

new Beginnings

SPRING/SUMMER 2009

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My Miracle

To say there are no miracles
I know it isn't true
For God has given me new life
Many, many thanks to you.

For me to see that my winter
Has turned to early spring,
That Mother Nature brought back to life –
Each little growing thing.

To gaze upon the skies of blue,
The clouds of puffy white,
The pearls of the morning dew,
The stars twinkling in the night.
To watch each day, the sun rise up
And set in the western sky,
To watch the robin build its nest,
And see the monarch flutter by,
To watch, on a fine spring day
My son and child with kite in hand,
And hear the shrieks of merriment
As grandchildren play out in the sand.
To take the girls down to the pond,
To fish to their hearts' content,
To frighten the mallards and the geese
And wonder where they went.

To be allowed to enjoy
These marvels that never cease –
I thank you.

Written by James McCormick, a transplant patient, to express his gratitude to the Transplant Team and also to his donor family.

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Writing to your Donor Family

Trillium Gift of Life Network has a new brochure with some suggestions for any recipients who want to send a note of thanks to their donor's family.

Through organ donation, you have received the greatest gift of all – the Gift of Life.

You may be thinking about how to express your gratitude to the family who unselfishly offered donation at the time of the loss of their loved one. This brochure will guide you through the process of sending correspondence to your donor family.

The decision to contact your donor family is a personal choice. It may help knowing that donor families are comforted by the correspondence they receive from the recipients of their loved one's organ.

There is no time limit for corresponding – you may write at any time. If it is more comfortable, you may choose to send a card during the holidays, or a 'thinking of you' card instead of a letter.

If you decide to write, here are some guidelines to help you:

Where do I begin?

- ☞ Open your letter with "Dear Donor Family,"
- ☞ Mention any hobbies or special interests you have
- ☞ Write about your family (please do not include any names)
- ☞ Tell them about your illness and how you are doing since your transplant
- ☞ Share what has happened in your life since your transplant (birthdays, births, graduations, etc.)
- ☞ Recognize the family and thank them for their gift

Carefully consider whether to include religious comments as the views of the donor's family are unknown.

Closing your card or letter

- ☞ Sign your card or letter "the recipient" only (please do not include your first or last name)
- ☞ Do not reveal your address, city, or telephone number
- ☞ Do not reveal the name of your hospital or transplant centre

Where do I mail my card or letter?

- ☞ Place your card or letter in an unsealed envelope
- ☞ Include on a separate piece of paper
 - o Your full name
 - o Date of your transplant

Please forward both documents in a sealed envelope to your transplant coordinator. Your transplant coordinator will review the card or letter to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. It will then be forwarded to Trillium Gift of Life Network, and the Family Services Advisor will send it to the donor family.

Please allow several weeks for this to be completed.

Will I hear from the donor family?

You may or may not hear from the donor family. Some families have said that writing about their loved one and their decision to donate has helped them in their grieving process. Other donor families prefer privacy and choose not to write to the recipients. It is important to remember that the donor family has experienced the loss of a loved one and may not choose to respond.

Here are a few sample phrases to help you get started:

- ☞ It is now approaching (one month, year, etc.) since I received the gift of life through your family's unselfish gift of organ donation. I want you to know that I continue to give thanks each day for this gift.
- ☞ I am so sorry for the loss of your loved one. I know it must be difficult to live without him/her. I hope you can find comfort knowing that your loved one was able to change my life.
- ☞ I hope this letter finds you well. Words cannot express how thankful I am for your family's generosity and compassion. You have given me a second chance at life. I am deeply sorry for the loss of your loved one.

