

The Gift of Life

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Citation: Sutton T (2023) The Gift of Life. *J Integrated Health* 2023;2(4):66-67. DOI: doi.org/10.51219/Emeka CK/13

Received: 20 August, 2023; **Accepted:** 06 October, 2023; **Published:** 09 October, 2023

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Ahoy Organ Donors and Fellow transplant recipients! It is truly a Gift of Life that I am here today. I would like to start by recognizing the Organ Donors among us, you deserve a HUGE HUG and recognition for the Gift of Life that you have given to others. Your Gift of Life has allowed me to hug my wife & son again and continue to grow with them. Your gift of life has allowed me to give others Hope & Inspiration to never give up when life challenges us.

Your gift of Life has allowed me to witness how others have grown, changed their lifestyle and are prospering today.

Your gift of Life has brought many people together, that never knew each other.

Thank you for the sacrifices you have made to help others live a better quality of life!

Thank you for not being afraid to scare your body to allow others to thrive!

Thank you to all the caregivers who have given endless hours of their life to help provide care for both Organ Donor and Recipients.

And finally, thank you to everyone in the medical community for giving the endless hours of your life, dedicated to your education to make organ donation possible.

My name is Terry Sutton, and I am a double organ recipient and a cancer survivor, because of two strangers donating a piece of their body.

I'll give it my best and I hope in some way my story will help inspire other's living with disease to never give up and those without disease to not be afraid to GIVE by donating their organs.

You see, my transplant and my journey with disease is not about me, it's about community, A journey with disease cannot

be traveled alone, it affects your entire family, your friends, your neighbors, and friends you don't even know you have.

A journey with disease will consume your life. A journey with disease is about being young. Wait, how does being young come into this? When I was faced with finding someone will to have their body cut open to donate part of their liver to me, my son and three of his 27-year-old friends signed up to donate, all of them were denied for medical reasons. Now, let's think about this, at 27 we should be in the best shape of our lives, we should not have to worry about disease, but we do. Why, because of the standard American diet and lifestyle.

To the young people, live life to the fullest, but be kind to your body, learn about what you put in your body affects your body, do self-examinations, get medical checkups, if something in your body does not feel right, say something, early detection is the best cure for disease.

A Journey with disease is about prevention and doing everything you can to heal your body. A journey with disease is about research and education, learning everything possible about how & what I can do to survive.

A journey with disease is about frustrations, anxiety, financial loss and the fear of the unknown.

A journey with disease is about team building, planning and organization.

A journey with disease is about positive thinking, mind over matter and the will to survive.

A journey with disease can cause grief and sorrow.

And finally, a journey with disease can be triumphant and give relief.

In 2015 at the age of 51, I was diagnosed with stage iv metastatic Colo rectal cancer. At that time, I was not sure what

that meant but, it sure sounded scary. One of the craziest things is they said I probably had cancer for over 8 years, and I did not know it, until I had some bleeding and went for a colonoscopy.

My family and I started researching and becoming educated in what we can do so that I can survive this horrible disease. The next 4 years led to many surgeries, removing tumors from my body.

It led to seeking various healing modalities to find what my mind, body and soul would connect with, it led to a lifestyle change, understanding nutrition, drinking clean filtered water, proper sleep, and deep breathing.

In December 2018, I was told it's time to get my affairs in order, there was nothing more that could be done, and I had about 6 months to live. The fear of the unknown set in. My biggest fear was my family and their fear of my death. But I remained positive and grateful for every moment I had.

In March of 2019, I was contacted to be evaluated for a liver transplant. After approval, I was told this is a BYOLL – yes,

bring your own live liver! ... I'm sure there are others here that were also shocked to hear these words My liver was functioning despite the tumor attached to my vena cava, so I had no meld score..... How could I possibly find someone willing to have their body cut open and donate a piece of their liver?

I mentioned the friends you did not know you had. Earlier in 2018 while I was in the hospital recovering from surgery, a beautiful angel named Danielle, moved in next door to me. I hadn't had the opportunity to meet Danielle at that time, but now she lives inside of me. She is still my neighbor, and she is my living organ donor. Thank you, Danielle, for your Ultimate Gift of life! Your courage and selflessness, without you, I would not be here today.

And thank you to the organ donor who gave me their vena cava, never knowing how it would help me to survive and begin my new mission in life, Ocean Dreams Cancer Healing Center. Our mission is to bring Hope, Healing, Education & Relief from the day-to-day stresses of dealing with disease to individuals and their caregivers.

Thank you for listening and to all Happy Days!