



UPMC HARRISBURG KIDNEY TRANSPLANT
2022 CALENDAR

UPMC HARRISBURG KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

Since its inception in 2000, the UPMC Harrisburg Kidney Transplant team has transformed and saved more than 1,300 lives. Patients who otherwise couldn't clearly see their future now have become a part of our remarkable history thanks to surgical innovation, technological advancements, paired kidney exchange programs, and the amazing dedication and skills of the transplant team, including Drs. Yang, Ladie, Menon, Singh, Waybill, and Hoffman.

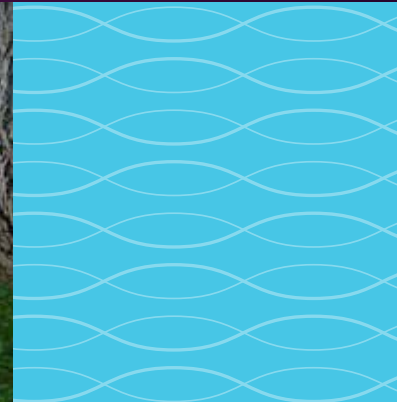
Because of our academic and research knowledge, our program offers the latest breakthroughs in transplant science and donation options. UPMC Harrisburg Kidney Transplant is certified by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, offering the finest medical services in conjunction with referring nephrologists.

From education, evaluation, and testing, through surgery and years of posttransplant care, our experienced transplant team – surgeons, nephrologists, nurse practitioners, transplant coordinators, nursing staff, social workers, financial coordinators, the Independent Living Donor Advocate, and other professionals – provides our patients, living donors, and their families with the emotional and practical support necessary to get through the transplant process.

The stories outlined in this year's calendar are a testament of strength, compassion, bravery, expertise, and tenacity. Described in familial terms by many patients, the UPMC Harrisburg transplant team continues to demonstrate its exceptional level of care – not only in the operating room, but prior to and beyond each procedure.

The time and genuine concern for every person encountered is much more than the outstanding care expected from our health system. While we are proud to provide the most advanced, quality care for those in need of kidney transplants, we are equally as honored to be chosen by those who consider us an extension of their family.

We welcome you to meet our outstanding transplant team, along with those whose lives were transformed this past year. May you enjoy a happy, healthy new year!



OUR PHYSICIANS



Harold Yang, MD, PhD
Surgeon

Dr. Yang completed his fellowship in renal transplantation at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. He earned his medical degree at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine and his PhD from the University of Chicago. Dr. Yang is certified by the American Board of Surgery.



**Danielle Ladie, MD,
MPH, FACS**
Surgeon

Dr. Ladie completed her transplant surgery fellowship at the University of Virginia. She received her medical training at St. George's University and completed her residency at UPMC Harrisburg, where she served as chief resident. Dr. Ladie also has a special interest in hepatobiliary surgery.



Vijay G. Menon, MD
Surgeon

Dr. Menon received his medical degree from the University College London Medical School and completed his surgical residency at the University of California San Diego Medical Center. He completed his fellowship training in abdominal organ transplantation from Massachusetts General Hospital.



Manpreet Singh, MD
Nephrologist

Dr. Singh completed his nephrology fellowship at Boston University and a transplant nephrology fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco. A graduate of Government Medical College in Patiala, India, he completed his residency at SUNY Stony Brook Medical Center in New York.



Mary Waybill, MD
Nephrologist

Dr. Waybill received her medical degree at Temple University School of Medicine in Philadelphia. She completed her residency at the Medical College of Virginia. She also completed her fellowship in nephrology at the Medical College of Virginia. Dr. Waybill oversees transplant research and participates in the management of patients with complex medical issues.



William Hoffman, MD
Nephrologist

Dr. Hoffman completed his nephrology fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh, where he was the chief fellow. Additionally, he completed a fellowship in transplant nephrology and a research fellowship in transplant immunology through the University of Pittsburgh. A graduate of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey—Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Dr. Hoffman completed his residency at the University of Rochester, Strong Memorial Hospital.