Transplant Patient Expense Reimbursement Program

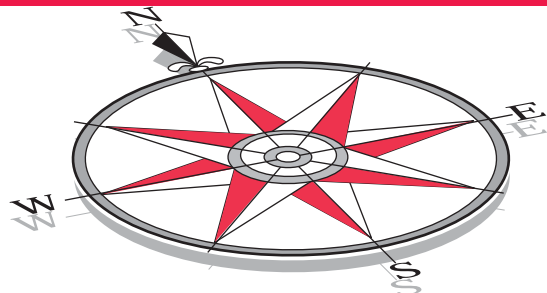
By Kelly Thomas, Social Worker

Transplant Patient Expense Reimbursement (TPER) Program is a new initiative of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. This program is available to assist heart, heart-lung and lung patients who need to relocate to a different city while waiting or recovering from their transplant. Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) will implement and administer the TPER Program, which was launched on May 1, 2009. TPER is not retroactive, and Ontario patients must have a valid Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) card.

TPER assists only with accommodation costs for patients who are waiting for heart, heart-lung or lung transplant surgery AND who need to relocate to the city where the transplant centre is located. TPER also assists with accommodation costs during the initial post-transplant recovery phase (up to three months if recommended by a transplant specialist).

The objective is to assist patients with some of the financial burden of relocating. TPER will reimburse up to a maximum of \$650 per month for up to 12 months while waiting for transplant surgery and up to 3 months after surgery. Receipts are needed in order to be reimbursed. For example, a landlord of a temporary, furnished apartment must provide you with a receipt for your accommodations; if you stay in a hotel/motel, you must keep the receipt or keep the rental agreement of a leased apartment.

For more information about this program, please e-mail TPER@giftoflife.on.ca or call 1-888-977-3563 or 1-416-619-2342.



From here and there...

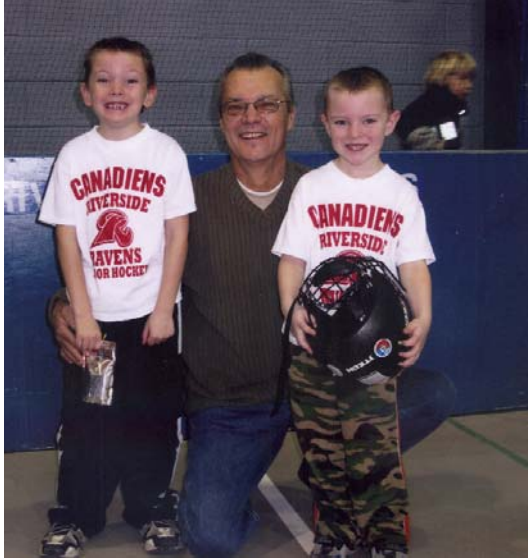


Efren Villarba (February 1995) wrote a letter at the end of 2008 from his home in Winnipeg Manitoba. After being diagnosed with a heart condition in 1990, he was referred to University Hospital for transplant assessment. Efren gives credit to the heart transplant team, and particularly mentions Drs. Menkis, Kostuk and Pflugfelder. "All the downpour of blessings over the past thirteen years would not be possible if not for the donor, the doctors and all the wonderful people in Canada's health care... I will continue to work and pay tax so that in the name of my parents, my wife, my children and grandchildren, we can keep the circle of pay-it-forward going and alive. To all, thank you very much."

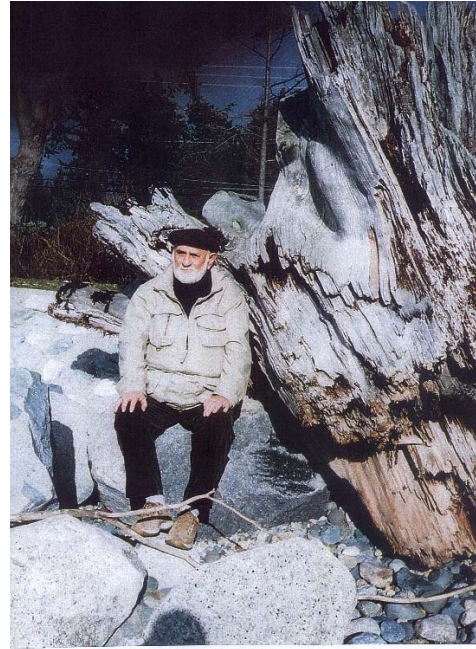
Ilja Korotvicka (February 2009) sent along this note:

Do you believe in miracles? I do! At least three have happened to me that I'm aware of. One, years ago when I was born; the second, years later when I emigrated to Canada, and the third miracle when I was "reborn" with my new heart. To those who are my Angels, the donor family, the doctors, nurses, therapists, social workers, my friends, fellow transplant recipients and those who are still on the list, let me say...thank you, miracles are real, they happen every day! Be well, be strong and let me share with you the first words I spoke when I awoke from this latest miracle. I don't remember saying this, but they tell me the first words I spoke upon waking up were... "I can feel it beating!" God be with you, and bless you all!

From here and there...



Bruce Keen (August 2008) says he is getting stronger every day, and his wife, Lorna, “keeps me busy doing dishes, making the bed and doing my Physio daily so Nancy will not be upset!” He passes along his thanks to all staff who helped take care of him. Bruce, a supporter of Sport-Fest Windsor, has his two young grandsons wearing their hockey jerseys with the message “Support Organ Donation.”



Two washed-up old stumps on Davis Bay beach - 2008

Jock Gibb (August 1989) sent a note and photo from his home in Gibsons, B.C. “I am now in my 20th year since my transplant in 1989. I was number 214. Here is a recent photo of an enjoyable afternoon at Davis Bay on the Sunshine Coast here in British Columbia. We live close by Molly’s Reach of the Beachcomber’s TV series.”

Jock also included a previously-printed poem in which he expressed his gratitude to the various staff who helped him, including this verse:

“Only three days later, on the long weekend
a young man sadly died
A motorcycle took his life
his parents quietly cried
His heart was the match for Jock
so, the team quickly assembled
McKenzie, Menkis, and Novick, fine surgeons all
whose hands just never trembled.”

Nutrition matters

By Jennifer-Anne Meneray, Dietitian

This is an enjoyable addition to a light lunch! Or great with a family BBQ!

Summer Fruit Salad

Makes 8 to 10 servings

- 3 oranges
- 4 cups (1 L) strawberries
- 2 kiwis
- 1 small pineapple, cut into chunks
- 1 ripe mango, cut into chunks
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) limeade concentrate
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) orange juice
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) ginger ale

1. Cut tops and bottoms off oranges. Holding orange flat side down on a cutting board, cut off peel from top to bottom, exposing segments. Cut out orange segments from between membranes (do this over a large bowl to catch juices).
2. Hull strawberries and cut each berry in half or quarter depending on size.
3. Peel kiwis and cut each one into chunks.
4. Add pineapple and mango.
5. Toss all fruit together.
6. Combine limeade, orange juice and ginger ale. Pour over fruit and toss.
7. Marinate for up to 1 hour at room temperature or longer in refrigerator.

Nutrition facts (per serving)

Calories	126
Protein	2g
Fat	1g
Saturates	trace
Cholesterol	0mg
Carbohydrate	32g
Fibre	4g
Sodium	3mg

The benefits of lifting weights

By Nancy Howes, Physiotherapist

"I really don't think I need buns of steel. I'd be happy with buns of cinnamon."

-Ellen Degeneres

Over the last 10 to 15 years, there has been a dramatic shift in our acceptance of strength training (aka "weight lifting") in the heart population. It used to be thought that lifting weights might further damage the heart, so people used to be advised to avoid it. In reality, when the intensity of strength training is kept at a safe level, adverse events are rare. The potential benefits, not only to cardiovascular health but also to weight management and the prevention of disability and falls, are becoming more widely appreciated.

