Donor Family Services

Donor Family Stories

Upstate New York Transplant Services honors the memory of all the individuals who have left a legacy through organ and tissue donation. All donors and their families are true heroes. We send special thanks to those families who have shared their stories for this site.

Organ and tissue recipients are living proof that transplantation works. Several transplant recipients have documented their experience to help raise awareness about donation. Please click on the links below to read their stories.

If your life has been touched by organ and tissue donation and you would like to submit a testimony, please contact UNYTS’ Family Services Counselor, Kim Lauta, at klauta@unyts.org.

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In Memory of Nicholas R.

On January 30th, my son, Nicholas, was born. From day one he was such a happy child. He had an even temper and warmed even the hardest of hearts. He touched so many lives in different ways. We spent the next three months loving him and our sons so much. Taking advantage of the time we had with our little family. Working and living life not knowing the tragedy that would befall us three months later.

Two days before Mother’s Day we were planning a trip to an out-of-state zoo as a family weekend for the upcoming Mother’s Day weekend. I had a rare Saturday off and was looking forward to the time with my family. That Friday my husband and I went to a hockey game. We enjoyed a rare night out without the children, leaving them with my mom and dad. We picked them up late that night and went home. The next morning began as usual. Nicky woke up at like 7:00 AM and my husband went to take care of him to give me a few hours of much needed sleep. Later I got up and took a shower. My husband got up and went to look in on the baby. What happened after that will forever be emblazoned on my mind. My husband screaming my name. Finding my child on the floor my husband performing CPR. The fire and policemen coming to my house and the endless questions. Then arriving at the hospital and being told my son was dead.

I was in a state of shock and disbelief. "Adults die," I remember thinking to myself. "Not babies, not my baby." He was healthy the night before--happy playing with his grandma and grandpa, and now he was gone. It was so unfair. I was angry with God for taking him from me. The ride home was the worst. We stopped at my workplace because I needed the photos of him that I had on my desk. While we were gone my mother and his stepmom had removed any
reminders of him from the house. They put them in the basement with a tarp over them so later on we could go through his things. Then we began to make calls. I can’t remember who the calls were to or what they were about but the one call that I do remember was the one to UNYTS.

The person was very kind and understanding and patiently explained that the only thing that would be able to be donated were his heart valves. It was appropriate because he had such a loving heart. It killed me to think about them cutting his heart but I knew that would be what he would have wanted. "Let me share my love with others." Because that was the kind of baby that he was. He loved and was so sweet and even tempered. We miss him so much every day. But knowing that he was able to help someone else eases that pain. We know a part of him lives on in someone else and be made a difference in this world. Isn’t that what we all want to do? Make a difference? He taught me to live for today because tomorrow may never come. He taught us all that you don’t have to be an adult to make a difference in this world. We learned a lot from our Nicky and we miss him every day that we are here and he is not. But I pray for the children that received his heart valves, I pray they grow to be strong and healthy and that they can love and be loved like Nicky was.

Even after his death UNYTS was there for us. I remember many times talking to the people there. I wrote letters to the parents of the children that received his heart valves and told them about the exceptional baby they came from. UNYTS made sure that they were delivered. They made his loss more bearable, offering hope where there wasn’t any. Thank you, UNYTS.

Nicky has been gone five years. I wouldn’t have made it without you. Seeing the donor families and being able to talk to the other parents at the Rose Parade event made this holiday a little more bearable for me. Being with other donor families made me feel less lonely and sad. It helped me confront the feelings that I had pent up for so long and to share them with others and to have others to lean on if only for a short while. It helped me so much. I am eternally grateful.

In Memory of Joe G.

When Joe said his final goodbye to me sixteen days ago in the wee small hours of Saturday, May 1, I realized my life had changed forever. We had been married for forty-five years. I was a girl of sixteen when I met him and fell in love. My life has always been defined by that love and I wondered who I would be without him. "I’ll have to re-invent myself," I thought. "How will I do that? How will I fill that huge hole? Can I limp on through the rest of my life alone?" It seemed like an impossible task. "I’ll think about it later, after I get some sleep. It may not seem so difficult after I am rested."

