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SHARING THE *gift*

A NEWSLETTER OF GIFT OF LIFE TRANSPLANT HOUSE VOLUME 9 | NO 3 | FALL 2009

Expansion Update



GIFT OF LIFE
TRANSPLANT HOUSE

EXPANSION FOR *life*

“The construction of new building is right on track,” said Tony Rand, Project Superintendent with Weis Builders. “Subcontractors are pouring exterior concrete and completing the finishing touches to the exterior of building. The casework is being installed on the interior doors, and final HVAC, plumbing, and electrical installation is now complete on the parking garage level so I expect to be complete building by the October deadline.”

Like any project there were a few challenges along the way but nothing Tony and his crew couldn't handle. All of the electrical, phone, and cable TV lines on the south side of site had to be re-routed and installed underground, the old overhead lines were then removed, and poles were taken down.

The excavation of the retaining wall area was complex. To remain in compliance, the south alley-way had to remain usable which made for a steep excavation requiring extra shoring and a great amount of coordination. Luckily, we had Tony's expertise to ensure this was handled appropriately!

In Tony's view, the accommodation of our guests and their needs in the new house is unique. “They will have many areas to find total comfort--from the south patio, to the library, to just reading a book on the front porch overlooking Second Street.”

“Sister Jane has been a dream to work for,” said Tony. “She has her whole life wrapped up in this project, and her excitement is contagious. I can only look forward to building her next Gift of Life House!” Tony, please! Let's get this one opened first!

As you can see (take a look at the pictures of the new house), we are just about ready to move in and host our first guests just in time for the Thanksgiving Holiday!

REQUEST FOR THANKSGIVING

With the addition of the new Gift of Life House we will require extra prepared dinner items for our annual Thanksgiving Feast. Please ask your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to consider donating a dish so we can provide a memorable holiday for all of our guests who will spend this holiday away from home.



Wish List

Please help us open the new house by purchasing items from our wish list below. Perhaps, you would like to have your sentiments set in stone with your \$100 purchase of a Memorial Garden Paver. To order call us at 507-288-7470 or email us at office@gift-of-life.org.

Individually wrapped candies – especially chocolate *NO HERSEY KISSES*
Postage Stamps (forever stamps)
Toilet Paper
Paper Towels
Kleenex
Regular and Decaf Coffee
Coffee Creamer
Antibacterial Hand Soap/Refills
Pop TABS
Crystal Light
\$25 to cover 1 night stay for a family w/financial need
Windex
Cotton dish towels

Irons (4)
4 Slice Toasters (4)
Hand Mixers (4)
Cookware Sets (4)
Canisters (2 sets)
2 Step Stools (2)
Spices
Crock Pots (6)
Cookie Sheets (6)
Roasters (1)
Pizza Pans (4)
Pie Dish (4)
Microwaves (4) Counter Top w/turntables

Expansion for Life

Total budget	\$7,620,000
Raised to date	\$3,000,000
Amount of need	\$4,620,000



25th annual Gift of Life Transplant House Golf Tournament



Bruce King

Unexpected gifts – Bruce King recalls two unexpected gifts received during his transplant journey – a kidney from a colleague and a life-changing stay at the Gift of Life Transplant House

By Sharon Rosen

“We don't really know what we need until we receive it,” says Bruce King, a kidney transplant recipient and the speaker at the 25th annual Gift of Life Transplant House Golf Tournament held on July 13, 2009, at the Rochester Golf and Country Club.

“My transplant journey has taught me that you never really know how

gifts will be packaged,” says King as he told the group about his unexpected diagnosis with end-stage kidney disease, after going to see the doctor about an earache in 2005. At the time of his diagnosis, King had just taken a new job as Chief Diversity Officer at the University of South Dakota (USD).

King sent an e-mail to friends and colleagues explaining his illness. “One of the first to respond to the e-mail was USD President James Abbot who said he would be willing to consider donating a kidney to me,” explains King. “As I continued my journey, first through peritoneal dialysis and then eventually hemodialysis, President Abbott continued to offer his support and underwent evaluation to be a kidney donor.”