PIERRE JOHNSON

Recipient • Harrisburg, Pa. • Age 57

My transplant journey began in February 2014 when one of my calves began to swell. Doctors monitored my swelling for about two years and gave me medication to treat it, but it never seemed to improve. Not once did I think that my swollen leg was a result of my kidneys failing. I had no other symptoms, and when doctors at UPMC Harrisburg told me about my diagnosis, I couldn't believe it. I was put on dialysis for about five years starting in 2016 and continued treatment until shortly before my transplant in March 2021.

When I received my diagnosis, I was very surprised because I thought I was a healthy person with just a swollen leg. However, I didn't want my condition to become who I am. My sister was in kidney failure during the same time, so my guess is that this might've been hereditary. Nevertheless, I began my search for a living donor. I wasn't very persistent at first, only letting my family, friends, and church community know that I needed a new kidney.

My wife was evaluated and ended up being compatible; however, she wasn't the best possible option for me. In the past, there have been two other instances where someone at church needed a transplant, and both living donors came from my church community. I thought if that could happen twice, why not a third time? Patricia Scott, a lovely woman from my church, decided to go through the evaluation process. Because she didn't want to get my hopes up, she underwent her evaluation in private. After she learned she was able to donate, she told me the news. I was part of a paired exchange, and when Patricia was told that even though she would be unable to donate to me directly, she always had the option to stay on the list in case another kidney came along to complete the exchange. She agreed, and I am here today because of her generosity and bravery. She had three kids under the age of 10 at the time and had enough going on in her own life. Why she chose to donate to me is a blessing, and thanks to UPMC Harrisburg and my support system, I am getting along great in my recovery.

PATRICIA SCOTT

Living Donor • Mechanicsburg, Pa. • Age 35

When the pastor at our church relayed the message that Pierre needed a kidney, I knew immediately in my heart that I should donate but just needed to work up the courage to actually say I was willing to.

A few months went by, and I just could not get the thought out of my head that he needed help. It even kept me up some nights. I was hesitant at first, but I wanted to make sure that I was healthy enough to go through something like living donation. Nevertheless, God gave me the strength to keep a positive mindset throughout my journey, and I will forever be grateful for that.

Prior to my decision to donate, I actually had no relationship with Pierre at all. In fact, we had never even spoken to one another. I knew of Pierre through the church, and I knew his wife because she was a part of our women's ministry. At the time, he was just an acquaintance to me, but that didn't stop me from helping him. Even though I didn't donate directly to Pierre, I decided to stay in the paired exchange registry because not only was I helping him, I was helping the many others who needed it. That was a blessing to all of us.

After the surgery, I am back to running, working out, and doing a cross-fit program with my husband. To all living donors out there, if you are not a match to the person you are trying to donate to, try and stay on the waiting list regardless. It will not only help your loved one, but it could help many others who are in need.

JANUARY 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 NEW YEAR'S DAY
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

NOTES



ROSS HILL

Recipient • Temple, Pa. • Age 38

In 2010, I went to the doctor for a sharp pain in my stomach. I thought it might've just been something I ate or maybe a virus of some sort. Turns out I had polycystic kidney disease (PKD). I knew nothing about the disease, and since I was adopted as a child, I had no information about my family's medical history to see if I had inherited the kidney disease. Nevertheless, I began to explore some treatment options.

After about 10 years of medication and doctor visits to keep my disease under control, my kidneys began to fail, and I was told I was going to need a transplant sooner rather than later. After being referred to UPMC Harrisburg by my nephrologist, I was quickly put on the transplant waiting list and stayed on it for about 11 months while I also underwent dialysis treatment. I always knew living donation was an option, but I didn't know that I would soon be a part of a five-paired exchange.

My wife, Jenna, wanted nothing more than to donate one of her kidneys to me. After her evaluation, she was told that she was able to donate, just not to me. Paired exchanges are pretty neat because you help more people than you had hoped. They occur when a living kidney donor is incompatible with their recipient but matches another person on the waitlist. While I didn't receive Jenna's kidney, someone else who needed it did. And as a result, I got someone else's kidney, which I thought was an amazing thing.