I was numb with fatigue. His oncologist admitted Joe to Kenmore Mercy Hospital on Tuesday morning. I slept in my own bed on Tuesday night, leaving him in the capable hands of an exceptional nurse when he assured me he could use the call button and urged me to go home. From Wednesday morning until he finally succeeded in his task of moving on, I had stayed by his side, occasionally dozing in a chair when a son or daughter-in-law gently pushed me away to take over mopping Joe’s brow and holding his hand.

When I woke up that first Sunday morning after his death, I found my face wet with tears. "I didn’t know people could cry in their sleep," I thought, surprised. With shock, I looked at the clock to see it was nine in the morning! I had slept through the night for the first time in months, a full seven hours. It flashed through my mind that now I was more rested, I should lie there and think about how to deal with this and figure out who I am now without Joe.
But then I heard voices in the kitchen below. "The grandchildren are up," I thought, "I haven't seen them since they arrived from Ohio and they will be worried about me." So I tucked my thoughts away for later and got up to hugs and tears and coffee and conversation and the whirlwind of the next few days of family and friends. I found myself comforting others more than being comforted. And that seemed natural and right, somehow. After all, Joe and I had had lots of time together to talk and prepare for his journey and mourn our loss of each other. Others had not.

The next few days were incredibly busy with people stopping at the house, dropping off pans of lasagna, and flowers and baskets of food. The Ohio kids stayed with me of course, and Joe's brother Paul and Bonnie opted for a hotel. But they arrived too, each morning, staying through the day, as did my sister and the rest of our family. It was much like Christmas with all of us together, the children doing their own things, laughter and teasing and good food and hugs and crying and dirty dishes and drinks and much loving confusion. The only time I was alone was in the shower and when I went to bed. With so much going on and so many decisions to make, there wasn't time to think about my identity dilemma. Each time it entered my mind, some other problem or some other person needing more immediate attention interrupted me.

Hundreds of people came to Charlie Meyer's place to see me and our sons and daughters-in-law and grandchildren. They filed past me, struggling with tears, hugging me, looking for words of consolation. I again found myself comforting them. After all, each one was hurting too, pained by their love for Joe and their own personal relationship with him, or their love for me or another of our family. "I'm okay," I said, over and over, "Please don't worry." And I was.

My girls did everything, from sweeping the floor to planning the Mass, to fielding phone calls. Each night when the house emptied to just me, and Mark's family, my problem flashed through my mind. But I was too tired and too busy with the next day's planning to consider it.

The funeral came and went, a solace for us all, the party afterwards was a wonderful time of stories, and healing laughter, and memories. And then they all left, each to his own home and I was finally alone.

Gratefully, Waif and I settled down in a chair together. She seemed fine. I thought about her for a while as I petted her, realizing that she knew her person was gone. She had been acting oddly for a day or two before Joe went into the hospital, sort of avoiding him, coming to him only when called, not spontaneously. I think his scent was different. During those few days afterwards, she looked for certain family members for attention, turning often to our sons and Joe's brother whose scent was most like his, and even the non-cat people comforted her. Her favorite family members got snuggles and purrs as she comforted them.

"Now I can figure this out," I thought, "this thing about who I am without him." But the problem seemed like a tangled ball of yarn. I pulled at it, looking for where to begin. There didn't seem to be an obvious end or a path to follow. Who I was now seemed to be much the same as before he died, except not so much. All my daily activities were continuing except that they didn't revolve around Joe's increasing needs. Now laundry and groceries revolved around all the things I needed to do to settle financial affairs, figure out how to show my gratitude to all those who had been so helpful, and get my house in order.

