

# New lungs give local pair a second chance

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and after 10 hours in surgery Murray had a new pair of healthy lungs.

Before his transplant at Toronto General, Pacheco's lung function had also dropped to about 12 per cent. He had been on the transplant list since last October and while in the hospital this past summer he was on oxygen and spent up to 14 hours a day using a bipap machine to help him breathe. He had little energy and doing simple things like brushing his teeth exhausted him.

Pacheco said he had come to terms with his need for a lung transplant by the time he went in for the surgery.

"I didn't have any crying or fear. I prayed to God, looked at my parents and told them I loved them, and that everything would be okay."

Pacheco said he had some complications following the surgery, and Murray experienced stage two rejection, but all in all the two are recovering well.

However, in addition to their regular regimen of pills and vitamins for their CF, they are both also taking pills to prevent infection and anti-rejection medication as the chance of rejection is greatest in the first three to six months. Pacheco estimates he takes approximately 50 pills a day.

They also both went through extensive physiotherapy, and weekly check-ups by their doctors.

The change in both Murray's and Pacheco's condition since the transplants has been dramatic and they are buoyed by the fact that one CF patient has lived 13 years so far following a double lung transplant.

In the case of Pacheco and Murray the disease will not affect their new organs.

Pacheco said he doesn't use oxygen at all now and his lung function has greatly improved.

"The energy level is there," said Pacheco. "I have more stamina."

He is also considering going back to school and starting an aerobic conditioning program.

"It's like a new life, a completely major difference," said Murray. "I can do things I wouldn't imagine doing."

She said she can't wait to get back to the gym and "I dream of running on a treadmill." She also hopes to get back to work soon.

## Organ donation facts:

- More than 3,500 Canadians are awaiting organ transplants and every year approximately 150 of them die, waiting.
- In 2000, 1,882 organ transplants were done in Canada
- Nearly two-thirds of all transplants are kidneys
- Canada has one of the lowest organ donation rates among industrialized nations.
- Nearly 98 per cent of all kidney transplants, 90 per cent of liver transplants and 85 per cent of heart transplants are successful

Source Health Canada

Darwin Kealey, president and CEO of the Trillium Gift of Life Network, which co-ordinates organ and tissue donation across Ontario, hears many stories about people who, through organ donation, have been given a new lease on life like Murray and Pacheco.

"The need is very great. In Ontario today there are 1,757 people waiting for a transplant," said Kealey. "Unfortunately of that number 110... will die before the year is over."

However, he said the good news is that transplants do work.

"The success of transplantation in kidney, heart and liver is all in the 90 per cent range."

Despite the fact that surveys show that acceptance of the concept of organ donation is very high, in Ontario only 46 per cent of residents have signed their organ donor card, which comes with the driver's licence renewal form and at OHIP card renewal time.

"It's extremely important to have the discussion with their family about their wishes," said Kealey. Even if someone has not signed an organ donor card, the family can decide whether or not to donate a loved one's organs.

Kealey said a donor card and more information about organ and tissue donation can be obtained at the Trillium Gift of Life Network at [www.giftoflife.on.ca](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca), or by calling the network at 1-800-263-2833.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