It's been a little over a year since my transplant date, and I feel great. Thanks to my much-needed family support system and UPMC Harrisburg, I started running again and am currently preparing to run a 5K – something I've always wanted to do.

JENNA HILL

Living Donor • Temple, Pa. • Age 38

Donation wasn't a scary thought for me. In fact, as soon as the doctor suggested that we pursue transplantation as a treatment for Ross, I knew that I wanted to donate. It was never really anything I needed to consider. It was more like: okay, he needs a new kidney so I'm going to give mine. The team at UPMC Harrisburg was amazing throughout the entire journey, and they made me feel as comfortable as possible each step of the way.

When I called Ross at work and told him that I was going to be his living donor, we were both just overwhelmed with excitement and joy. Even though I didn't donate directly to him, being a part of a paired donation was an amazing blessing. Not only was I able to help Ross to have a better quality of life, but I was part of helping four other people as well, which really is incredible. Our son knew what was going on more than our daughter since she was a little too young to understand. But when we told him that Daddy was getting a new kidney, he started to cry tears of joy, and that moment will stay with me forever.

I am back to being active with our two kids, and it's such a blessing to be able to see them grow up with their father in such good health. Seeing Ross back to his normal self with the energy he now has is incredible to watch. Whether it's tinkering with his car or just walking around the house, getting to see him healthy and the impact that was made on him is remarkable. I am very grateful that God used me as part of that chain. Being a kidney donor is one of the things I am most proud of doing, and I could not have gone through this journey without support of our family, close friends, and church family.



FEBRUARY 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2 GROUNDHOG DAY	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY
13	14 VALENTINE'S DAY NATIONAL DONOR DAY	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 PRESIDENTS' DAY	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

NOTES



SHELLY HELM

Gettysburg, Pa. • Age 55

When I was 53, my daughter had just graduated from college. To celebrate, my family and I traveled to Punta Cana for a little vacation before she went off into the real world with a full-time job. On the flight home, I noticed that my ankles were swollen, and I just didn't feel like my usual self. Once I arrived home, I made an appointment with my primary care doctor. After my blood work came back, I was diagnosed with hypertension and high blood pressure, and I was told that my kidneys were failing. My doctor at UPMC Harrisburg then began discussing the option of a kidney transplant. I didn't know much about kidney transplants other than the fact that I may need one.

I began my journey a little scared, as I imagine most people do. However, my family was there for me every single step of the way, especially my husband. From researching different transplant options to keeping up with the housework, he was my rock through it all. He was evaluated to become my living donor, but unfortunately, he was not a match. The same thing happened with my sister. At first, I felt sad. But then I realized that some people don't even have family to try and step up for them in times like this. After that, my sadness slowly morphed into gratefulness. Family means everything to me, and without them, I wouldn't be where I am today: alive and well. I wanted to get back to my three grandchildren to see them grow up together, and that's what kept me going.

In July 2020, I got the call that a match had been found for me and received a kidney from a deceased donor. Thanks to UPMC Harrisburg and my donor, I feel like my old self. My husband and I started kayaking again, gardening, and taking our walk around Gettysburg about three times a week. UPMC was the absolute right place for me, as they cared for me like I was family. This journey has showed me that there is no greater gift than life itself, and you must appreciate every single day you have.

MARCH 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 MARDI GRAS	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 DAYLIGHT SAVING BEGINS	14	15	16	17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY	18	19
20 FIRST DAY OF SPRING	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOTES





BRUCE COVEY

Recipient • Lake Ariel, Pa. • Age 53

As I was going through transplant evaluation and testing at another hospital, it just didn't seem right. They weren't returning my phone calls, lost some of my paperwork, and were difficult to deal with when I needed help the most. When I heard from a relative that someone she knew recently had a transplant at UPMC and was doing very well, I decided to do some research. I visited UPMC Harrisburg and saw an immediate difference in personal care and attention. Every question was answered. Every phone call was taken. Every detail was addressed. The difference was amazing.