During the last two weeks, I have begun to understand that I really am okay. My house comforts me. I take pleasure in the new carpeting and the other changes we made together. The new spring weather and green grass and my tulips and the rabbit on the side lawn this morning make me happy. My plans for an Alaskan cruise to be with close friends who will be married in Juneau excite me. Cooking a gourmet meal for my friends who handled the party and sitting long hours in the gazebo talking together made me realize I was comfortable.
Yesterday, my sister asked me if I had written a Scraps column yet. I said I was thinking about it but didn't know how to talk about Joe's death to my readers. She shot me a glance and said to do it the same way as I did with all my other friends. "After all," she said, "they all think they know you personally, and maybe they do. Just let them know you really are okay."

The puzzle solved itself. The ball of yarn unraveled. I am still me. My life isn't so very different after all; it is just more separate. Joe isn't far. I sense him all the time, just beyond my glance. Waif does too, stopping with a paw in the air, shooting a sharp look behind her before she jumps into his chair. Problems are still solved by thinking, "What would Joe suggest; how would we deal with this together?" My responsibilities are minimally more, but less too.

I stopped in the drugstore yesterday for the first time in two weeks, just to say thanks to those who had been so helpful. I missed the staff after being there four or five times a week for months. I got something to eat in the middle of the afternoon when I was hungry, deciding I didn't have to prepare dinner if I didn't want to. The phone is always for me. The toilet seat stays down for the first time in 45 years of living in a house full of men. I sat on the lid in the middle of the night and couldn't get back to sleep because of a fit of giggles. Julie brings the mail to the back door if I forget it for a couple of days, knowing it was always Joe's job to empty the mailbox. Matt helped grandson Dan set up the yard furniture and clean out the gazebo, and is available to trim and rake when I need him, as he has been for a couple of years. My health insurance has gone down and I took one cell phone off the bill. My life continues. I really am okay!

In Memory of a great kid...Sean

The tragedy we have had to deal with for the past 3 months has been overwhelming. Unbearable sometimes, as we still find it difficult to honestly believe that this has not been just "a bad dream." Sean was such a great kid, always looking to help people, no matter what it was. He made the room light up, always making people laugh.

Sean was killed in an accident in December 2003, just ten days before Christmas. He was sledding down a hill when he was struck by a pickup truck. He had been gone from the house only 22 minutes. He was just being a kid, on a snowy Sunday morning, doing what he loved to do--play in the snow. He loved the outdoors and anything dealing with nature. He loved to go fishing, and loved sports, bike riding, music, and being with his friends.

When Sean died, a big part of a lot of people went with him. He went out of his way sometimes, to do things that were beyond a normal kid to do. He made a friend that was an older lady, with kids just a little bit older than him. But shortly after we moved here, she had a leg amputated. Sean went to her house every day, to make sure she had what she needed, no matter what it was. He did for her what her own kids wouldn't do, but that didn't stop Sean from being himself. For being only 12, there were over 500 people at his funeral, which just amazed me, because we never knew that he had so many friends, as well as lives that he touched. His friends are of all races, ages, male and female.

Sean was our third child of four, and is with his older brother Christopher, whom we lost in 1988 from SIDS. We never had discussed with him about donating, because honestly, I never dreamed I would have to face something like this. But at the time of the accident, I knew in the bottom of my heart that if Sean knew he could help someone even after death, he'd be ok with it. So his dad and I gave the ok for Sean to once again.....help.

We are blessed to know that he has helped several people with his beautiful, big, blue eyes. I have to say "THANK YOU" to the recipients because they are giving my child the chance to live on, through the eyes of others. We had also
donated his heart valves, but were devastated to find out that they couldn't be used. I know as his mom, I wanted him to be able to help more, but because of his injuries, it was limited. The gift of eyesight, is something that people take for granted every day! I have, since my son's accident, signed the back of my driver's license, as I now realize the importance of being able to help someone else.

Sean is greatly missed--no more laughs or funny little pranks be pulled, but he does live on, not only in spirit, but through the eyes of those "SPECIAL" people, who needed a miracle, that my son helped them through.