Continued on page 2

President's letter

Greetings to you, our Gift of Life Family! Let me take a moment to introduce myself to you. I'm Bob Groettum, and I have the honor of serving this great family as the new President of the Board of Directors. I have served on the board for the past 12 years and have been the co-chair of our annual golf tourney since 1997. I take great pride in being asked to lead the board for the next 2 years. I want to thank Roger Erickson for his leadership and mentoring during his tenure. With Roger's help we were able to embark upon Expansion for Life. Let me take some time to update you on the many activities we have going on at this time.

Progress of the new house is moving forward at a fast pace. We will take over the new house during the first week of October. At that time we will begin furnishing the house and getting it ready for occupancy. We are planning a Gift of Life House Warming Party on October 17th which will allow you a sneak peek of the house before we are officially open for business.

Please keep in mind that we are continuing our fundraising for the new house. I know it is not the best of times that we are currently experiencing but I know we, as the Gift of Life Family, will come together to help us make this house a Home. There is information in the newsletter about ways we can use your support for Expansion for Life. Please take a moment to review our needs and be as generous as you can.

We have just completed our 25th Annual Golf tournament which was held on July 13th at the Rochester Golf and Country Club. It was a great day on the course, and the dinner and program which followed proved a marvelous ending to a great day. We were blessed to have Bruce King as our speaker this year, and we want to thank him for the job he did relaying his transplant story to us. As a board member, this is the part of the day which is inspiring. Hearing from the patients who have experienced the Gift of Life helps us realize that our mission is one that is needed and embraced by many. We had a great turn out for golf with 115 golfers enjoying the day of golf and fellowship on the course with close to 200 for dinner. Once again, thanks to all that attended.

Other events coming up are our 1st Annual 5K run/walk and our 5th annual A Taste for Life. The 5K run and walk will be held on Sunday, September 13th. More information will be coming on this.

October 16 is our 5th Annual 'A Taste for Life' which is our wine and beer tasting gala fundraiser which is being held at the Kahler Grand Hotel from 6 - 10 PM. Enjoy your favorite wine and beer with a great array of food. In addition we will have a fantastic selection of silent auction items to bid on. Please plan on attending and supporting the Gift of Life. Thanks to Lisa Gander and her committee for the time and effort she dedicates to this event. As you can see, the Gift of Life Family has been busy and needs your support now more than ever!

Thank you for your continued support,



Bob Groettum

President, Gift of Life Board of Directors



25th annual Gift of Life Transplant House Golf Tournament *Continued from page 1*

"I always thought that my kidney donor would be a family member or close friend," says King. "I never thought that my life, which began in the south side of Chicago, Ill., would be intertwined with President Abbot, who was born in Yankton, South Dakota." But on June 4, 2008, at Mayo Clinic, King received a kidney from President Abbott.

This was King's first unexpected gift — one that he will always be grateful for.

The next gift would come as he recovered from his transplant. "I did not stay at the Transplant House until the night before my surgery," explains King. "It was only after my surgery, when I began a four week stay that I realized the gift I had been given."

The supportive, nurturing environment was first evident to King's wife, Marcine, who returned late in the evening on the day of King's transplant. "Some people were preparing dinner and recognizing my wife's exhaustion," says King. "They offered to share their meal with her." Both King and his wife met and visited with many patients and their families during their stay, always being inspired by all that people had endured as they waited for an organ or recovered from a transplant."

"Two weeks into my stay, I experienced a life-changing event," says King.

"I was receiving e-mail updates about a young woman, a USD student, who lay in a coma from meningitis — she would become an organ donor," says King. "At the same time that evening, new people were arriving at the Transplant House, each saying they had received the call that an organ had become available and they were going to receive a transplant. With helicopters flying constantly over the house that evening, I felt that I was experiencing the circle of life."