Once I got to UPMC Harrisburg, it didn't take long for them to evaluate my potential living donor. After UPMC's thorough transplant evaluation process, my son, Jacob, ended up being compatible and donated his kidney to me. He did this during the same year he finished his master's degree in electrical engineering, got married, and started his new job. Jacob was hesitant at first to switch transplant centers, but once he met the staff at UPMC Harrisburg, he understood why I wanted to go there instead. They treat your transplant process as if you are a part of their family and give each patient the personal attention and care they deserve.

With 10 days to go before my scheduled transplant, my procedure was rescheduled. My new transplant date was September 25, 2020, the same day I turned 52. Jacob was 25 at the time, and he gave me a new kidney for my birthday. We were both born on the 25th; me in September and Jacob on Christmas day. Twos and fives are now my lucky numbers.

I have been incredibly fortunate throughout my journey and have experienced no complications after my surgery. I feel better than I have in 20 years and was given so much hope for the future with the help of UPMC. I cannot explain how grateful and blessed I am that Jacob donated to me – he truly saved my life. My entire family has been incredibly encouraging, patient, and loving throughout this entire process. My wife, kids, and father gave me so much support from the beginning to make sure that every step of the way was worry free. In terms of birthday presents, I don't think anyone could top this one.

JACOB COVEY

Living Donor • Baltimore, Md. • Age 26

As I wrapped my head around the living donation process, it was something I really wanted to do. Donating to someone is an opportunity that doesn't present itself that often, and I wanted to step up and help my father.

My experience throughout the donation process was fantastic. After my surgery, I remember being in such a great mood. Everyone at UPMC Harrisburg was amazing and so friendly. Their level of care was incredible from beginning to end, and that made things a lot easier for both of us. Because of the care they provided, I am back to lifting weights and biking just like I used to.

When I saw my father for the first time after surgery, we were just overcome with emotion. It was very surreal, and it took a little while for the reality of donating to hit me. But when it did, I was so thankful for the opportunity to help my father live his best life. I will never forget this journey, and I appreciate every obstacle that is presented to us because it made us both who we are today.

APRIL 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 APRIL FOOL'S DAY	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 EASTER SUNDAY	18	19	20	21	22 EARTH DAY	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

NOTES

A man with a full dark beard and a dark baseball cap with a white logo is leaning on a wooden railing. He is wearing a dark t-shirt and light-colored pants. He is standing outdoors next to a pond with a paved walkway and greenery in the background. The lighting suggests it might be late afternoon or early morning.

COREY MURPHY

Harrisburg, Pa. • Age 48

Since birth, I never experienced the normal life that a kid should. I was born with kidney failure, and as a child, you don't really know what that means. Since I had no family history of kidney disease, the diagnosis came as a surprise. Be that as it may, I began my fight for survival at a very young age. But when it came time for me to have a kidney transplant at age 48, I chose UPMC Harrisburg to lead me to a healthier way of life. They were close to where I live, and their staff was welcoming and supportive from day one.

I was on the transplant waiting list for about six years and began dialysis in 2011 to help maintain my kidney function. My mom and brother were my main support system through it all, taking me to and from the dialysis center and making sure I got all the medication and attention I needed to be ready for transplant. Even though most of my family lives out of state, that didn't stop them from calling me to see how I was doing or checking with my mother to see if there was any progress on finding a compatible kidney. We all kept the faith throughout the entire journey and never lost hope in the process. I trusted the system by believing that one day I would be transplanted and back to living the best life I could. After six years of waiting for the most compatible donor, I got a call in September 2020 that I would be getting a new kidney from a deceased donor.

After the surgery, my mom was my rock. I went to stay at her house so she could help me in my recovery process and everything else I needed to regain my strength. I fish a lot now and play basketball when I have the time. I like catching big game fish like muskie, carp, and catfish, but I throw them all back. I just enjoy being back out there on the water and appreciating each and every day. When I was on dialysis, I saw a lot of other patients start to give up. You can't do that. You need to stay focused on the outcome and motivate yourself to reach the end goal. If you let your fears push you around, you'll never live the life you really want.