GOD Bless. Sean's Mom, Dad & Sisters

In Memory of Brandon H.

Brandon was born September 04, 1986 and passed away June 29, 2002 at the age of 15. On October 10, 1994 at the age of 8, my son Brandon signed his organ donor card; he had always liked to help people. Brandon volunteered for the Welland S.P.C.A as he loved animals. He also volunteered for the Welland Historical Museum. Brandon was a very outgoing person who helped anyone who needed help. He was always there when grandma needed his help, and if there was work to be done, Brandon was the first one there to help. If the smaller neighborhood kids needed someone to play with, Brandon would get out his hockey net and let them take shots at him. Brandon loved to play hockey and computer game with his younger brother. They would also race their remote control cars up and down the road after school. Brandon’s love for his family was most important to him. He spent any spare time with his family and his cousins in Fort Erie, where they would swim, fish, and play computer games together. They were inseparable--they did everything together.

Brandon loved sports. He loved the Toronto Maple Leafs and watched every game. Even if he was supposed to be in bed on a school night he was in his room with the TV down low listening to the game. He had to know who won--waiting until the morning wasn’t good enough for Brandon. Brandon played on his school’s soccer team as their goalie, and on their basketball team. Brandon also played on our local hockey team for many years, and during the summers Brandon played on Fort Erie’s youth soccer team as their goalie with his cousin.

Then on June 25, 2002 Brandon was hanging out with his cousins in Fort Erie, when at the result of another person’s recklessness, he was left brain dead. Being so close to Buffalo he was sent to Children’s Hospital where he lay for four days hooked up to many machines and tubes while they tried everything they could do. Then we had to make the hardest decision of our lives--to take him off life support and let nature take its course, but first we needed UNYTS to be aware of our situation because Brandon would have wanted to help out anyone who needed his help. They were great, and they helped us with everything we needed to know. Being Canadian, we wanted some of Brandon’s organs to help people in Canada too. Now Brandon has helped people everywhere, something that would have made him very happy.

Brandon is my angel and always will be............. forever in my heart, Mom.
Mark C., 1964-2001  
Submitted by Sue C., Mark's wife

In January 2001 my 36-year-old husband Mark passed away from a brain aneurysm. It was the most shocking and devastating experience of my life. I thought we'd have our whole life together and have lots of time to make beautiful memories together that would last a lifetime.

When my husband was taken to the hospital we thought he was having a sugar attack, but the emergency room doctor said it was an aneurysm. We were given two choices--immediate surgery with a possibility he would not pull through it or may need total care the rest of his life; or we could elect not to do surgery and it would be a matter of time before he would pass away. Because Mark was so young we decided to go with the surgery, hoping and praying he'd pull through it.

We stayed and watched over him for four days as he remained hooked up to machines. During those saddest days of my life, I hoped and prayed for a miracle. I felt as if part of me was with him. The loneliness, emptiness and helplessness I felt are unexplainable, but I would not wish anyone to experience this feeling. The next day two neurologists came to us and confirmed that my husband was brain dead. We then were asked to consider organ donation. At first I was totally against the idea, but after discussing it with my family I agreed it was the right thing to do. Mark had a special gift to offer to others, and there are many people who are unable to give the gift of life.

After making the decision to donate I have had several mixed emotions. Did I make the right decision? What would he have wanted? The hard part was that we never discussed the issue. Thinking about the kind of person Mark was: kind, caring, very giving. I thought if he was still here, he'd continue to be the loving person he was. I feel this was a very good choice that we made as a family. Through this experience I have also decided to donate my organs and offer the gift of life.

In Memory Timothy B, 1971-1992  
Submitted by Tim's mom, Sally B.