These events have led King to become an advocate for organ transplantation. After his transplant, King became active in the Kidney Foundation in Sioux Falls, South Dakota,

addressing the need to raise awareness about kidney disease and kidney transplantation for underserved populations. King has now relocated to Northfield, Minn. where he serves as the Special Assistant to the President on Institutional Diversity at St. Olaf College. In 2008, King became a member of the Board of Directors for LifeSource, the upper Midwest region organ procurement organization, based in St. Paul, Minn.

Many participants who attended the Gift of Life Golf Tournament had similar stories to King's — stories of receiving support and making life-long friends at the Transplant House. Robert Schaeffer, who received a liver transplant in 1991, has attended the tournament for the last twelve years. "My wife and I always enjoy the weekend," says Schaeffer. "We join friends who we met during our stays at the Transplant House and attend the picnic on Saturday and then the tournament on Monday."

"Our stay at the house was great — my wife and I made many good friends," explains Jim Schnepf, a 2007 kidney transplant recipient who traveled from Hartford, Iowa to play in his second Gift of Life tournament. "I was the puzzle guy, sitting at the table putting puzzles together and visiting with everyone."

The tournament also had several first time participants. Ron Patrias, who received a liver transplant in 2008, traveled from Chaplin, Minn. to play in his first tournament. "I am an avid golfer and was unable to play golf for the last couple of years," says Patrias. "I am just getting back into the game and my goal is to eventually play a full 18 holes and walk the whole way."

The Gift of Life Tournament Benefit is also a celebration of life.

During the dinner, Sister Jane Frances Gregoire, the executive director of the Gift of Life Transplant House, recognized two patients who celebrated their health with a dance at the transplant picnic. Patricia Alejandra Rodriguez, known as "Ali" at the house, danced with Barry





Depot – the two met while staying at the transplant house and their families became friends.

Rodriguez, originally from Argentina and now living in Italy, received a double lung transplant on April 23, 2009. Depot, from upstate New York, received two stem-cell transplants. “We share their story to let you know that we are alive and well at the transplant house,” says Gregoire.

Eric Peterson, head golf professional at the Rochester Golf and Country Club, and his staff, also contributed to the success of the day. For only \$10 per shot, golfers could have one of the professional golfers make their drive. Thanks to Peterson and his staff for raising \$300.

And Amanda Durhman, a professional photographer, donated her time to help commemorate the event.

The celebration continued with an update on the new addition for the Transplant House, being built across the street from the existing facility.

“We will receive the keys on Oct. 1, 2009, which will allow us to open this new 36 room facility by Nov. 1,” says Bob Groettum, President of the Gift of Life Transplant House Board and co-chair of the golf tournament. “This new facility, combined with our existing house, will provide 87 rooms for transplant patients and their caregivers.”

Throughout the day, the efforts of Gift of Life staff and volunteers was evident - from welcoming and registering golfers, to sitting as hole watchers, to organizing the silent auction and dinner – all who volunteered did so with a common purpose – working towards the continued success of the Transplant House.

“Everyone who walks through the Gift of Life Transplant House has a story to tell,” King told the group. All who participate in the tournament are part of the Gift of Life story – whether they are patients and their families, living donors and donor families, physicians and nurses, or volunteers – they all give and receive unexpected gifts.



An Introduction and a Fond Goodbye

Gift of Life would like to introduce and offer a warm welcome to our new Administrative Office Manager, Nancy Ilbuga (Ilboo-ah). Nancy comes to us with many years experience, great energy, and a positive attitude. Please stop by the front desk during your next visit to say hello to Nancy.



Nancy Ilbuga

Also, we would like to thank Alison Bentley who recently left Gift of Life to continue her education, for the many years of dedicated service to Gift of Life. You will be missed!

