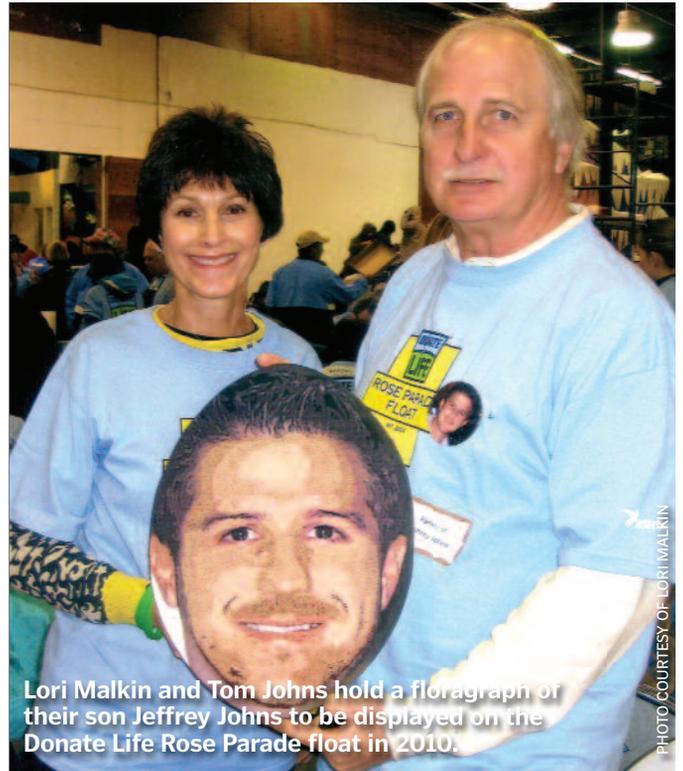
procurement organization, which checks the national database to see if the potential donor's organs match the needs of the patients based on size, blood, tissue type and time limitations between organ recovery and transplant. Because of these parameters, less than one percent of hospital deaths meet the criteria for organ donation.

Unlike organs, tissue can be processed and stored for an extended period of time for use in severe burn treatment, ligament repair, bone replacement and other reconstructive procedures. One donor can provide tissues, bone and ligaments that will vastly improve the lives of 50 people.

JJ'S LEGACY

Lori Malkin, founder of JJ's Legacy, knows firsthand the pain that the Dhanens family experienced. Her own son, Jeffrey Johns, died on March 1, 2009. Through organ donation, Jeff saved five lives and improved the quality of life for 50 others.

In 2010, the Malkin family was invited to create a floragraph of their son for the Donate Life Rose Parade float. A floragraph is a portrait made from floral material. Following a template akin to a paint-by-number kit, the donor's family goes to Pasadena to begin the portrait of their loved one. The project is



Lori Malkin and Tom Johns hold a floragraph of their son Jeffrey Johns to be displayed on the Donate Life Rose Parade float in 2010.

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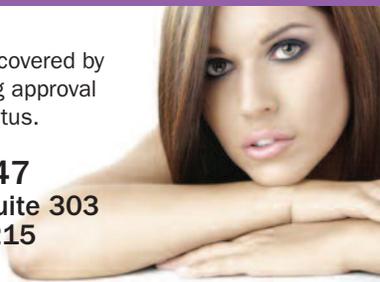
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then taken home where family and friends work together to complete the floragraph.

"It's hard to say how amazing it was to do something in his honor that was joyous and not sad," Malkin said.

Malkin was so inspired by her work with the Donate Life float that in 2010 she started JJ's Legacy with the goal of raising money so that local families could have the same uplifting experience. Every year since 2011, JJ's Legacy has made it possible for a Kern County donor family to participate in the Donate Life float, covering the cost of sponsoring a floragraph and providing meals and hotel rooms.

JJ's Legacy

To learn more about what this local nonprofit is doing to inspire organ and tissue donation, visit jjslegacy.org.

THE NEVER-ENDING STORY

This year, JJ's Legacy is sponsoring the Dhanens family's participation in the Donate Life float. The theme of the float is "The Never-Ending Story."

On New Year's Day, 15 million people will watch the Rose Parade. Many of them will get a good look at Philip Dhanens' portrait. Those who see him should know that he was a beloved young man, one who lit up a room when he was alive and gave a great gift to many when he died. ☐

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