My oldest son Tim was 20 years old when he died as a result of injuries sustained in a motor vehicle accident. He was an honor student in his last semester at Erie Community College, and planning to pursue a career in physical therapy at the University of Buffalo. In his spare time Tim was a triathlete, a runner, biker, and a swimmer. Prior to his accident, Tim had talked to us about his desire to become an organ donor. He planned to sign the back of his license on his 21st birthday.

Consequently, when we were approached by a coordinator from UNYTS, we honored our son’s wishes and said yes to organ donation. Five lives were saved and our family has a beautiful legacy to remember Tim.

The decision to donate has helped us work through our loss, while the recipients were given another chance at life.
In Memory of Mary N.

I would like to write a little something about my mother Mary, who passed away November 23, 2003. Mom was a caregiver ever since I could remember, as well a volunteer for our church and for SABAH (Skating Association for Blind and Handicapped).

There are five children in our family, four boys and myself. Dad was stricken with a puzzling neurological disease at a very young age of 42, very much like Lou Gehrig's disease. Mom reversed the roles; she had to go to work from 8 pm until 1:30 am every night. Dad was unable to feed, bathe, or even move a finger; he was totally dependent on Mom. We used a Hoyer lift to get him in and out of bed. He had severe pain, he suffered terribly, and this went on for 26 years. Mom never complained. Dad was dependent on all of us, but especially Mom. They were childhood sweethearts, grew up next door to each other and married in 1952. They certainly were two people who truly cared for and loved one another.

Then in 1991, Mom and Dad were granted their first grandchild, named after Dad. His name was Alex and he arrived on January 20, 1991. He was born early; he was not due until April, 1992. Unfortunately, Alex had a grade IV bleed and his optic nerve, as well as many parts of his brain were severely damaged. He is totally blind, has asthma, has a shunt in his head, cerebral palsy and cannot speak. We have taken him all over to see if we could restore his sight. That is not possible at this time. My brother Joe got divorced before Alex was one year old. Alex, our angel, was given to Mom to take care of. Now she is working five days a week, taking care of Dad and now we have our angel, Alex to take care of also. He is totally dependent on her too. Mom somehow found time to be a Eucharistic Minister at church, volunteered in the cafeteria at St. Benedict's (our church), and also volunteers for SABAH. She finally retired in 1992. Dad passed away in 1993. Mom also took care of her five other grandchildren, all younger than Alex.

Mom insisted that her organs or whatever possible be donated to UNYTS. She was very adamant about this and I was so pleased to carry out this request for her.

I just felt it was necessary to write this information about my mother. It has been one year since her passing, and we all miss her and think of her and my dad every day. Thank you for allowing me to give some insight on my mom, she was and still is a very remarkable, unique and compassionate person. She is missed by everyone.

Andy Z., 1981-1995
Submitted by Luanne Z., Andy's mother

When my oldest son, Paul, who is a teacher in Western New York, told me some years ago he had signed the back of his driver's license, in order to make sure his organs would be donated in the event of his death, I shuddered, "You did!" I cringed, "How could you do that? I don't even want to think about it."

On August 12, 1995, my youngest child, Andrew, who was 14, was hit by a drunk driver on the street in front of our house. He died two days later, after fighting valiantly to live, despite a broken neck, back, pelvis, leg and a fatal brain injury. During those two days, my family learned more about the workings of a trauma unit in a major hospital that we ever wanted. Although he never regained consciousness, he responded to our touch when we held his hand and talked to him, and we tried desperately to ease his fears and to say what we thought he needed us to say.
When we were informed that he was brain dead, we no longer had to try to tell him what he wanted to know. We had to try to decide what he would want us to know, especially when we were asked if we had thought about donating his organs. Andy had never discussed the subject with us. He was a carefree, happy teenager with plans and dreams for what he thought would be a long life. Death was not a topic he considered. All we had to draw upon when making this crucial decision was what Andy was like, and based on that, we pondered the question, "Would he have wanted his organs donated?"

