

Transplant Trends

Transplantation Services in Arizona

Girl, Interrupted

Heather, 18, Grateful for Stem Cell Transplant and a Second Chance



Heather, left, and mom, Sue, celebrate life and a second chance. A major contributor to the healing process? Leon the dog.

A 14-year-old girl isn't supposed to be worrying about hair loss from chemotherapy. Generally her world would revolve around the prom, an afternoon at the mall — and plans for college. It wasn't so for Heather, the subject of this story. In her own words, Heather, now 18, explains what it's like to endure cancer and to travel the arduous journey through diagnosis and a stem cell transplant. Today, she is a survivor - and has big plans for her artistic skills.

My name is Heather Bongiolatti. I'm 18 years old and I'm a cancer survivor. Just four years ago, at age 14, I was looking forward to freshman year in high school. Until then, I was an honor student

with perfect attendance. But I wouldn't start high school until my sophomore year, and that, too, would be short-lived.

I remember the day the doctors took my parents away for a long

time for a meeting. I remember sarcastically thinking, "Oh, great. I'm dying." Little did I know - I really was. My dad came back and took my hand and kissed it. I kept asking

"I remember sarcastically thinking, 'Oh, great. I'm dying.' Little did I know - I really was."

– Heather Bongiolatti

about my mom and nobody answered me. She was in the hall and she didn't want me to see her crying.

I had cancer. But I was too young to really understand what it meant. The only thing I thought was, "I'm going to lose my hair!"

I completed 14 months of chemo, and then the day after my last chemo I went to Florida for my Make-a-Wish to Disneyworld. When I got back, I was able to start high school.

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Girl, Interrupted *(continued from page 1)*

But in March 2004, the cancer came back. My doctors seemed even more disappointed than my family and me. I had only a 50 percent chance of a cure now. And I would need a stem cell transplant. That's when I met with Dr. Roberta Adams from Mayo Clinic and got tested to see if the cancer had affected my bone marrow. It hadn't, and that meant they could use my own stem cells to create new, healthy cells.

It took 18 days to have very harsh chemo, a day of rest, and the transplant, where I would get my cells back and then wait for them to respond. I was able to go home sooner than expected. I think it was because I had a little bit of hope waiting for me

at home - a puppy. I'm sad to say, however, that she died. She left me the day after Christmas.

Then I got sick again - this time with a terrible cough. I ended up in the intensive care unit and I didn't wake up for two weeks. But it wasn't like a real sleep. I had a dream that felt real to me. I was on a boat with everyone I loved the most and they were all protecting me. It was like my infection had taken a human form and was trying to hurt me. But my loved ones were there for me, helping me.

When I woke up, I was unable to do simple tasks. I had to learn all over again how to walk, shower, write and do the normal functions of life. And my

love for drawing turned out to be a great occupational therapy for my hands. I spent a second birthday in the hospital.

But I started high school again and graduated, on time, in May 2006! I will be starting college in October. I also have a wonderful new dog - Leon!

Nothing can express how grateful I am for my family and, most of all, for my doctors.

Dr. Roberta Adams is one, as well as many doctors from Phoenix Children's Hospital - especially Dr. Jessica Boklan and Dr. Paul Baranko. The passion Dr. Adams and the other doctors have is priceless. They care for their patients as if they were their own.



A 'Heartfelt' Thanks

Mayo Clinic's first heart transplant patient, Priscilla French, right, was able to connect with the pilot of the jet that flew the Mayo medical team to pick up her heart in another state. Priscilla, who is doing well and is grateful for her transplant, not only got to meet her pilot, Al Adams, left, she convinced him to sign her "heart" pillow. She (and her dog, "Honey Bunny") also got to sit in the cockpit of the plane. Including Priscilla's heart transplant, which happened in October 2005, Mayo had completed 15 heart transplants by early September 2006.

Joe, the 'Comeback Kid' -

Undisputed Youngest Heart Transplant in Phoenix



A morale booster for Joe -- Arizona Cardinals kicker Neil Rackers pays a visit to Joe, pre-transplant

Joe Hasse could be described as a typical 16-year-old, fixated on video games, sports and Harry Potter CDs. That pretty much defined him on the morning of April 9, 2006, when he was casually browsing in a Phoenix area book store.

Until then, his parents insist he was the portrait of health. But things went profoundly awry that milestone day. No one had any clue that the morning would evolve as a day of catastrophic change for young Joe. In fact, when it was all over, he had a "change of heart" - literally.

