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Avance® Nerve Graft Recipient Selected to Ride on Donate Life Rose Parade® Float

Parade float will highlight the life-changing power of tissue and organ donation

ALACHUA, Fla., Dec. 04, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Axogen, Inc. (NASDAQ: AXGN), a global leader in developing and marketing innovative surgical solutions for damage or transection to peripheral nerves, today announced Jessica de Paz has been selected to ride on the 2020 Donate Life Rose Parade float that will be featured in the annual Tournament of Roses® parade. The parade takes place on New Year's Day in Pasadena. This is the seventh year that Axogen has co-sponsored the Donate Life float.

After receiving a breast cancer diagnosis in June 2017, Jessica underwent a grueling five months of chemotherapy followed by a double mastectomy. When breast tissue is removed during a mastectomy, the nerves that provide feeling to the breast are severed and the nerve signals are disrupted, often resulting in numbness and loss of feeling in the breast area. This lack of sensation can add physical and emotional burden for women following the challenges they have already endured with a breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. Jessica planned to have her breasts reconstructed, but she was concerned about ever feeling connected to a chest that was permanently numb.

Thankfully, Jessica's surgeon was able to reconnect the nerves in her chest to nerves in her newly reconstructed breasts using the Avance Nerve Graft and the Resensation® surgical technique. The procedure ultimately allowed the nerves to regenerate, restoring sensation. Jessica is now back to work as a nurse and patient advocate and can once again feel the hugs of her two children.

"If it weren't for the generosity of a nerve tissue donor and the expertise of a skilled surgeon I could be living with numb breasts for the rest of my life," said Jessica. "I am grateful for both the kindness and the science that allows the gift of donation to save and improve the lives of so many patients. I look forward to sharing my personal story as a rider on the Donate Life Rose Parade float."

Avance Nerve Graft is an off the shelf processed human nerve allograft intended for the surgical repair of peripheral nerve discontinuities. Nerve damage can result in loss of sensation or movement and reduced quality of life. Damaged peripheral nerves can be surgically repaired, but the window of time for an effective outcome is limited, so expertise from a nerve specialist should be sought quickly. Axogen is dedicated to revolutionizing the science of nerve repair by providing innovative solutions to surgeons and their patients.

“By showcasing Jessica’s story and those of others who have been touched by donation, we hope to inspire people to register as an organ and tissue donor and by doing so make a positive impact on the lives of many,” said Karen Zaderej, chairman, CEO, and president of Axogen. “We recognize that our ability to provide Avance Nerve Graft to patients like Jessica is made possible by the gift of donated tissue and the work of organizations such as Donate Life.”

The theme for the 131st Rose Parade is “The Power of Hope.” Jessica will ride alongside 17 other organ, eye, or tissue recipients, honoring the gift of donation. The Donate Life Rose Parade float is the centerpiece of a national effort of more than 50 organizations to reach a broad audience with the simple, life-giving message that organ, eye, and tissue donation saves and improves lives.

About Donate Life America

Donate Life America is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit alliance of national organizations and state teams across the United States committed to increasing organ, eye and tissue donation. Donate Life America manages and promotes the national brand for donation, Donate Life, and assists Donate Life State Teams and national partners in facilitating high-performing donor registries; developing and executing effective multi-media donor education programs; and motivating the American public to register now as organ, eye and tissue donors.

About Axogen

Axogen (AXGN) is the leading company focused specifically on the science, development and commercialization of technologies for peripheral nerve regeneration and repair. We are passionate about helping to restore peripheral nerve function and quality of life to patients with physical damage or transection to peripheral nerves by providing innovative, clinically proven and economically effective repair solutions for surgeons and health care providers. Peripheral nerves provide the pathways for both motor and sensory signals throughout the body. Every day, people suffer traumatic injuries or undergo surgical procedures that impact the function of their peripheral nerves. Physical damage to a peripheral nerve, or the inability to properly reconnect peripheral nerves, can result in the loss of muscle or organ function, the loss of sensory feeling, or the initiation of pain.

Axogen's platform for peripheral nerve repair features a comprehensive portfolio of products, including Avance[®] Nerve Graft, a biologically active off-the-shelf processed human nerve allograft for bridging severed peripheral nerves without the comorbidities associated with a second surgical site; Axoguard[®] Nerve Connector, a porcine submucosa extracellular matrix (ECM) coaptation aid for tensionless repair of severed peripheral nerves; Axoguard[®] Nerve Protector, a porcine submucosa ECM product used to wrap and protect damaged peripheral nerves and reinforce the nerve reconstruction while preventing soft tissue attachments; and Avive[®] Soft Tissue Membrane, a processed human umbilical cord intended for surgical use as a resorbable soft tissue barrier. The Axogen portfolio of products is available in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and several other European and international countries.

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