25th Annual Golf Tournament Winners and

First Flight

1st Place score 56

- Davis Castleberg
- Troy Anderson
- Eric Kaiser
- Chris Stroud

2nd Place score 57

- Scott Nyberg
- Peter Nyberg
- Mark Pactznick
- Aaron Pactznick
- Bob Beekenbaugh

Second Flight

1st Place score 69

- Greg Layton
- Bruce Gudlin
- Emily Rohsam
- Alec Beck
- Ron Patria

2nd Place score 70

- Wayne Christenson
- Chuck Brumbach
- Richard Bahr
- Nancy Bahr
- June Buck-Tipton



Additional Winners

- **Closest to pin on hole #3** – Bob Gander
- **Closest to pin on hole #5** – Peter Nyberg
- **Long Drive Men** – Tom Bruckman
- **Longest Drive** – Nadine Perkins
- **Longest Put Women** – Emily Ruhson
- **Longest Put Men** – CJ Underhill
- **Closest to pin #11** – Bruce Gudlin
- **Closest to pin #14** – Lynn Honsey

Raffle Winner: James Illy from Checktowaga, NY



Karen Holman poses with the Gift of Life cake she baked with love for all of us at the house

Innovative Therapeutic Options for Sensitized Renal Transplant Candidates

Mark D. Stegall, M.D., Professor of Surgery

Antibodies are an important part of the body's normal immune protection against infection. However, a blood transfusion or a prior transplant can stimulate the body to make antibodies against other people's "tissue types" (the scientific term is Human Leukocyte Antigens or HLA). Antibodies against HLA can be a major problem for people who need a kidney transplant. When these antibodies are present in the bloodstream at high levels, they can attack and damage a new kidney early after transplant leading to early or late graft loss. Patients with these anti-HLA antibodies are termed "sensitized" and the problem is becoming more common—especially in people who require a second transplant after a long-functioning transplant fails.

Historically, the risk of graft failure in patients who have antibodies against their donor's tissue types has been so high that most transplant programs have considered this situation an absolute contraindication to kidney transplantation. Patients with this condition were left with few options. Most were placed on the deceased donor waiting list, but few ever received a donor against whom they did not have antibodies.

Our group here at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, has become one of the world leaders in overcoming antibody barriers to kidney transplantation. Over the past decade, we have transplanted more than 200 kidneys into recipients with antibodies against donor HLA. Our main approach has been to remove the antibodies using a dialysis-like procedure called plasmapheresis. While this technique has resulted in successful kidney transplants in many sensitized patients, it is still complicated by high rates of antibody-mediated damage. In addition, we have found that some patients have antibody levels that are just too high for a successful transplant even with plasmapheresis. This situation stimulated our group to search for new therapeutic approaches to control anti-HLA antibody and to ameliorate its effects on the transplanted kidney. Fortunately, over the past year, two new studies that are testing new medicines are beginning to show promising results. Both are approved by the Mayo Institutional Review Board and both are still ongoing.

The first study is intended to improve the outcomes of our existing plasmapheresis-based protocols. The rationale for using this new drug is based on the role of specialized serum proteins, called complement, in antibody-mediated damage. We have shown that when antibody binds to the kidney transplant, it activates complement. Early after transplant, it appears that antibody-activated complement actually does most of the damage to the kidney and not the antibody by itself. Thus, we hypothesized that blocking the body's complement system might prevent antibody-mediated damage of the kidney. A novel drug called Eculizumab has been shown to block the activation of some types of complement. The drug is approved by the FDA for a rare condition involving abnormal complement activation (called Paroxysmal Nocturnal Hemoglobinuria). Thus much experience exists with the drug and its safety profile is well-established. In this study, patients with anti-HLA antibody against their

living donor undergo our usual plasmapheresis treatment. In addition, they receive eculizumab at the time of transplant and weekly for at least the first month after transplant. Compared to plasmapheresis alone in which antibody-mediated rejection occurred in almost 40% of patients in the first month after transplantation, none of the first 10 patients treated with eculizumab have developed rejection. All of the kidneys in eculizumab-treated recipients are functioning well and biopsies of the kidneys are normal. Most patients have been able to stop eculizumab within 3 months of transplant when anti-HLA antibody levels have decreased to safe levels. However, two patients have required longer treatment.



Mark D. Stegall, M.D.