Joe, through no choosing of his own, holds the undisputed title as the youngest heart transplant patient in Maricopa County - and at Mayo Clinic in Arizona, where the heart transplant program began in October 2005. The unremarkable trip to the book store is a distant memory for Joe's parents, Angel Grinder and Pat Hasse, because what started out as Joe feeling ill and vomiting morphed into a medical odyssey in which his heart stopped a number of times, his kidneys, liver and

lungs began to shut down, he "coded" and was eventually stabilized at another medical center and finally air-lifted to Mayo.

"My son's face was blue and his lips were purple," recalls Pat, Buckeye, Ariz. "They basically told me Joe had an extremely enlarged heart and would need a heart transplant. It was a shock, given that the day had started out so normal. Then all of a sudden, we're in this emergency room where they're fighting to get a pulse and a heartbeat on my son."

Joe's mother, Angel, who came as quickly as she could from her home in California, arrived at the hospital also in a state of shock, never expecting to hear the words, "It's a waiting game for your son." In her mind, young Joe was like any kid his age and was set to be a junior in high school in the fall. "I lost it," Angel confesses.

As of May 12, Joe was placed on the list for a heart transplant. But within two hours, "He took another nosedive, and was taken off the list, too sick to undergo a transplant," recalls Pat. But Joe persevered, as did his medical team. By May 17, he showed improvement and was again listed. But it took two mechanical pumps, called ventricular assist devices (VADs), to keep his heart going.

A boost to Joe's morale happened just a few days before a heart came in and he was able to get his transplant. One of his sports heroes, Neil Rackers, kicker for the Arizona Cardinals football team, paid Joe a visit. They talked,

had lunch and spent considerable time together.

Then the life-altering call came to Joe's family at 2:30 a.m. on May 20. A heart had come in and the transplant would proceed, under the leadership of

"They basically told me Joe had an extremely enlarged heart and would need a heart transplant. It was a shock, given that the day had started out so normal." - Pat Hasse

heart transplant surgeon Dr. Francisco Arabia and the surgical and medicine teams. The transplant took place, and several hours later, Joe was in recovery.

His life may not have rebounded to normal for a number of weeks, but Joe's appetite certainly did. Within days of his transplant, he was sitting up, requesting his siblings to fetch him a bountiful buffet of what some might call junk food. While many recuperating from major surgery may have recoiled at the mere thought of food, Joe couldn't seem to get enough of chips, salsa and enchiladas to fill out his six-foot, three-inch lanky frame.

Moreover, once the video games were again fired up in his hospital room, Joe seemed oblivious to the chatter all around him that chronicled a stunning story of courage, perseverance, teamwork and near-death experiences. The family is eternally grateful to the medical team at Banner Estrella Hospital in Phoenix that worked on Joe for hours to keep him alive- and to the team at Mayo Clinic that eventually transplanted him and is now carefully watching his progress as Joe heads back to school.

In short, Joe is the real-life "comeback kid."

For Reuben, it was 'Just in Time'

Tiny Cardiac Device Credited for Keeping



Ruben Delgadillo, heart transplant patient number 14

Until June 2006, when people talked to Ruben Delgadillo on the phone, they would invariably ask, "Did you just run a mile or something? You're all out of breath."

Being out of breath pretty much defined Ruben's world, whether he was talking on the phone, squeezing lemons on his job as a produce manager or simply walking across the room.

At age 41, he says he felt like an old man.

Because of heart failure caused by an infection four years earlier and a resulting weakened heart muscle, Ruben suffered shortness of breath, swelling, water retention and chronic exhaustion. In his words, his life was relegated to "going to work, coming home and going to work." Even a simple trip to the store loomed as a daunting effort most of the time.

All that changed on June 15, when Ruben Delgadillo, Yuma, Ariz., became the first patient in the state to be implanted with a tiny cardiac device that dramatically improved his quality of life while he waited for

a heart transplant. Called the HeartMate II, the small, essentially lightweight device works with the whole body to maintain a steady flow of oxygenated blood until a heart transplant can take place.

For Ruben, the device came just in time. His heart was pumping only 10 percent of its expected volume and was the size of a volley ball. He was, in fact, at risk of dying. "I was up to 280 pounds when I came in," he confesses, but then quickly adds that when his friends saw him when his medical odyssey was over, "They all said they couldn't believe I was the same person."

Reuben's story, obviously, has a happy ending, because he was able to get a heart transplant and to go into the surgery feeling stronger and more resilient, thanks to his HeartMate device. But it was the long journey to that point that taxed his physical and emotional being.

