

69-Year-Old Grandmother Needing A Lifesaving Kidney Transplant Finds a Miracle on the Internet: a 25-Year-Old Living Altruistic Organ Donor Stranger

BOSTON, Dec. 14 /PRNewswire-HISPANIC PR WIRE/ -- When Kurth Krause, an aerospace engineer for NASA, was giving the Apollo crew instructions for landing on the moon, he was confident that technology and science could solve just about anything. Years later, Kurth realized there was one thing that science couldn't solve. His wife Susan needed a kidney transplant and even though dialysis machines would keep her alive for awhile, she would die without a transplant. Kurth wrote: "My wife is 69 and is starting dialysis next month. She has been accepted into the UCLA program to receive a kidney, but will likely be too old by the time one is available (average 8 years)." Then Kurth found MatchingDonors.com and put his wife's profile on the website. Maybe technology could save his wife. MatchingDonors.com is the most successful nonprofit organization that is finding living altruistic donors for patients needing transplants.

Within days of being on MatchingDonors.com she found Robert Chiles, a 25-year-old. Robert's personal experiences drove him to Susan. Robert wrote: "I'm very healthy and want to donate in memory of my grandmother, who needed a kidney but would not take one from us because she said she lived her life."

Through the miracle of the Internet, the two strangers met on MatchingDonors.com. Robert found out he was a match and donated a kidney to Susan at UCLA's transplant center on Wednesday, November 18, 2009. It took Susan only three months on MatchingDonors.com to find a willing matching donor.

MatchingDonors.com was launched in January of 2004 as an Internet service and is now the largest living donor database in the United States. It can get over 1.5 million visits in a month. Patients put their profiles on the website and potential donors browse the site for a life they want to help save.

MatchingDonors.com advertises and promotes its Web site through extensive public relations networking to increase potential donors viewing the site. There are over 7,000 potential donors on the site waiting to find patients needing organs. Donors are not compensated, since it is against the law to have any financial benefit from organ donation.

MatchingDonors.com has an extremely high success rate. Most patient members that have been on the site for at least 30 days have been offered an organ by a potential donor. MatchingDonors.com has had over 106 surgeries take place in a little over four years. It is recommended and used by some of the most prestigious transplant surgeons and centers in the United States.

Dr. Jeremiah Lowney, one of the Web site founders, said, "Patients are asked to pay a membership fee, but there is a sliding scale if they can't afford it. We believe that if more people were better educated on the ability to be a live organ donor, the number of donors would increase and so would the probability of a patient receiving their much-needed organ."

The personal connection MatchingDonors.com provides is key to finding a potential live donor. According to the National Kidney Foundation, "Nearly one out of four (23.4%) of 1000 people queried told pollsters that they would be 'likely' to consider donating an organ to help save the life of someone they did not know."

As of November 16, 2009, there are 104,867 patients waiting for an organ transplant on the National Deceased Donor Waiting List run by UNOS.org in the United States. Yet, in 2006, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing (www.UNOS.org), a non-profit organization contracted with the U.S. Department of Health, there were only 28,930 organ transplants performed in the United States. Every day, 18 people die while waiting for an organ transplant.

Currently, patients waiting for an organ donation are placed on a national waiting list through the United Network for Organ Sharing. A computer system matches patients to donor organs according to objective criteria such as blood and tissue type, immune status, medical urgency and time spent on the waiting list. This ranking system determines which patients are offered available organs. This process is extremely important in anyone's organ search, but now MatchingDonors.com offers a way to enhance the search with a more active approach.

For more information, visit <http://www.MatchingDonors.com> or call 781-821-2204 in order to:

- Interview Dr. Jeremiah Lowney, one of the website founders
- Speak with patients and donors by contacting Paul Dooley, CEO of the website
- Read stories about MatchingDonors.com from The NBC Today Show, CNN, NBC News, ABC News, CBS News, NPR radio interview, ABC News NightLine Story, Sixty Minutes, New England Journal of Medicine articles and more
- Donate money, property, or services to support MatchingDonors.com.

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