

## **Local family's Christmas 'miracle'**

I want to share what I believe is a Christmas miracle.

My husband, Scott, 48, retired from the Burlington City Police Department about a year and a half ago. In May, he started to become ill and went to see his family physician, who diagnosed him with liver disease. In June, our sister-in-law made an appointment with a liver specialist at Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, who was able to see him immediately. It usually takes weeks to get an appointment, and he was able to be seen the next day.

When we met with the doctor, he did not seem too concerned and told him he did not see where he would need a transplant in the near future or at all. Well, with each passing month, my husband's health was failing rapidly. The simplest things were a struggle for him. He was not living, only existing. He was admitted to Jefferson for a week and a half in October and a week and a half in November. While in the hospital in November, he was placed on the transplant list. Now it was a waiting game. It could be months or years before a liver would become available. The holidays were upon us, and at a time where happiness and joy are bestowed among people, he was barely able to get off the couch or out of bed. He said on Christmas Day that he only wanted a liver for Christmas. About 10:50 p.m. on Christmas, my cellphone rang, and it was his nurse coordinator asking to speak with my husband. I could not imagine why she was calling so late, on Christmas night no less. I put him on the phone, and as they spoke I was getting bits and pieces of the call. When he hung up, I asked him what was going on, and he said they had a liver. I fell to my knees crying, and then began making the phone calls. I called my father, who rushed over and took us to the hospital.

We got to Jefferson around 11:30 p.m., and he went into surgery on December 26. The surgery went well, and the new liver seems to be working so far.

Words cannot describe our thanks and gratitude to the family who made the selfless decision to donate the organs of their loved one. Their act not only saved my husband's life, but possibly many others' as well. We do not know who the donor is, or where they are from, but whoever you are, we will be forever grateful to you for giving us the gift of life. We will think about you and your family every day. And our Christmases will be forever changed.

My husband now has the chance to enjoy watching his two teenage sons, Kevin and Colin, grow, and enjoy the simplest things that life has to offer. We also would like to offer thanks to the many family, friends, co-workers and even strangers who offered prayers. Thank you also to the Parish of St. Katharine Drexel in Burlington City for the continued prayers, as well as to the ladies of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Burlington City for the beautiful prayer quilt. The power of prayer is amazing.

Many thanks also to the staff at Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. The care my husband received was nothing less than stellar. Every staff member of the hospital was so kind and caring. We truly believe this was a Christmas miracle, and our Christmases will now have a new meaning.

If you would like more information on organ donations, please contact the Gift of Life Donor Program at 800-DONORS-1.

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SOURCE: *Burlington County Times* (Willingboro, NJ)