So how does one incorporate strength training into their daily routine? There are lots of options. The type of exercise equipment you choose will depend on what interests you the most. In recent years, the use of low-cost approaches that allow for a gradual progression in resistance or weight has grown in popularity, for example, resistance-cord exercises, pulley weights, dumb-bells or wrist weights. Weight machines are a more costly option, but have a variety of exercises you can do. During all types of strength training, participants should be advised to maintain a secure but not overly tight grip of the bar and to avoid holding their breath, all to prevent an excessive rise in blood pressure.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM, 2006) advises that strength training should be performed in a rhythmical manner, at a slow controlled speed. Patients should avoid holding their breath by exhaling during the hardest part of the lift and inhaling during the relaxation phase. You should lift a weight 10-15 times as a cardiac patient, and then rest following that one set. How much weight you lift will depend on your individual strength, and might need to be determined by a fitness instructor or a physiotherapist. The rule of thumb is to choose a weight that makes your muscle tired after 10-15 repetitions. If your muscle isn't tired at all, then the weight is not heavy enough. If you are struggling to lift the weight after 8 repetitions, then you've chosen one that is too heavy.

Weight lifting should be performed 2 or 3 days a week, on non-consecutive days. Just aim to do one set of 10-15 repetitions of a number of major muscle groups. If you can remember, think back to the exercises you did in the Physio Gym following your surgery for a few ideas. Stop immediately if you develop dizziness, excessive shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or heart rhythm problems.

Keeping yourself interested in exercise is certainly a challenge. Incorporating strength training can provide variety in the training regimen and can increase the potential for more interest and greater dedication to your health. Given the extensive evidence of the benefits of aerobic exercise (like walking, cycling and swimming) in the management of the heart patients, think of strength training as a complement rather than a replacement for those activities. Add a few "weight lifts" to your daily routine, and see how good it makes you feel!

Resources:

- ACSM Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription (5th Edition)
- AHA Scientific Statement "Resistance Exercise in Individuals with and without Cardiovascular Disease: 2007 Update"

Here's the latest...

'Ride for Pat' in support of London's Transplant Program

Pat McArdle, a heart transplant recipient who sadly passed away in 2007, was an avid cyclist. As a member of a local cycling training group, Pat was always ready to lend a hand to others and was always there to put a smile on everyone's face.

Pat was an enormous inspiration to many in this cycling group. "As a way of remembering Pat and what he did for us, we want to remember him in a way that he would be proud while also benefiting the community. Pat was passionate about cycling and donor awareness. This event reflects that passion. We hope you will participate and give generously." Here are some details about this year's event:

When: Sunday, August 9th, 2009 – START 7 AM

Where: Start and finish at Mother Theresa High School

Distance: 160 and 80 km options, quiet country roads one loop marked course

Safety: Open to traffic, all road safety rules apply, helmet mandatory

Technical Support: Vehicle provided in case of mechanical breakdown

Feeding stations: Two feeding stations – prepare your own feed bag to be transported to feed zone

Who can enter: Anybody with minimum donation of \$35 entry

Registration: at Champion Bicycles – 592 Adelaide St. N. London, ON

Questions: info@cbss.ca

Please help The London Health Sciences Centre do more by collecting pledges and handing them in before the ride day at Champion Bicycles. A pledge form can be downloaded at http://www.cbss.ca/Century_Ride.htm

17th World Transplant Games, August 22-30, 2009

The World Transplant Games have been held for more than 25 years, and they continue to be a wonderful celebration of life, providing 'living proof' that organ and tissue donation works and allows recipients to return to a productive and fulfilling life. The 17th World Transplant Games will be held on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia from August 22-30, 2009. The organizers are expecting up to 2,000 participants from approximately 50 countries.

The Games include everything from 10-pin bowling and tennis to volleyball and a mini-marathon. There's athletics, swimming, table tennis, badminton, squash, golf, lawn bowls, and cycling, to name a few. The standard of these Games are high and many records are held. This year, they are introducing the excitement of beach volleyball at Kurrawa Surf Lifesaving Club, Broadbeach. More information can be accessed from the World Transplant Games Federation (www.wtgf.org/) or from the 2009 Transplant Games site (www.worldtransplantgames09.com).