The second study is aimed to help those patients with very high levels of antibody—too high for our existing plasmapheresis protocols to be successful. The medicine in this study is called Velcade and it is approved by the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of multiple myeloma. Again, there is a large amount of clinical experience with this drug and its safety profile is well-known. In preliminary studies in my laboratory, we found that Velcade attacks normal antibody-producing cells and thus might decrease antibody production. Since the drug affects antibody secreting cells, the outcome that we are interested in monitoring is the number and function of anti-HLA antibody producing cells. These cells primarily live in the bone marrow, thus we need to take a bone marrow sample before and after Velcade treatment to measure its effect. If we detect a significant decrease in the cells making antibodies against HLA, then we start our usual plasmapheresis protocol to see if we can reduce serum antibody levels to a safe, transplantable level. The first iteration of this protocol involved a relatively short treatment schedule. Three of the first 4 patients treated responded. Of these 3, 2 have undergone transplant successfully and a third is scheduled. As we gain more experience with the drug in transplant patients, we are finding that longer treatments may be needed in patients with very high antibody levels. Currently, we are testing this longer treatment in 5 more patients and the results appear to be better than the shorter treatment regiment. We are hopeful that these patients will be transplanted as they complete the protocol. Importantly, the treatment and the bone marrow aspirations have been tolerated quite well.

We are optimistic that these new treatment options will improve the outcome of kidney transplantation in sensitized patients. Without these innovative protocols, many patients may never receive a kidney transplant. Finally, our group also continues to explore other options for sensitized patients such as participation in a national paired donor program as they become available.

There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something tomorrow.

U.S. Marden

Gift of Life's 5th Annual "A Taste For Life" Wine and Beer Tasting – Friday, October 16, 2009

FIFTH ANNUAL

a taste for life



The Elks present
Big Screen Mania Sundays

Every Sunday this NFL football season watch
the game at Elks Lodge 1091 in Rochester

11am to 7pm
1652 Hwy 52 N

Ball Park Concessions
Popcorn, Peanuts, Hotdogs, Nachos
BB's Pizza, Wong's Wings & Appetizers
Served all day beginning at 12pm.

It's just like being at the game!

Proceeds benefit Gift of Life Transplant House

Gift of Life 2nd Motorcycle Ride June 6th

By Scott Geroux & Denise Stegall

It was a wet and soggy day. Despite the pouring rain, nineteen dedicated friends of Gift of Life braved the weather on Saturday, June 6th in memory of Rick Geroux, heart and kidney transplant recipient. We had people show up, and then it started to rain. We received phone calls from Rochester, MN telling us how bad the weather was and suggested that it wouldn't be a good day for riding.

But the show went on! We had eight bikes and four cars, in total 19 people. These people knew this ride was for a good cause, proceeds go to Gift of Life Transplant House, and said "Let's ride," and that, we did. Wet but in good spirits we rode from Eau Claire to Wabasha where we had lunch and received extra donations for the drawing.

After lunch we rode back out into the rain to Eau Claire, WI, where we had the party in memory of my brother, Rick Geroux. Higgs Pub and Grub had warm food, hot coffee, and a warm welcome for all of us riders. My family and I enjoyed visiting with the people who joined us on June 6th.

I'd like to send a special thank you to all of our riders, our friends. Without you this wouldn't have happened, especially in the rain. Thank you Linda, Scott, Mike and Joe Bilodeau, and my family: Lois, Peggy, Jennifer, and Denise Geroux. Our brave riders were: Joel and Darla Almsted, Ronnie Dye, Terry and Nola Tymell, Scott Swanapoel, Michael Magnuson, Janet and Dennis Dean, me (Scott Geroux) and my daughter Becca "Way to go Becca!" and also there was Troy



Jim Garrett,
our lone rider



Gift of Life 2nd Motorcycle Ride

Den, his girlfriend Bridget, and Scott II.