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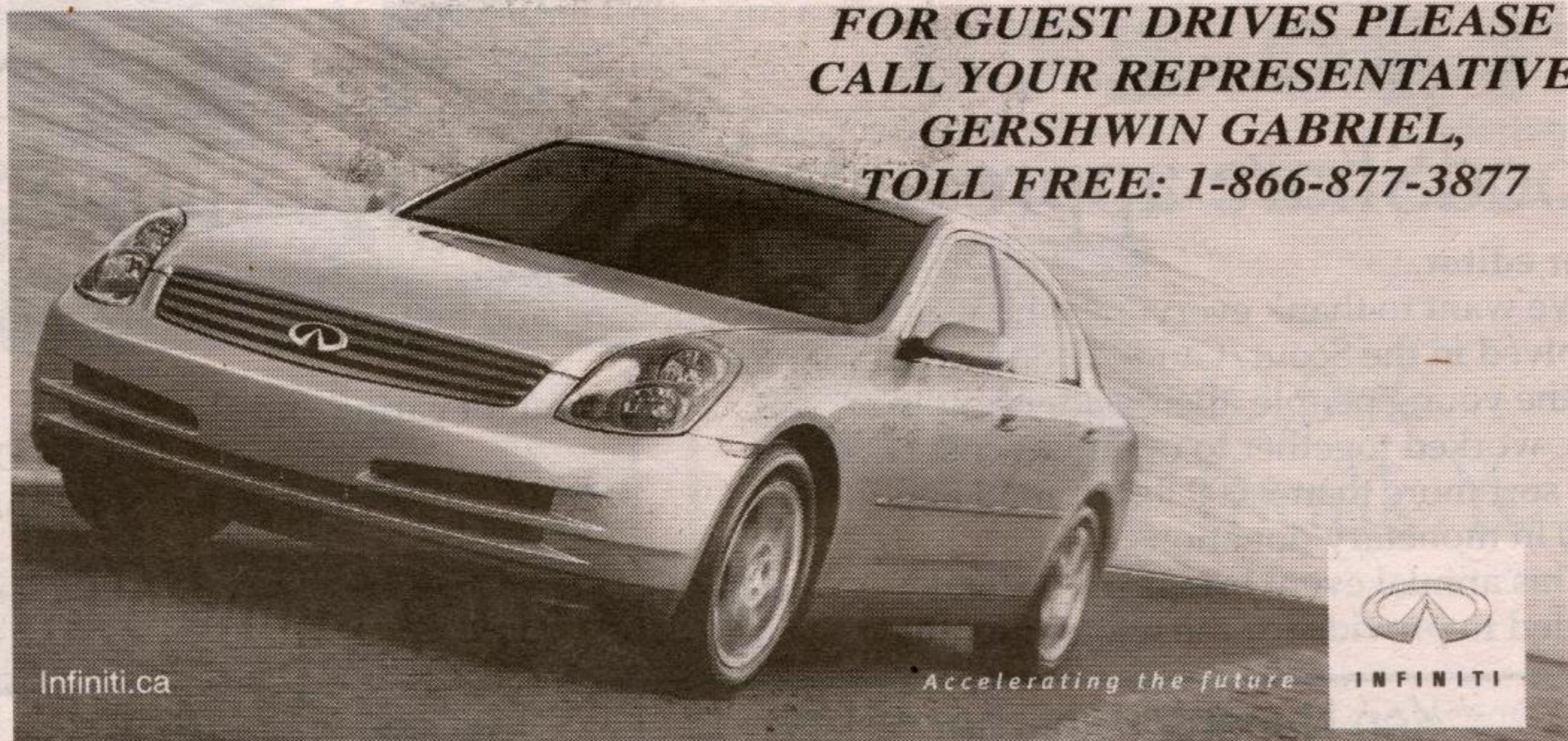
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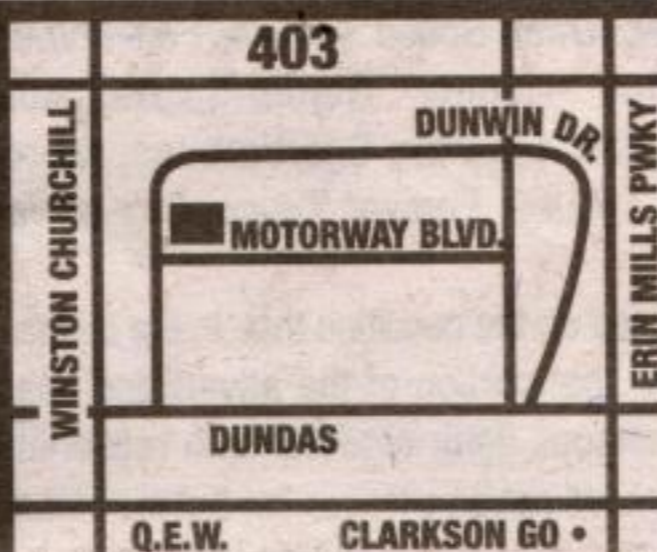
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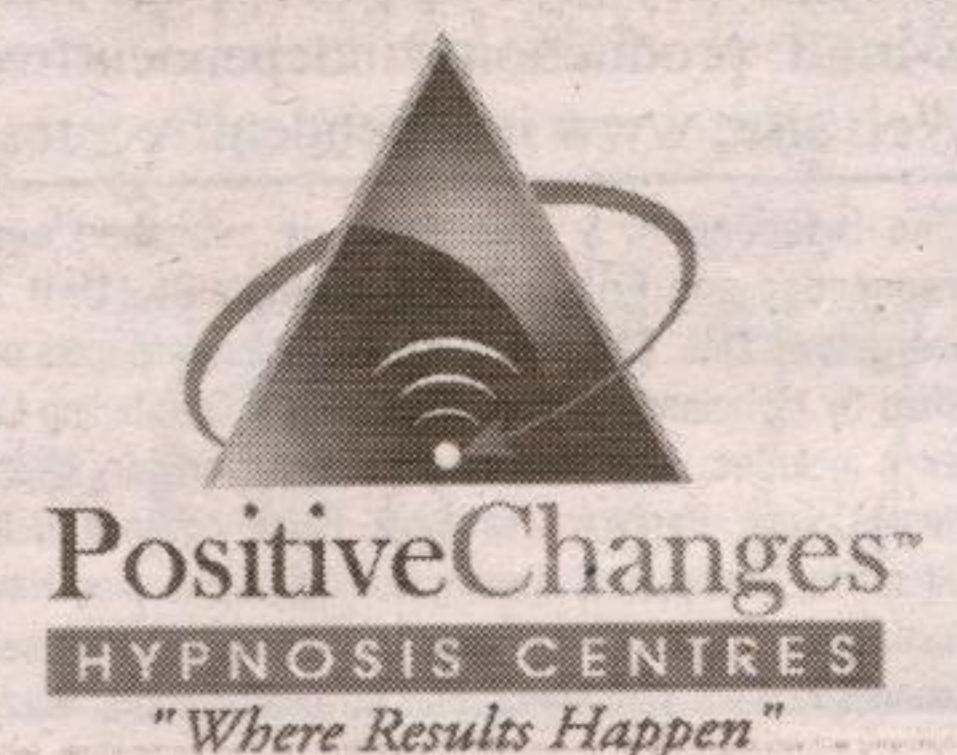
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