

One Generous Gift Results in Ten Transplants

Second Recipient in Chain Wins Bronze Medal at 2008 Transplant Games

Toledo, OH July 18, 2008 - The Alliance for Paired Donation (APD) announced that today marks the first anniversary of the world's first NEAD (Never-Ending Altruistic Donor) chain, wherein Matt Jones, a then-28-year-old donor from Petoskey, Michigan sparked a chain of ten kidney transplants, with more on the way.

Building on the traditional method of paired exchanges, whereby kidney patients who have a willing but incompatible donor are matched with others in a similar situation, the Alliance uses altruistic (or "good Samaritan") donors to begin a chain of transplants that can be performed in a step-wise fashion, rather than having to be performed simultaneously. Not only is this logistically easier, but it allows the recipient's loved ones (including their incompatible donor) to be present for the transplant and recovery, before going on to give a kidney to someone else.

On July 18, 2007, Matt Jones of Petoskey traveled to Phoenix to donate a kidney to Barb Bunnell, a 53-year-old grandmother whose husband, Ron, wanted to donate but was incompatible. On July 26, Ron flew to Toledo, Ohio, where he donated a kidney to Angie Heckman, a 32-year-old woman who had been receiving kidney dialysis treatments three times a week for 11 years. The chain continued with Angie's mom donating a kidney two months later, and there have now been ten people transplanted in five different states as a result of Matt's initial gift.

All of the recipients in the chain are doing well, and in fact, Angie Heckman, the second recipient in the chain, recently traveled to Pittsburg for the Transplant Games, where she competed and won a bronze medal in racquetball. Matt and his new wife, Meghan, who celebrated their honeymoon at the Games, were on hand to participate in the 5k run. Matt also had the opportunity to present Angie with her bronze medal.

A reunion is planned for later this year, to celebrate both the donors and recipients of this first Never-Ending chain, as well as to honor all of those who have been part of the Alliance for Paired Donation program. In its first year of operations, the APD facilitated 19 transplants.

The Alliance for Paired Donation is headquartered in Toledo, Ohio. A 501 (c) 3 organization, the mission of the APD is to save lives by significantly shortening the waiting time for kidney patients through kidney paired donation. Learn more about the program by visiting www.paireddonation.org, or by calling 419-866-5505.

Contact Information

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Photo 1: (from right to left) Matt Jones and his bride, Meghan are pictured with Barbara Bunnell, Matt's recipient, and her husband Ron; Ron's recipient, Angie Heckman and her husband, Lance; and Dr. Michael Rees, Medical Director for the Alliance for Paired Donation (with Will and Sophie Rees).



Photo 2: Angie Heckman, left, receives the bronze medal in racquetball at the 2008 Transplant Games in Pittsburgh