It all began one day when he collapsed on his job in the produce department of the store he works for near Yuma. He apparently scared his coworkers when blood started oozing from his skull. He explains that his potassium levels were "off" from his heart medication and that he frequently felt dizzy. After his fall, he was stitched up and intubated in Yuma, and "I woke up just as they were

going to fly me to a hospital in Phoenix," he recalls.

Eventually he was sent to Mayo Clinic Hospital to be evaluated for a heart transplant - something he had been told was inevitable. Because of his weakened condition, Dr. Francisco Arabia, heart transplant surgeon, saw Ruben as a good candidate for the new heart pump. Mayo was only hospital in Arizona using the device, but being "first" was not a frightening prospect for Ruben.

"I trusted the doctors," Ruben insists. "They were excited about this heart pump and they said I could breathe better and eventually could go home with it while I waited for a heart to come in. I had no other options, so I told them to go ahead."

In fact, that was the plan. Ruben, who was tolerating his implanted heart device well, was given the go-ahead to leave the hospital with his HeartMate II to stay at his sister's home in Phoenix until he got "the call." He had the drill down pat in terms of using the batteries while out



Heart Transplant patient Ruben Delgadillo accepted the support from Laura Spitaleri, RN, for his victory walk down the hall, although he was feeling well enough to walk proudly on his own

Yuma Patient Going Until New Heart Arrived

and around and otherwise linking to the power base.

But he never got to do a solo test run of his HeartMate II. That same day, “They came in and told me I wasn’t going home after all. A heart had come in!” Ruben marvels. The surgery went remarkably well. Ruben credits his heart pump and the fact it made him healthier and gave him more energy while waiting.

Was he scared about the transplant? “Think of the alternative,” Ruben advises. He also remarked, “All the doctors and nurses were so calm and they kept talking about ‘after the surgery,’ like I had a future, which helped. They talked as though it was so normal and that after I woke up they would do this or that. That made me feel really good.”

According to Dr. Arabia, the HeartMate II is being tested in nearly 30 hospitals around the U.S. and early research suggests a lower risk of stroke and a shorter recovery period for patients. Previous devices were much larger and were noisy. The HeartMate II can pump blood from the heart throughout the body at up to 10 liters per minute - the full output of a healthy heart.

Just over two weeks after Ruben’s transplant, it was discharge day. The medical team remarked how he was healthy, energized and ready. Those around him said it was a good sign that Ruben had complained about his breakfast that morning - that it wasn’t enough to satisfy his appetite.

“I know that salsa is not allowed for me for a while,” he concedes. “But I’m looking forward to being at my sister’s house, even if I can’t have it.”

Bridge-to-Transplant: HeartMate II can go Home with Patient While Awaiting Heart Transplant

What is heart failure?

Heart failure is typically caused by persistent high blood pressure, heart attack, valve disease and other forms of heart disease. It is a widespread chronic condition in which the lower chambers of the heart cannot pump sufficient amounts of blood to tissues and vital organs. This causes the organs to progressively fail, resulting in numerous medical complications.

What are the benefits of “bridge-to-transplant” therapy?

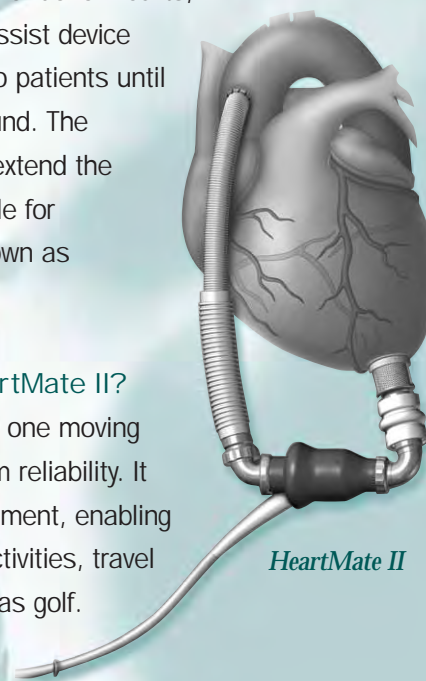
Because of the extreme shortage of donor hearts, the HeartMate II left ventricular assist device provides life-sustaining support to patients until an appropriate donor heart is found. The device also has the potential to extend the life of patients who are not eligible for heart transplantation. This is known as “destination therapy.”

What is unique about the HeartMate II?

