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## ***ORGAN DONOR SHORTAGE LEADS TO 60,000 DEATHS Teen Notes Problem & Finds Solution Through Research***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Amra Suljic of Kansas City, MO has won *Our Voice Our Country's* third \$1,000 National Scholarship Competition. Suljic, an incoming freshman at University of Missouri-Kansas City this fall, won by proposing an urgent national problem, identifying an accomplished expert who provided an achievable solution, and by gaining public ratings for her entry. Suljic was one of 15 finalists in the competition, out of 1,073 registrants nationwide.

Through online research regarding the issue that Ms. Suljic believes to be urgent across America, she discovered the work of [lifesharers.org](http://lifesharers.org), a non-profit headed by executive director Davis Undis. As spokesman for the organization, Undis speaks publicly about the strategies Lifesharers recommend to combat the ongoing problem of an inadequate number of organs being available to meet the needs of citizens across America.

In his 'ProblemSolver Solution' that accompanied Suljic's Recommended Topic, Undis wrote "America needs two transplant waiting lists: the 'A' list for registered organ donors and the 'B' list for people who have not agreed to donate. There are over 107,000 people on the national transplant waiting list, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing, which administers the waiting list and establishes rules for allocating donated organs. More than half of these people will die before they get a transplant. " Undis believes the institution of A & B waiting lists would lead to an increase in available organs that can "save thousands of lives per year."

### ***ADOPTION SYSTEM REFORM PROPOSED***

Johnson & Wales University/Denver incoming freshman\* Kyle Armstrong has won honorable mention in the Competition, for his entry "*Why The American Adoption System Needs Reform.*" (see details on page two)

*Our Voice Our Country's* Director Jon Mann says "This competition and one currently underway enable new young voters to clarify the national issues that are most important to them. Our users are pointing out many valid 'under the radar' national problems that rarely get coverage in the media. By also finding solutions, they are also providing guidance to candidates searching for tangible issues and ideas to include in their platforms."

Short **videos about Amra Suljic's and Kyle Armstrong's experiences** in this competition, which they wrote and produced, can be viewed on the home page at [www.ovoc.org](http://www.ovoc.org)

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Kyle Armstrong, of North Salem, NY points out that there are an estimated 500,000 children awaiting adoption in America. He poses these poignant questions in his entry: "What can we do to help the children in this country find loving, forever homes? What can we do to encourage potential adopters to adopt a child from this country? What can we do as a country to make home based adoptions more attractive than international adoptions?"

Kyle's ProblemSolver Lawrence Adams, a public speaker, journalist and author responded. In his solution, Mr. Adams, who as a youth spent 18 years in the foster care system, suggests implementation of the 'AFSA' law that was already passed by Congress in 1997. He advocates switching the priority from reuniting families, to placing the child in one stable home. "(In) the section stating 'unless unusual circumstances warrant, termination of parental rights should begin when the youth is out of the home and in foster care for 15 of 22 months. Too many jurisdictions do not follow this section and there is no enforcement clause in the action, which means there are no penalties. The longer a youth remains in care, suffers a number of moves, and other difficulties arise, the stronger the possibility the youth will age out and become one of the numerous statistics of failure."

**Kyle is currently completing an unscheduled tour of duty for The Air National Guard**, \*which has caused his start at Johnson & Wales University to be postponed until January. He receives \$150 to use for educational expenses.

**Members of the media are asked to join us in celebrating Amra Suljic's and Kyle Armstrong's achievement, by posting a story or conducting an interview. When posting a story, please send a copy or link to [press@ourvoiceourcountry.org](mailto:press@ourvoiceourcountry.org)**

To view articles about the winners of earlier competitions, click the \$1,000 Competition button at [www.ovoc.org](http://www.ovoc.org), then click on the articles at left.

*Our Voice Our Country.org* is a non-partisan national website which has conducted three national competitions and drawn 197,000 visitors since going online last year. It was developed with early endorsement and input from: Walter Cronkite, Yolanda King, Joanne Woodward, Jane Alexander, Ruby Dee, from leaders of national non-partisan organizations, judges, professors, lawyers, students, senior citizens, soldiers, officers, current and retired politicians, and dozens of blue & white collar workers of all parties from across the country.

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