MAY 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5 CINCO DE MAYO	6	7
8 MOTHER'S DAY	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 MEMORIAL DAY	31				

NOTES

RODNEY WELSH

Recipient • York, Pa. • Age 67

I had been dealing with chronic kidney disease pretty much my entire life. At age seven, I had my left kidney removed. At age 13, I had surgery to save my right kidney from failing. So, it's safe to say that my childhood was unlike most.

My family means everything to me, as they were my support system throughout the entire transplant journey. They took me to and from appointments, helped me stay positive, and assisted me more than I could've imagined posttransplant. When I was told by UPMC that I needed a kidney transplant, my sisters were the first ones to step up for evaluation to become my living donor. Out of my three sisters, the middle one, Darlene, was told that she was the most compatible. I am extremely thankful for my family because some people don't have that support system, let alone have multiple people wanting to be evaluated to potentially save their life.

In May 2006, I received my kidney transplant. I remember almost 20 family members in the UPMC Harrisburg waiting room wanting to know how my sister and I were doing after surgery. It's been almost 16 years since my transplant, and I am still thriving. Today, my kidney is doing wonderfully, as is my sister. I can now go fishing with my nephews on Lake Mead where we usually catch bass for fun. Ever since I was about 20 years old, my sisters and I vacationed in Ocean City, Md., almost every summer. Thanks to Dr. Yang and UPMC Harrisburg, my family and I get to continue that tradition with them.

DARLENE WEBB

Living Donor • West York, Pa. • Age 69

I was 54 years old at the time of my donation. I never thought about age being a factor; I just wanted to help my brother. Our sister always has an annual summer get-together, and that's when I broke the news to Rodney and the family that I was going to be his living donor. He and his wife were just overcome with joy and happiness, and that was a special moment for all of us that I will always cherish. I never planned on being a living donor and was unfamiliar with the entire process of living donation. Everyone at UPMC Harrisburg was great at educating me, and that made me feel more comfortable with everything that the process entailed.

The most rewarding thing about this journey was to see Rodney get his life back. I didn't do this for me; I did this so he could live the normal life that he and his wife deserve. We are a very close family, and hopefully this holiday season we can get together for Christmas Eve and celebrate life and our loved ones again.



JUNE 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 FLAG DAY	15	16	17	18
19 FATHER'S DAY	20	21 FIRST DAY OF SUMMER	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

NOTES



HUE KOVAC

Lancaster, Pa. • Age 62

After being on the kidney transplant waiting list for more than five years, I began to wonder if my transplant was ever going to happen. I was on dialysis for about three of those years to keep my kidney disease under control, but the skepticism was always there. I had no appetite while on dialysis, and food wasn't really appealing. As someone who normally loves food, cooking was a very important hobby in my life that I was unable to do. However, I'm the type of person who doesn't get discouraged that easily. So, when I received the news that I needed a transplant, I kept my head high and wanted to know what I needed to do to help myself get back to the healthiest person I can be.

During the beginning of my journey, my sister immediately went to be evaluated to become my living donor. Even a stranger at work wanted to be evaluated. But unfortunately, neither of them were compatible. However, I took every day as a gift and trusted the process. The team at UPMC Harrisburg made me even more comfortable with my situation. The coordinators, staff, and doctors all made me feel at home even though I was in a hospital. I learned to accept the hand I was dealt and wanted nothing more than to get back to my family. That was my motivation.

I received about seven or eight phone calls from my doctor telling me they might have a potential donor for me; however, each one ended up being incompatible. I never lost my confidence, though. I was sitting at home when I received yet another phone call. The doctors wanted me to come in for blood work to see if I was compatible with a deceased donor. After my blood work came back, my life changed forever as I was informed that I would be getting a new kidney.

It was November 2020 when I received my kidney transplant, and I couldn't be more thankful to my family and the UPMC Harrisburg transplant team for getting me back to full health. After surgery, my appetite returned, and I got back to doing what I love most – cooking. Since I am Vietnamese, I enjoy cooking a lot of traditional Vietnamese dishes for my family. I even started to try my hand at baking, too.

