

Son needs second double-lung transplant

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cough throughout the night in the next room. The first night he was home after his transplant, she lay awake in silence; it was the best feeling she had ever had. Not only was her son walking, he was running, playing paintball, swimming and doing all the things a teenager does.

"It gave him a new quality of life," she said. The need, however, remains constant, in some cases, even with those who have benefited from a transplant.

Dan's body is rejecting his transplanted lungs and, now 24, he requires a second transplant. Dan is the nephew of Stouffville town councillor Rob Hargrave.

While at the Toronto hospital, children awaiting transplants bond since they understand each other, she explained.

But there are times when the transplants don't arrive in time, since the demand for

organs outweighs donations.

Her story is what touched so many when she hosted an Aurora Chamber of Commerce's networking event at the Tuscany Event Centre last month. She was reluctant to share her story with the 100 people who attended the event, but she is glad she did as it captured the attention of many, including Aurora Mayor Phyllis Morris.

"You can't help but be touched and, as a mother, you wonder what you would do if it were your child," Ms Morris said. "The gift of life is in all of us to give."

Ms Hargrave's speech sparked Ms Morris' curiosity and when she returned to town hall the next day, she asked a few people if they had signed organ donor cards.

Taking it one step further, she decided it would be a great idea to ask her fellow council members to approve putting organ donor cards in public places, including community centres, fire halls and at the town hall to kick off an awareness campaign.

Ms Morris is confident council will support the initiative.

If the organ donor campaign is successful, Ms Hargrave said she will consider venturing into other municipalities in York Region.

A donor card can be downloaded at giftoflife.on.ca and, when you renew your Ontario health card, you can say yes and that information will be stored in the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care database.

The network also suggests having a conversation about your wishes with family and friends to ensure your wishes are honoured when you die.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Tanis Hargrave is urging everyone to sign an organ donor card. Her son, Dan, lives with cystic fibrosis and needs a double-lung transplant. They live in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

BY THE NUMBERS

- ▶ Five Canadians die each week because the organ donation that could save their lives is not available.
- ▶ There are more than 4,000 Canadians on transplant waiting lists.
- ▶ The need for transplants will increase by 150 per cent in the next two decades but organ donations will only increase by 12 per cent.

Source: Organ Donation and Transplant Association of Canada





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