The HeartMate II device has only one moving part and is designed for long-term reliability. It allows for more freedom of movement, enabling the patient to continue routine activities, travel and some sports activities such as golf.

Can patients leave the hospital with the device?

Yes. With approval from physicians and appropriate instruction from the medical team, patients can be discharged from the hospital with the HeartMate II. This not only has psychological and social benefits for the patient, but can mean cost savings as well.



Celebration of 500th Kidney Transplant at Ma



Billy Carpenter, kidney transplant number 500, is surrounded by friends

May 15, 2006, marked yet another milestone day for the Transplant Program at Mayo Clinic in Arizona - the celebration of the 500th kidney transplant. To be specific, the actual 500th surgery took place on April 7. By the time of the celebratory event, at least 13 more kidney transplants had been completed.

Dr. Raymond Heilman, Nephrology and Transplant Medicine, told the audience: "Size is not the most important measure - our great outcomes and the satisfaction of our patients and their families are the keys to our success."

Many were there to mark the occasion, including representatives from Donor Network of Arizona, who reinforced the message about the importance of organ donation. Mayo's first kidney transplant recipient, Matt Ziomek, Kingman, Ariz., had every

intention of being there to celebrate his good health. But because it was the dangerous wildfire season for Arizona, he instead had to fly his plane to fight fires - his profession.

The 500th kidney transplant patient, Billy Carpenter, Queen Creek, Ariz., was there and accepted a plaque that honored him and his landmark occasion.

A special patient, Renee Harris, also brought the crowd to tears when she recounted her story of her journey to transplant and her life-after-transplant.

Billy Carpenter, 500th Kidney Transplant

Billy Carpenter, Queen Creek, Ariz., was only six months old when he came to the U.S. from Bangkok, Thailand. He became used to conversations about "kidneys," because he lost his mother to cancer, although

she suffered diabetes as well.

At age 32, Billy was diagnosed with hypertension and was listed for a kidney transplant. Although he had been a truck driver for 13 years, making good money, he was unable to work for seven years prior to his transplant at Mayo Clinic Hospital.

"I was on dialysis for seven years, for four hours a day, three days a week," Billy. That was no way to live, but you do get to know people at the dialysis center. It was almost like being a member of a special family."

Billy's kidney transplant took place on April 7, 2006, cause for personal celebration as well as being part of Mayo's more public celebration. "You have grief when you're that sick and you're waiting for a transplant," he says. "Now I have a second life and another chance. You want to talk about it and give others hope."

Mayo Clinic Unites Patients, Staff and Families



Renee Harris, a Story of Courage

Renee Harris found out at age 28 that she was in renal failure. "I remembered wondering what my life expectancy was," she recalls. She required dialysis beginning in 2001, yet was afraid to devote that kind of time to the procedures, given that she had given birth to her beloved son, Denzell Virgil Harris, on July 18, 2000.

Denzell had been a premature birth baby and experienced respiratory problems, a frightening complication that Renee was fully aware of during her hours of dialysis. "It was so hard, knowing that my son needed care, and that I needed care as well," she says.

"But Denzell was my inspiration that allowed me to go on. It was tough - the fear and frustration. I struggled."

Renee turned to her parents, who were in the audience as she addressed the crowd at the 500th kidney event. "You and dad were right there. My family was my support," she told them. Then the audience became still as Renee reported what they secretly feared:

"The hardest thing for me was being on dialysis - and burying my child." Denzell was only 3.

But she quickly went on to say, almost as if to console the audience, "There is sunshine on the other side. I know the meaning of 'one day at a time.'"

Renee, an accomplished student, earned a law degree and, then, as if that wasn't enough, went back to school to become a teacher. But her biggest accomplishment, she avows, was coping with illness, dialysis and, of course, the loss of her son. "It all gave me my strength."

As if it were meant to be, Renee got a call on July 18, 2004, that a kidney had come in - the anniversary of Denzell's birthday. Renee says it was a sign that things were going to get better. "I'm very thankful and honored that someone gave me life," she says.



Dr. Victor Trastek, CEO, Mayo Clinic in Arizona: Transplant is a gift of life that touches so many



Dr. Raymond Heilman - Transplantation is a team effort



500th kidney transplant recipient, Billy Carpenter, is awarded a plaque by Dr. Heilman



Dr. Kunam Reddy: Thanks to all the donors and their families for their precious gifts

2006 U.S. Transplant Games: A Portrait in Cour

Kidney Transplant Recipient Glenn Schmidt Celebrates the Gift of Life at Transplant Games

It's a healing thing. It's a camaraderie thing. It's a way of celebrating the gift of life and all that it means to both give - and receive - a life-saving organ transplant. Be it for kidney, liver, heart, lung, pancreas or bone marrow transplantation, the U.S. Transplant Games, held in June in historic Louisville, Ken., was that special place.