When I was diagnosed and needed a transplant, I worked hard to spread the word about my condition. And that is what everyone should do if you are put in that position. By spreading the word, your chances of finding a donor, living or deceased, can dramatically increase. Life is what you make it. You will be given obstacles and hardships every day, but it's what you do about them that makes you who you are.



JULY 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

NOTES



CHRIS DEMPSEY

Recipient • Harrisburg, Pa. • Age 36

I woke up one morning in late September 2018 feeling a bit nauseated. Thinking my body just needed to adjust to the early morning, I got in the shower to start the day. The next thing I knew, I woke up in the tub with the water still on. I had passed out in the shower with no one around to help or find me. Thankfully, I regained consciousness and drove myself to the hospital immediately. Doctors took my vitals and saw that I was severely dehydrated, so they kept me overnight to run some additional testing. In the morning, they informed me that I needed to be prepped for dialysis and that I was in end-stage kidney failure.

I remained on dialysis for about three years before I was placed on the transplant waiting list. While on dialysis, I still worked my normal hours as much as I could and drove myself to and from appointments. I was a little apprehensive about telling anyone about my condition. Even though most of my family lives near me, I didn't want to be a burden. I was scared and uncomfortable, but I knew I needed to listen to the doctors and transplant team at UPMC Harrisburg to regain my health. From the beginning, everyone was encouraging and always had positive attitudes. They made me feel more comfortable with my situation, and that made me want to finally share what was going on with the people closest to me.

It turns out that telling my family and friends was the best thing I could've done because I needed their support to find the strength to complete my journey. After being on the transplant waiting list for about three weeks, I got a call from my transplant coordinator saying that I was going to be transplanted.

In March 2021, I was transplanted and am doing great in my recovery. Throughout my journey, my family has supported me in so many ways. My brother would come and cut my grass, and my sisters would come over and make me meals so I didn't have to cook. My mom was also amazing. She was by my side, and I appreciate her more than she knows for everything she's done for me.

I am now back to doing yardwork, fishing on the weekends, and going out on my pontoon boat. I'm thankful that I have my life back and for the things I can do again. This experience has really opened my eyes to things like spending time with family and doing the things you love most. This experience has made me who I am today and taught me not to take everyday things for granted. I am currently helping someone I went to school with as she goes through dialysis treatments. I just want to give back and help people because I know how difficult that journey can be when doing it alone.

AUGUST 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

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DAVID WHITE

Recipient • Dillsburg, Pa. • Age 73

I didn't know much about kidney disease, but when my doctors told me I needed to begin exploring kidney transplant as a result of my high blood pressure, I quickly took action. They said because of my age, placement on the transplant waiting list was not my best option, and I should consider living donation. Since most of my friends and acquaintances were unable to donate, I really had no one to turn to except my family.

I posted about my need for a kidney transplant on Facebook and even put a blurb in my church's newsletter to help spread the word. In the meantime, members of my family were beginning the evaluation process to become my living donor. After delays due to COVID-19, my living donor had been found – my son-in-law, Ray. During our journey, Ray and I kept our faith in God and never gave up hope. We were transplanted in March 2021, and I couldn't be more grateful for him and UPMC. I love him dearly, and I am so glad that he is a part of my life. In fact, our transplant was one of the first known cases where a person of Malaysian descent donated to a Caucasian person. So, I thought that was pretty neat.

Today, I feel wonderful. Before my transplant, I slept 11 hours a night and would still be tired the next day. Since my transplant, I have not taken a nap once during the day. I also work out in my son's garage when I can and bike four miles every day at 7 a.m. My wife and I also walk about one mile around the block during the evenings. After surgery, my wife, who is a retired nurse, took care of me and said that it was actually quite easy. Although, I'm sure her 12-hour shifts at the hospital may have prepared her for such a task. She is everything to me, and I don't know where I would be today without her love and care.

RAY CHUNG

Living Donor • Dillsburg, Pa. • Age 39

To me, choosing to donate my kidney was not a difficult decision. I thought about it as I have two kidneys, and my father-in-law needs one. The nurses, doctors, coordinators, and support staff involved in my journey at UPMC were unbelievably nurturing. Everyone performed their duties with such enthusiasm and was very kind and compassionate to my family and me.

