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Baseball Hall of Famer Rod Carew to Be Joined by Father of Heart and Kidney Donor Konrad Reuland in First Pitch Ceremony April 25 at Angel Stadium

Reuland's Unselfish Act of Kindness Gave Carew a Second Chance at Life; Family and Hall of Famer Encourage Others to Become Donors During Donate Life Month

(ANAHEIM, Calif. – April 24, 2017) — Baseball Hall of Famer and transplant recipient Rod Carew will participate in a special first-pitch ceremony before the Angels baseball game on Tuesday, April 25, against the Oakland Athletics as part of the nationwide celebration of Donate Life Month. Joining Carew for the ceremony and throwing out the first pitch will be Ralf Reuland, father of former NFL tight end Konrad Reuland whose generous heart and kidney donation gave Carew a second chance at life. Also joining them for the ceremony will be David Eckstein, former Angels World Series champion shortstop whose family has a deep connection with transplantation.

Konrad Reuland died of a brain aneurysm in December, and his heart and kidney were transplanted into Carew who had been on a waiting list since his massive 2015 heart attack. More than 3,000 heart transplants are performed each year in the United States thanks to thoughtful donors who have given their permission for organ donation and the support of their families. Still, at any given time, as many as 4,000 people are on a waiting list for a heart or heart-lung transplant; Carew and the Reulands hope their story will inspire others to become donors.

“This has been a very difficult and challenging journey for Rod,” said Angels Chairman Dennis Kuhl. “Everyone in the Angels Family is extremely impressed by the strength and optimism shown by Rod and his wife Rhonda throughout this process. We are excited to continue to work with the Carew and Reuland families to help raise awareness for heart disease.”

Carew wore No. 29 during his 19-year career with the Minnesota Twins and the Angels, and his story of transplantation has inspired the American Heart Association’s “Heart of 29” Campaign

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to increase awareness of heart disease. One of Carew's goals is to have Major League Baseball adopt "Heart of 29" as a national charity as it did with its "Stand Up to Cancer" campaign.

National Donate Life Month is designed to help encourage Americans to register as organ, eye and tissue donors while honoring those that have saved lives through the gift of donation. The month is capped by the April 29 Run/Walk at California State University Fullerton, where more than 12,000 people will participate in the largest event of its kind in the country.

"In California alone nearly 22,000 people are waiting to receive a lifesaving heart, liver, lung, kidney or pancreas transplant; but there are simply not enough donors to meet the growing need," said Tom Mone, chief executive officer of OneLegacy, the largest organ, eye and tissue recovery organization and the largest health transplant program in the country. "Nationwide there are nearly 120,000 people currently on waiting lists, and tragically 22 people die each day while waiting for a life-saving organ donation. But it doesn't need to be this way."

Mone points out that a single organ donor can save the lives of up to eight people and improve the lives of as many as 75 more by donating their corneas and tissue. More than 35,000 life-saving transplants were performed in the U.S. in 2016, more than 6 percent higher than 2015 and a milestone that has never been reached before. Still there is much work to be done.

Becoming an organ or tissue donor is easy. People may register at the local DMV or online at www.donatelifecalifornia.org.

About OneLegacy

OneLegacy is the nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives through organ, eye and tissue donation in seven counties in Southern California: Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Kern. Serving more than 200 hospitals, 11 transplant centers and a diverse population of nearly 20 million, OneLegacy is the largest organ, eye and tissue recovery organization in the world. For more information, call OneLegacy at 800-786-4077, or visit onelegacy.org.

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