

Spotlight

Yale
NewHaven
Health

Yale New Haven
Hospital

NEWSLETTER FOR OUR DONORS, VOLUNTEERS, AND FRIENDS

FALL 2017



Every day, 13 people die while waiting for a new kidney

**Thanks to you—and to his wife Denise—
Jim Cassella wasn't one of them.**

“NO REGRETS,” Denise Cassella said to her husband, Jim, as they wheeled her into surgery. She was on her way to donate one of her kidneys to a stranger, so that Jim could receive a new kidney—before it was too late.

continued inside >>

18-Person Kidney Exchange

On June 21, Yale New Haven Transplantation Center completed one of the largest kidney exchanges in the US—and the largest ever in Connecticut—**matching 9 donors for 9 recipients.**

Peter Yoo, MD, Jim's surgeon and the Director of the Paired Exchange Program, says the matching process—which can involve many multiple pairs—is like a complicated puzzle, involving computer algorithms and “ingenious and creative nurses who keep a zillion details in mind to see who will fit with what.”

This past July, two years after the surgery, Denise and Jim celebrated their thirtieth wedding anniversary with a party. “We are so grateful to YNHH and the altruistic donor,” says Denise. “If not for them, we might not even be celebrating our thirtieth. So we asked our guests to make donations to the Transplantation Center,” says Denise.

Dr. Yoo would like to urge people to consider donating a kidney. “There is a very acute shortage of transplantable organs,” he says. “YNHH has such a high record of safety that the only lasting effect of donation is the satisfaction of having saved a life.” ♥



Denise and Jim hold their wedding photo on the occasion of their thirtieth anniversary as their children Jessica and Brian look on. “If not for the altruistic donor and YNHH,” says Denise, “we might not even be celebrating our thirtieth.”

The story of Jim's kidney disease started over twenty years ago—and came to its happy conclusion in July 2015, when he and Denise participated in a paired kidney exchange at Yale New Haven Hospital.

When Jim was 40, he was diagnosed with “minimal change disease,” a condition that can damage kidney function. It typically affects children and is usually treated successfully with medication. Jim's case was not typical. The medication didn't work.

For twenty years, Jim was able to manage his symptoms—high blood pressure, fluid retention, and shortness of breath—with medicines, a strict diet, and a healthy lifestyle. It wasn't always easy, but he refused to allow his condition to interfere with his career as a neuroscientist or his life as a husband and father.

“Suddenly, around 2012,” says Jim, “my kidney function started to deteriorate.” Before long, he had to start dialysis treatments.

Dialysis allowed him to function, but it wasn't a good long-term solution. “Jim wasn't doing well,” says Denise.

“He was losing a lot of weight. Watching your husband start to fail... it's frightening.”

Shortcut to the top of the list

Jim desperately needed a new kidney, but there was a seven-year waiting list. “I knew we couldn't risk that delay,” says Denise. “I decided to donate one of mine.”

But she and Jim had different blood types. He couldn't use her kidney.

That's where the Paired Exchange Program at YNHH came in. The program matches an incompatible donor-recipient pair like Denise and Jim to another pair, and they “exchange” donors. In this way, a compatible match is made for both patients.

Denise's decision to donate bumped Jim to the top of the list. Within a couple of months, a perfect match was identified. Jim received his kidney from an “altruistic donor,” a woman who

wanted to save a life by donating a kidney—even though she didn't have a particular recipient in mind.

You can save a life with a living organ donation.

For more information, call the Transplantation Center at YNHH.

1-866-YALE-TXP

CREATIVE GIVING

Big-hearted badge-bearers battle breast cancer

THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS, the cheering crowds, the amount of funding raised—and the muscles needed to win—all get bigger every year.

The seventh Battle of the Badges bench press competition occurred last spring, and it raised nearly \$5,000—every penny of which was donated to Smilow Cancer Hospital for breast cancer care and research.

Captain Von Narcisse of the Yale University Police Department and Sergeant James Scott of the Connecticut State Police have been co-organizers of this event from the very beginning.

Anyone can enter the competition, which takes place each year in the Yale Payne Whitney gym. There are two divisions. The Public Safety Division is for police, firefighters, emergency medical service providers, and members of the armed services. The Open Division is for the rest of us—because you have to be really tough to compete with public safety officers!