I hope that my kidney provides my father-in-law with not only the chance to live and thrive for years to come, but also the chance to educate my children about their Irish farming heritage, even as I hope to teach them to embrace their Malaysian-Chinese background. I want my children to love every part of who they are and to grow up with their grandfather's influence. I wouldn't change one thing about our journey together, as life is all about helping others.

SEPTEMBER 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5 LABOR DAY	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 FIRST DAY OF AUTUMN	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

NOTES



GLENN JOHNSON

Harrisburg, Pa. • Age 47

My journey began about 20 years ago when I was diagnosed with focal segmental glomerulosclerosis (FSGS). I went to bed one summer night and woke up the next morning with my face so swollen I couldn't even recognize myself. I immediately went to the hospital, where they referred me to a specialist who informed me of my diagnosis. I was 27 at the time and so confused and scared.

When I started dialysis in 2006 after being treated with medication for almost five years, I was mad, bitter, and negative about my new life. I was single, lived alone, and my mother was on dialysis as well. I felt isolated with no one to help me. After about two weeks on dialysis, my mother passed away. Right then, I turned my attitude around and did everything I could to get better and make my mother proud.

After 14 years on dialysis, doctors at UPMC Harrisburg told me that I needed a kidney transplant. During that time, I got married in 2018 to my beautiful wife, Faith. She was my everything as I approached the end of my transplant journey. She kept up with the house, paid the bills, and still found time to come and visit me every day while I was in the hospital. She made life beautiful for me when I was at my low points, and everyone deserves a support system like the kind she provided.

I was transplanted in May 2020 from a deceased donor and have continued my recovery since then. The transplant team at UPMC Harrisburg was excellent. They kept me informed of any updates or test results and always kept in contact with me when I needed it. Because of them and my support system, life couldn't be more beautiful than it is today. I told myself when my mom passed away that I needed to stay positive and keep doing what the doctors were telling me. Because of that change of heart, I am here today sharing my story, hopefully to inspire someone who needs it.



OCTOBER 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 COLUMBUS DAY	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 HALLOWEEN					

NOTES



RACHAEL WITHERSPOON

Waynesboro, Pa. • Age 37

The year 2020 was complicated for many, but for me, it's a year I will always cherish. My transplant journey began in 1991 when I was six years old. I was diagnosed with Wilms Tumor, which is cancer of the kidney, and I needed to have it removed right away. After my kidney was removed, I was monitored by doctors for about 20 years to help keep my new body as healthy as possible. When I turned 28, I was put on dialysis because my remaining kidney was struggling, and my journey for a kidney transplant began shortly after.

A few family members were evaluated in hopes of becoming my living donor, but none of them were compatible. From there, I waited for a deceased donor. Right as the pandemic began, I received calls from the UPMC Harrisburg transplant team about a possible compatible kidney. I received my kidney transplant in August 2020 and had my second chance at living a normal, healthy life. Doctors were pleased with how well my new kidney was working only four days posttransplant – until something odd happened.

Unrelated to my kidney transplant, I started to get an extremely sharp pain in my right side, and my blood pressure dropped rapidly. I first thought my body was rejecting my new kidney. I woke up in the ICU the following day and learned that my intestine had ruptured, causing me to bleed internally. I underwent dialysis treatment for just one day to help my new kidney with the trauma my body had gone through.

My kidney has been great and continues to help me live my best life. You deal with a lot of body changes, side effects from medicines, doctor appointments, and the constant worry about whether or not you're doing everything right to keep the new kidney strong and healthy. The transplant team at UPMC Harrisburg was amazing and helpful from the beginning, and I will always be grateful for my hero, my donor angel. I'm back to living my normal life with no machines, and I'm working my dream job at a hospital. Each day I take care of others the way I was cared for, and I look forward to furthering my career in nursing.