Here's what Andy was like:

When he was hit, he was riding his all-terrain cycle to our land across the street to take care of Max, his horse. He didn't ride Max, he just cared for him, fed him, watered him and taught him how to put his big head under Andy's arm for a hug. Max is an old horse, and we gave him a home where he could spend his last years. That was Andy's idea, and that's why he didn't ride him. He just wanted Max to be happy in his old age.

It was also his idea that we buy a turkey every Christmas and he came with me to donate them to the local soup kitchen, "because I really care about those people, Mom," he said.

We didn't realize until later, when we looked at the ATC and noticed Andy was carrying a basket, which he was also going to pick daisies for me when he was hit. He and his father had seen a field of wild daisies earlier that day while riding through the family farm, and he told his father that I loved daisies and that he was coming back later to get some for me.

Andy was comical, he would do anything to make people laugh, and he took special pains never to hurt anyone. A teacher recalls that he wrote the words "I love Math" on the board every day, and repeated those words to her as he left class. She learned soon that he did the same thing in all his classes, to the delight of his classmates.

"Let me help you, Grandma, I'll do that," were his last words to his grandmother, when he found her washing windows the day he was hit. When his father was recovering from a fractured spine some years ago, Andy fulfilled the promise he made to him while his dad was still in the hospital, "I'll be your back, I'll do everything for you." He made time to play football and baseball with his youngest cousin, who was only nine, because, he said, "I know what it's like to be the youngest and no one wants to play with you." He told me he was more of a counselor than his father, who is a high school guidance counselor because, "Everyone at school tells me all their problems. I'm like Ann Landers."

Andy was kind and compassionate and helpful. He was a peacemaker and be wanted, more than anything, for people to be happy. With that in mind, we made the decision to donate Andy's organs. It turned out to be the easiest decision we have had to make in all this nightmare of losing Andy. Because he was a big boy, already 5 feet 9 inches tall and over 200 pounds, all of his organs went to adults. They were received by three fathers of children, one a widower with three teenagers, and a woman who had been ill for five years, a grandmother in Buffalo and a 15-year-old boy. Before we gave permission, I asked Andy's cousin, Pat, who was like a brother to my son, if he thought Andy would have wanted his organs donated. He said yes, and based on what Andy was like when he was alive, I have to agree with him.

I hope no one reading this ever has to face the agony my family has experienced, but it might be a good idea to take a minute to discuss such things. If the worst happens, and you are one day asked about organ donation, remember Andy, and think about what your loved one was like in life. My beautiful son is gone forever, but his heart is still beating, and because of him, several others have a second chance at life.
In Memory of John S., 2005
Submitted by Erika F., John’s Mom

John was 20 when he was killed in a car accident on January 17, 2005. John and his friend were on their way to go snowboarding. John was wearing his seatbelt, and the driver of the car was not speeding. In other words, they were not doing anything wrong. Because the road was very icy, the driver lost control of the car and slid into oncoming traffic. John was pronounced dead at the scene.

John was full of life. He was always on the go, looking for adventure. He was into extreme sports and was always trying new things. His last craze was snowboarding. He was fearless. He did not believe in letting fear rule a person. He was also a prankster. He loved to get a laugh out of people. He also had a very deep sensitive side, which not a lot of people saw.

John knew that I loved him and worried about him, as all mothers do. He was very respectful of my feelings. He and his friends called me Mrs. John’s Mom. I was watching him turn from a sometimes rebellious youth into a responsible young man. I was very proud of the life lessons he was learning and the direction his life was heading.

When I took John to get his learner’s permit, he wanted to know what it meant to be an organ donor. I told him, and John signed up to donate his organs. I always believed in organ donation, and he liked the idea. I remember coming home from the DMV and being amazed that this sometimes cocky kid would actually consider something so serious and life saving. I was really proud of him. He would amaze me like that sometimes. Most of the time he was carefree and happy-go-lucky, but he had a very sweet and soft side that he would let people see every once in a while. John’s organs were donated, and I was able to track down the woman that received John’s cornea. We have formed a great friendship and bond, and I know that John lives on in the cornea of Kathy. John will be forever missed and loved. I am grateful and proud to have been his mother and to have been blessed with his life that was just too short.