Participants compete in teams of three people. The team whose members perform the highest combined number of bench press “reps” is the winner. Teams include both genders, but men must lift 75% of their weight, while women lift 50% of their weight. This year's competition fielded 30 teams.

Funds are raised from registration fees (\$20 per entry—\$15 if you're a student) and donations.

“It feels like a championship event,” says Von. “The crowd is yelling and screaming, kids are cheering and jumping up and down for their parents. The energy level is through the roof and contagious!”

Even with all the help they get from volunteers, organizing the Battle of the Badges is a big job. But Von and James are committed to the project.



♥
“Our motto this year was Keep Pushing because we believe it's so important to push until there's a cure for breast cancer.”
SERGEANT JAMES SCOTT



Captain Von Narcisse (l) and Sergeant James Scott (r) proudly present a check to Camille Servodidio, Program Manager of Women's Oncology Services at Smilow Cancer Hospital. Nearly 100 participants performed thousands of bench presses to raise nearly \$5,000 for breast cancer care and research.

“As police officers, we believe you are never ‘off duty’ when it comes to serving the community,” explains James. “This event is another opportunity for us to help others.”

And breast cancer is personal—almost everyone has been touched by it. “We're not researchers or scientists or physicians,” says Von, “but we have just as much energy in the fight. And one of the best ways to fight it is to raise funds for doctors and researchers.” ♥

Use YOUR muscles to battle breast cancer!

The 2018 Battle of the Badges is already in the works. Von and James would love to have YOU enter the competition next year.

Email Von for information or to sign up at von.narcisse@yale.edu. If you'd rather not bench press but still want to join the battle, make a donation at givetoynhh.org/donate. Indicate “Battle of the Badges 2018” when prompted.

ABOUT
YOUR HEALTH

Tick season isn't over yet!

Six important things you should know about Lyme Disease



2017 is proving to be a particularly bad tick season, with reports of more ticks infected with Lyme bacteria than ever before. Fortunately, Yale New Haven Hospital has some of the world's leading experts in tick-borne diseases—like Linda Bockenstedt, MD, a physician scientist in the Section of Rheumatology who has been studying Lyme disease for more than 20 years. Recently, we asked her for some information and advice about ticks and Lyme disease.

What do these ticks look like?

They are dark brown and very small! The unfed nymph is about the size of a poppy seed. After it feeds (usually in late spring and summer), it expands to the size of a sesame seed. The adult tick is about the size of a sesame seed and can expand to the size of a raisin after it feeds (usually in late fall and winter if warm).

How long must a tick be attached to give you Lyme disease?

In most cases, ticks must be attached for 36 hours or more to transmit the infection to you.

What symptoms should I watch for if I'm bitten?

A rash at the site of the bite occurs in 70 to 80 percent of those infected. Other symptoms include fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, or neurological symptoms like Bell's Palsy (temporary paralysis of part of the face). Some people don't recall an illness or tick bite, and develop a swollen joint (usually the knee) months after the infection started.

How can I protect myself and my family?

You are most likely to be exposed in brushy areas, woods, or near stone walls where mice live and ticks may be present.

Use a repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, or IR3535—these are very effective and safe if you follow product instructions. If you go camping, consider buying clothing and gear that are impregnated with permethrin (or treat gear yourself). Shower soon after coming indoors, preferably within two hours, to wash off any ticks not yet attached. And check yourself and your children after being outside.

I've heard Lyme disease can be hard to cure—is that true?

Symptoms usually resolve after treatment with antibiotics, but this may take time. Fewer than 10 percent may experience fatigue, musculoskeletal pain, or subtle cognitive problems that persist longer than six months or a year.

If I find a tick on myself, what should I do?

Don't put anything on it. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp it as close to the skin as possible, and pull straight out. Then clean the bite site with rubbing alcohol or soap and water. If you develop a rash or any symptoms, see your doctor. ♥



The Wish Book is Coming!

Keep an eye on your mailbox—your 2018 Yale New Haven Children's Hospital Wish Book is on its way!

Choosing items from the Wish Book is the best way we know to bring healing and hope to our youngest patients during the holiday season and all year long.

Be generous—we promise that helping a child feel better will make you feel terrific!

Can't wait for the Wish Book to arrive?

Visit us online at ynhhwishbook.org and start giving today.