

THANK YOU FROM EARL



Dear Healthcare Staff,

My name is Earl Howell I am a retired guy and a liver transplant recipient of 22+ years. Thanks to my gift of life I have been able to see my children complete their education, get married, and present my wife of 49+ years with five awesome grandkids, which certainly helps keep me young. I am fortunate to have an extremely healthy life situation, which allows me to keep fit by exercising regularly, volunteering with several transplant related entities, and enjoy life.

For many years I have been privileged to be part of the Operation Popcorn team, which has allowed me to meet and reach out and personally thank many of the people on the healthcare teams who are on the very front line of our transplant life journeys. **To see the joy on your faces at getting to meet the living proof of your truly extraordinary and compassionate work in such trying situations is a very emotional moment for me. Your caring attention and dedication to the entire organ donation and transplant program is an inspiration to everyone of us.**

Everything recipients have today and our many tomorrows are a result of our gifts of life, and the efforts of all of the exceptional health care workers like yourselves, for which I am truly grateful. I say forever thank you thank you, to each and every one of you!!!

Earl Howell
Liver Recipient, 22+ years

THANK YOU FROM CATHLEEN



My name is Cathleen and in 2016 I underwent a double lung transplant. In 2014 I was diagnosed with Pulmonary Fibrosis (PF) and my world as I knew it changed in an instant. Before my diagnosis I was living what most would consider a normal life. I was a member of the RCMP, I was married to a police officer and I had two step-children.

Throughout my adult life I struggled with lung issues but through medication and lifestyle I always overcame the obstacles I experienced. But in 2014 I started to experience more daily symptoms that I struggled to manage. At first, I chalked it up to shift work and just life. I was wrong.

I was diagnosed with PF and told my only chance of survival was a double lung transplant. In my career I have faced some terrifying moments, but nothing was scarier than this news. I chose to endure the process of being listed for transplant. In August of 2016 I was officially "listed." In November 2016 I received the call. This was such a scary, terrifying moment for me and my family. I was filled with terror as I counted back the numbers to be put under, not knowing if I would wake up. **But I did, to a nurse with the kindest eyes, smiling at me and telling me I made it and everything would be okay.** I spent almost two weeks in the ICU struggling to breathe with my new lungs, move and start my long road of recovery. I am now back to living my new normal life. I am back to work; I am the first member of the RCMP to receive a transplant and return to work. I am living an amazing life with my family, all my creatures and my friends.

Every day, I think of all the people that helped me get here. I recognize the absolute sacrifice my caregivers and the ICU team made for me to live. I watched my caretakers work through their coffee breaks, skip their lunches and leave late to make sure I was taken care of. I want you to know this daily sacrifice is not unnoticed by your patients. The value of holding my hand when I was enduring something uncomfortable is something I cannot put into words. The kind words to get me through a hard moment, and just telling me it was going to be okay meant so much to me. I trusted all of you, and because of this your words carried me through the worst moments of my life. Organ donation is such an amazing gift in life, of life, and every day I think of my donor. Every day. And the legacy of my donor is with me, as I work, I play, and I live. **To me, all of you are part of that legacy. Without all of you, there would be no me. Thank you.**

THANK YOU FROM PAUL



Hello Healthcare Teams,

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to my healthcare heroes. **My name is Paul Lee and I am a liver transplant recipient in 2011.**

I had a bad stomach pain and went to emergency. My condition got worse and doctors found out that I had liver failure. I went into a coma and was rushed to VGH. The next day my family got the great news that they had found a matching organ donor. It was a miracle!

I found out later that I had only 24 to 48 hours to live if I did not receive a liver transplant. Surgery was successful and I was discharged from the hospital 12 days later. **I am so grateful to my transplant heroes, donor family, doctors, nurses and all hospital staff because without them I wouldn't be here today.**

Transplantation gave me nine extra years so far. I attended my three children's weddings and experienced the joy of holding my five grandchildren when they were born.

I want to let you know that your work makes a huge impact to a family like mine. I want to show you that the result of your hard work is lives saved, because you normally see seriously-ill patients and donors and families at their most tragic moments. I know how hard it must be to approach families who are at the worst moment of their life, but your work makes miracles to other families like mine.

I hope this message reminds you how vital your work is to saving lives.

Keep up the great work,
Paul Lee