In Memory of Thomas M, 1980 -1997
Submitted by Tom’s mom, Janet M.

On a warm summer evening on August 19th, 1980, my son, Thomas was born into our family, joining an older brother. After the nurse placed Thomas in my arms, I would never know that God would lend him to me for only 16 years, 349 days and 20 hours! Just as I remember the details of his birth, I will never forget the details of his death.

On August 2nd, 1997, Thomas took his dad’s motorcycle out for a ride on a warm summer night. He never returned. A driver came up from behind, did not see him and hit him. He was thrown 178 feet from the point of impact. After arriving at the hospital, the neurosurgeon informed us that Tom only had a 5% chance of survival due to massive head trauma. After relating this devastating news, the neurosurgeon said, "You may want to consider organ donation." Tom’s dad and I looked at each other and knew that organ donation was a certainty. I remember thinking, "Since death is out of my hands, I do have a choice about life for others." We also based our decision on the fact that Tom loved people and would have done anything for anyone. After Tom was thrown 178 feet, none of his organs sustained injuries. Thus, we were able to donate all of his organs. Organ donation offered me hope in the middle of despair, a purpose in the midst of tragedy, and light in the midst of the darkest night of my life!
At that time, we were unaware that Tom discussed organ donation with friends in Georgia five months earlier. He told them if anything ever happened to him, he wanted to donate his organs so others could live. I would not find that out until six months after his death. Although we had no doubts about our decision, it was confirming to find out later that it was also Tom’s wish. I totally believe that organ donation was a gift from God to me in the midst of the worst nightmare of my life! Our decision saved four lives, enhanced the lives of five others as well as helped others through bone and tissue donation. Organ donation was a fitting way to pay respect to the extraordinary person my son was, and would have been. At that time, I didn’t realize the impact organ donation would have on my personal grief journey. One and a half years after Tom’s death, I had the privilege of meeting my son’s heart, lung, and kidney recipient. They were moments of ecstasy in the midst of my intense grief. Meeting them helped me heal even more. To hear about their struggles helped me realize again, the life-saving impact we had by just saying, "Yes." I am confident that when I see Tom again in Heaven that he’ll be proud to know that his wish was granted.

Pondering the sign, "miracles do happen" near the door of Tom’s heart recipient’s home, I was reminded again, that Tom’s death and subsequent organ donation brought about that miracle! It further brought me peace knowing that through his death, he and others were given a second chance.

Mary Ann H. 11/13/47-11/01/06
submitted by Christina H.

My mother was everything to me we talked almost every day of my thirty-two years on this earth. She was one of the loves of my life. Never could you find a more caring or gentle soul.

On All Saint’s Day 2006 when my mother passed away I was in a state of shock as was my sister Eileen and my daughter Emily. She was the cornerstone of our small family she was our rock. My mom was above reproach she always knew the right thing to say and had the most easygoing demeanor.

The day she passed away due to a tragic car accident I could barely feel anything but pure grief. I was contacted about organ donation and I was unsure due to the fact that it was un-marked on her driver’s license. Immediately I felt the surge that it was the right thing to do, you see my mother was the most giving person in the world. Giving the gift of life to others made sense out of something that otherwise seemed senseless. In the days that passed I had many friends and family confirm that I made the right decision she had conversations with them as she did with me that it was something that she would like to do.

In the days and months since my mother’s passing our family has found great solace and relief in knowing that my mom’s beautiful gift will help to save or improve the quality of other people lives.

If that day someone had told me that my mother could survive with some type of transplant I would have consented to anything to save her. Unfortunately our family did not have that choice but through my mother’s gift we were able to potentially give that choice to another family. Knowing that her legacy will live on in not only in our memories but in her living gifts to others has helped our grieving process immeasurably.