Glenn Schmidt, 37, Phoenix, was determined to participate in the 2006 Games. His wife, Joannell, had little doubt that it would happen. Glenn had already proven that he was destined to recover quickly from his kidney

transplant at Mayo Clinic Hospital just 14 months earlier - on April 10, 2005. "He was back at work in 10 weeks after the transplant and has been going strong ever since," reports Joannell. She says Glenn's drive and zeal to participate in the U.S. Transplant Games was one way for him to regain a sense of normalcy.

Glenn, who works for the City of Phoenix, had suffered with kidney stones since he was 20. Then came renal failure and 18 months on peritoneal dialysis. He weathered his travails with remarkable dignity and courage,

and took up the challenge of playing basketball and volleyball at the Olympic-style Transplant Games very seriously.

It did not elude him that more than 88,000 Americans are currently on the waiting list for an organ transplant. In fact, Glenn was able to speak by phone with the daughter of the woman who had been his kidney donor. "It took a while, but we finally connected. I felt such a sense of completion and gratitude, talking to that generous family and realizing what a gift the donation has been," says Glenn.



Glenn Schmidt, kidney transplant recipient, is serious about his basketball skills



Arizona participants from Mayo Clinic in the U.S. Transplant Games: Left to right, Ann Reidenbach, Jim Manning and Glenn Schmidt



Vintage Louisville is captured in this photo of the majestic Belle of Louisville

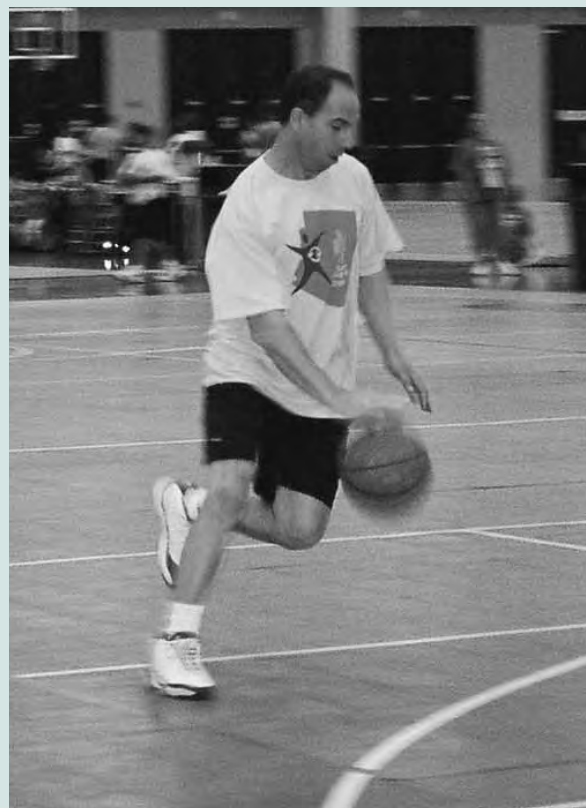
Age, Healing and Teamwork for Team Arizona



The significance of the Transplant Games is very real when the teams march in. Here, Team Arizona, takes center stage.



It's always a somber moment when the gift of life is exemplified through the memorial quilt.



Glenn Schmidt demonstrates his ball handling skills during the basketball event

Proud Granddaughter Proclaims:

‘Everyone Should Become a Donor!’



Julisa Edwards

This story is very important to my family, because it is a story of changing lives, the best of humanity's goodwill - and of miracles. This all begins with my great Uncle Jack and Aunt Harriet, who retired in Arizona. Uncle Jack began to feel very ill, but unfortunately, he didn't have the flu. Tests found he had severe loss of kidney function because of allergic reaction in the kidneys, which had caused severe damage.

Uncle Jack was in serious trouble - his kidneys were past the point of repair. He was put on a list, but it could have been years before a kidney match would become available. Uncle Jack and Aunt Harriet were encouraged to seek out friends and family members to donate a

Donating a kidney to a family member or close friend engenders a myriad of emotions, not the least of which is pride.