Although the weather cancelled the ride from the Rochester end, we want to thank the one brave soul who, despite the downpour, rode to Wabasha to meet up with the gang from Eau Claire. "I decided to ride to Wabasha and meet the other riders at the VFW. I stayed at the VFW until about noon or a little after and heard conflicting reports as to whether the Eau Claire riders were going to ride as far as Wabasha, given the weather. After I had dried off and had some lunch, I decided to head back to Rochester. It was actually a nice ride, assuming you had rain gear, said Jim Garrett, of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Division at Mayo Clinic. He collected \$415.00 for the Gift of Life Motorcycle Ride. Jim works with patients in need of lung transplants and was very enthusiastic to help the Gift of Life knowing first hand what these people go through.

Our hearts were definitely touched that morning by Jim's efforts. Jim Garrett is definitely a wonderful example of what one person can do to make a difference and was the Gift of Life's hero for the Rochester Ride!

This year's ride raised \$1,215!



Rick Geroux,
April 4, 1953 –
Feb. 17, 2008

BOARD PROFILE: KATHY JENSEN

Kathy Jensen, one of the three women on the Gift of Life Board of Directors, has been an active member since joining us in 2005. "I got to know Ed Pompeian, fellow board member and founder of Gift of Life and was inspired by the dedication he has to Gift of Life," Kathy said about why she joined the board of directors. "My fellow board members, Gift of Life staff, and guests have made me feel extremely welcome and an important part of the team."

"I also have a nephew, Conor, who spent the 1st year of his life in the Minneapolis Children's Hospital with severe heart and lung problems. Although he has not had a transplant, our family has been in a similar situation, going through extensive medical treatment away from home. He is now twelve years old and leading a reasonably normal life and playing baseball for the first time this year, after having more than a dozen different surgeries."

Kathy grew up on a farm between Holmen and Mindoro, Wisconsin. After graduating from Winona State University where she earned her degree with a major in Paralegal and a minor in Business Law, Kathy lived in La Crosse and Holmen, Wisconsin. Kathy and her husband Eric moved to Rochester 9 years ago. They have two sons, Jacob who is 11 and Logan who is 6.

As a career banker, Kathy started out as a Loan Assistant, then a Credit Analyst, and for the last 7 years as a Commercial Banker. Currently, she holds the position of Vice President of Commercial Banking at Merchants Bank, NA with whom she has been employed for 9 years.

She enjoys sporting events and attending all of her kids' activities. She is also a fan of boating, reading, and shopping. Kathy's burning desire is to set a good example and raise her children to be happy, healthy and caring individuals. And, also to spend more time traveling!



Kathy Jensen

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FIFTH ANNUAL

a taste for life

WINE AND BEER TASTING

featuring

A TASTING OF OVER 100 QUALITY WINES AND BEERS PAIRED WITH A LITE FARE OF APPETIZERS AND DESSERTS. SILENT AUCTION AND DIAMOND RAFFLE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2009
 Kahler Grand Hotel, Rochester, Minnesota
6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
 \$40 each or \$360 per Group of 10
 Reserve Tickets by October 5th
 call Gift of Life at 507-288-7470

Gift of Life Transplant House thanks our sponsors and contributors.





















Calendar of Events 2009

September

Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month

October

Healthy Living Month

16th New Gift of Life Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Gift of Life 5th Annual A Taste for Life, Wine Tasting Fundraiser

17th Gift of Life Open House and House Warming Party

November

National Family Caregivers Month

National Marrow Awareness Month

26th Thanksgiving Day Feast at Gift of Life



YES, I Want to Contribute!

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Located in Rochester, Minnesota, Gift of Life, Inc., is an independent, non-profit, tax-exempt Minnesota corporation independently run by a board of directors, staff, and volunteers. Contributions to Gift of Life Transplant House qualify for charitable gifts under federal law.

Help Us Communicate with You Better

Send your email address to office@gift-of-life.org

GIFT OF LIFE TRANSPLANT HOUSE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Gift of Life Transplant House is to provide transplant patients and their caregivers with high quality, affordable accommodations in a supportive, home-like environment.

Gift of Life Transplant House is a proud member of



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