NOVEMBER 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6 DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS	7	8	9	10	11 VETERANS DAY	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 THANKSGIVING DAY	25	26
27	28	29	30			

NOTES



JOYCE ROBINSON

Pleasant Gap, Pa. • Age 60

For some people, their transplant journey begins when they're born. For me, my journey began when I was 38 years old. I was diagnosed with a chronic renal condition and had little idea as to how I could've gotten it. I just knew that I had to do something about it. I received my first transplant in 2012 because my kidneys began to fail. Nine years later, I received a second kidney transplant. If the last 20 years have taught me anything, it's that miracles take time, and being patient can have some pretty amazing outcomes. Being a double-transplant recipient isn't something I imagined for myself, but it's who I am, and I'm proud of where this journey has taken me.

Although both of my kidney transplants saved my life, my second transplant was quite distinct from my first because of the superior care I received at UPMC Harrisburg. They treated me and my family with respect and generosity and made me feel as if I was their only patient. I was on dialysis when I received a phone call that I would be getting my second kidney transplant. I remember my coordinator being so excited for me and congratulating me for everything I accomplished up to that point. From appointments, evaluations, dialysis, to emotional support, I couldn't have been happier with my decision to go to UPMC Harrisburg for my second transplant.

As I look back at everything that needed to be done for me to get back to my normal life, my support system was something that I will always cherish. I have three sisters and two brothers. Even though my brothers don't live in Pennsylvania, that didn't stop them from calling me to check on how I was doing pre and posttransplant. My sisters cared for me at home after my transplant, ensuring that I was getting enough rest and exercise as I regained my strength. I love them dearly, and having them there for me is something I will always treasure.

Before my kidney transplant, my father passed away. But just before he left us, he asked one of my sisters if he could purchase a kidney for me. She smiled and told him that unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. Thanks to UPMC Harrisburg, my family's support, and my donor's generous gift, my father's wish for my renewed health has been granted.



DECEMBER 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 NATIONAL PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 FIRST DAY OF HANUKKAH	20	21 FIRST DAY OF WINTER	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE
25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 LAST DAY OF HANUKKAH	27	28	29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE

NOTES





ELIZABETH GOMEZ

Lancaster, Pa. • Age 49

I worked as an EMT in York County, Pa., in 2013. I loved what I did and enjoyed helping people who urgently needed it. My partner and I received a phone call one night to transport an obese patient to the nearest hospital. As we were loading the patient into the ambulance, the stretcher we were using broke, and the patient fell on top of me. Because our backup was 25 minutes away, I was trapped under the patient for a very long time. This resulted in an overstress of my kidneys, and I was rushed to the hospital upon my backups' arrival. There, they told me that my kidneys suffered major damage, and they began to run more tests on me. After testing was complete, doctors informed me that my kidneys were failing due to my injuries.

Shortly after my diagnosis, I was put on dialysis for about eight years to help maintain my kidney function. At first, I had a hard time accepting that this was my life now. From going to my dialysis appointments to always having low energy and not wanting to do much, I really struggled to come to terms with my new life. It wasn't until my kidneys began to shut down that I changed my way of thinking, and I can't thank the team at UPMC Harrisburg enough for always staying positive and wanting to help me through my journey. I didn't have much of a support system at home because my mother was sick at the time, but my 10-year-old son would help me when he was able.

I was on the transplant waiting list for almost one year before I received the phone call that I was getting a new kidney. I was transplanted in September 2020, and I now have the energy to wake up in the morning without strain and don't have to go to bed early because of my fatigue. My caregivers, who were with me for about 16 hours per day after surgery, were amazing, and I can't thank them enough for helping me in my recovery process. I am also back to reading novels and doing light exercises to keep my strength up.

My words of advice for people who are going through any transplant journey is to stay mentally prepared for whatever comes next and to spread awareness about your need for a transplant. I received my kidney from a deceased donor; however, that didn't stop me from letting everyone around me know that I needed help. Do not give up, because if you give up then your body gives up.

A few months after my transplant, my mother passed away. Since we were both going through health issues, we could always relate to one another. However, while I tried my best to keep my spirits up, she often let fear get the best of her. I say this because you shouldn't be afraid of anything that lies ahead of you and staying positive can really go a long way during any journey. I wish my mother was here today; she would be so proud of where I am right now.