

Organ recipient pushes for MORE

By Sharon Hill
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LEAMINGTON

Waiting and waiting.

Scott Young knows what it's like to wait for a life-saving organ transplant and not know if it will come in time. His did, but for many others — including some of his friends — an organ never became available.

"There's a critical shortage of available organs across Canada. The number of people waiting for transplants gets bigger every year. The number of donors does not," Young said. "The people waiting wait for a longer time and more tragically more people die before an organ can be found."

The 33-year-old Hamilton man was speaking Saturday at the Sherk Complex in Leamington on behalf of those who wait. He was just one of many volunteers giving out information to the

public from about 40 organizations at the Leamington District Memorial Auxiliary's Health Extravaganza Saturday.

Auxiliary president Pamela Evans said the day was organized to help educate the community and raise money for an \$11,000 defibrillator and monitor for the hospital.

A nice day kept the crowd small but Evans said the day allowed visitors to quickly gather pamphlets and news on a wide range of health problems and support groups. Evans said recent health cuts have made such education more important.

"With the state of health care now,



Scott Young

people are having to go on their own," she said.

Young came from Hamilton to tell people about organ donation on behalf of the Multiple Organ Retrieval and Exchange (MORE) program of Ontario. He received a double lung transplant five years ago.

His life is dramatically different. He was born with cystic fibrosis, a genetic lung disease, and wasn't expected to live past his 12th birthday. Although he played hockey into his teens, he was so ill in his early 20s, he couldn't walk without gasping for breath and remembers showering as a "monumental undertaking."

Young still has cystic fibrosis, but the new lungs aren't his and aren't affected. He can now play the hockey he dreamt about every night his lungs wouldn't let him skate and is on his way to becoming a stock broker.

Young said it's important not just to

sign an organ donor card but to discuss it with family members because hospital staff require family permission before organs can be retrieved.

Anyone of any age can donate, but there's a shortage because only organs from people who are declared brain dead can be used. Young said that only occurs in about two per cent of all deaths.

Although most people agree with organ donation, few sign cards and discuss it with their families. Young said Canada lags behind other countries, including the United States, Spain and Portugal, in organ donation. In Canada there are about 14 donors per million people. The U.S. rate is 20 to 27 donors per million people.

Organ donors remain anonymous so Young said he wants to thank all donors and their families this week during National Organ Donor Awareness Week.