For Joe Edwards, Blanchard, Idaho, who donated a kidney to his brother-in-law, Jack Rothwell, at Mayo Clinic Hospital in 2002, that sense of pride has been validated - through a tender and insightful school essay written by his granddaughter, Julisa, 20. (The essay won her an "A" by the way, and laudatory comments from her professor.)

The following are excerpts from Julisa's essay:

kidney. You can imagine how hard it is to ask someone to donate one of their body parts. They didn't have to.

My grandpa (Joe Edwards) hung up the phone after talking to Uncle Jack and said, "I wonder if he'd want one of mine." Of course, this absolutely shocked Grandma (Joe's wife, Sandy). But they phoned Uncle Jack and offered the kidney. Uncle Jack and Aunt Harriet were absolutely shocked speechless for several minutes.

Unfortunately, the hospital where Uncle Jack was wouldn't transplant a kidney on someone older than 55. At the time, my Grandpa was 61. But he transferred to a hospital (Mayo Clinic) that transplanted healthy kidneys no matter what the age, and by the

end of all the tests, the doctors were astounded. The match was so close that the two could have been brothers.

The surgery was a success and my grandpa was out of the hospital in three days and was out exploring the countryside. Uncle Jack recovered for four days. When I asked why he donated the kidney, Grandpa said it would help Uncle Jack and Aunt Harriet play golf, and that he would get to beat Uncle Jack at golf once in a while!

My grandpa gave Uncle Jack the gift of life. The events of this story are miraculous, but nothing is as miraculous as giving another the chance to live. My whole family thinks everyone should become an organ donor.

News from our Mayo Clinic Transplant Programs

Kidney/Pancreas Program

Mayo Clinic has the honor of being the largest kidney/pancreas transplant program in Arizona- and one of the largest pancreas transplant programs in the Southwest. Since the kidney transplant program opened in 1999, 553 kidney transplants were completed as of mid-August 2006. Since the opening of the pancreas program in 2003, 60 pancreas transplants were completed as of mid-August. Of those 60, 22 were simultaneous kidney/pancreas transplants.

At Mayo Clinic in Arizona, approximately 30 percent of patients received simultaneous kidney/pancreas transplants before needing to be on dialysis, compared with about 5 to 10 percent on average across the U.S.

Liver Transplant Program

Since opening in 1999, 329 liver transplants had been completed at Mayo in Arizona as of mid-August, 2006. Of those, 60 have been living donor liver transplants. Mayo has consistently placed among the top 10 transplant centers in the U.S. for volume of living donor liver transplants. Mayo is the largest living donor liver transplant program in Arizona and the fourth largest in the U.S.

Save The Date!

It is soon time for the Mayo Clinic Transplant Reunion! This year's event will be on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., and will again be held at the Arizona Transplant House in Scottsdale. Watch for an official invitation in the mail, but consider yourself invited! Come celebrate with other patients, family, friends and Mayo transplant team members.

Signing Up for Organ Donation in Arizona - Simple and Online

Making the decision to be an organ donor is one that provides the greatest gift of all. Don't forget: Becoming a donor in Arizona is simple - and online. Sign up now by going to www.AZDonorRegistry.org.

By registering online, your information is confidential and is a complete record of your informed and legal decision to be an organ donor, should the right set of medical circumstances occur. That way, your family members will have no doubt about your decision.

If for any reason you do not want to sign up via the Arizona Donor Registry, you can still indicate your wish by signing a donor card. Also, be sure to tell your family and/or medical decision maker about your wishes.

AZDonorRegistry.org

Outcome Statistics: Kidney Transplantation	
Total Transplants 6/99 - 7/31/06	543
Living Donor Transplants	332
Current 1-year graft survival rate	92.33%*
Current 1-year patient survival rate	96.15%*
Current 30-day patient survival rate	99.51%*
Current 30-day graft survival rate	95.32%*
Median length of hospitalization	4 days
*www.ustransplant.org	

Outcome Statistics: Liver Transplantation	
Total Transplants 6/99 - 7/31/06	325
Living Donor Transplants	59
Current 1-year graft survival rate	89.13%*
Current 1-year patient survival rate	91.57%*
Current 30-day patient survival rate	96.03%*
Current 30-day graft survival rate	93.33%*
Median length of hospitalization	7 days
*www.ustransplant.org	

Outcome Statistics: Pancreas Transplantation	
Total Transplants 6/99 - 7/31/06	58

Outcome Statistics: Heart Transplantation	
Total Transplants 6/99 - 7/31/06	13

Attention Physicians – 24-Hour Physician Referral Line: 1-800-344-6296 or 1-800-446-2279



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