

T
S
O

TRANSPLANT SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

Serving Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess,
Bronx Counties and Southern Connecticut

VOL. 23, ISSUE 1



WINTER, 2018

Next Meeting Date

April 18, 2018

Greenburgh Health Center
295 Knollwood Road
White Plains, NY 10607

Ron Cohen Lung Recipient Pays it Forward



Ron Cohen knew something was wrong. Just climbing the stairs in his home left him out of breath. A pulmonologist suspected idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, a chronic and progressive lung disease in which the lungs harden and become honeycomb-like, making it difficult to breathe. There is no known cause. The life expectancy after diagnosis is generally three to five years.

Backup candidate. Ron knew about the disease only because his sister had died of it two years earlier. A biopsy at New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center confirmed the diagnosis. Ron learned a lung transplant would be his only hope of survival. Although he wasn't sick enough yet to be listed for a transplant, he grew weaker every day. Eventually he had to resign from his job in sales at Fortunoff, work that he enjoyed. He went on oxygen 24 hours a day and then, finally, he was added to the wait list at Columbia. It was determined that although both of his lungs were damaged, he would be okay with one new lung.

The first call from the transplant center came late one evening in July 2012. Ron, his wife Susan, son Brian, and daughter Meredith made the trip to New York City from their home in Westchester County. But after going through the required workup and tests, he was sent home—it's called a dry run. Ron explains: "I was considered a backup candidate. If a pair of lungs became available, they would go to someone who needed a double-lung transplant. If one of the lungs was not usable, then I would receive the good lung I needed." It is not unusual for candidates to have one or two dry runs before they're transplanted. Ron would have nine.

A donor. "I was getting depressed, but these dry runs were toughest on my family," Ron says. "The calls generally came in the middle of the night. We'd make the trip into the city, and then my family had no place to stay so they would try to get some sleep in the hospital waiting room. That bothered me more than anything."

The tenth call came September 16, 2012. This time it was for real. Later, after some research, Ron located his donor's parents. Their 25-year-old son had died in a motorcycle accident, and they had made the decision to donate his organs. Ron is still in touch with his donor's father.

Continued on page 2

Ron Cohen, Lung Recipient

continued from pg. 1

Family matters. “I will never forget the look on my wife’s face when she walked in my hospital room the next morning and found me sitting up in a chair, eating breakfast,” says Ron. “She and my son were expecting me to be hooked up to tubes and not looking so great. But I felt good for the first time in a long time.”

Ron was off his oxygen the next day and left the hospital after only eight days. He attributes his great outcome not only to the terrific staff at Columbia but to his family. “Their support was critical,” he says. “They were there for me every step of the way.”

Since his transplant, Ron has walked his daughter down the aisle to marry her longtime boyfriend, Alex. And he has been able to join his son on Brian’s quest to visit every major league baseball ballpark. They’re headed to Florida later this year to attend Miami Marlins and Tampa Bay Rays games.

Volunteer Extraordinaire. As a member of Transplant Support Organization of Westchester (TSO) and co-chair of the Volunteer Committee, Ron is committed to educating the public about the need for more donors. He attends symposiums, health fairs, and events on college campuses where he registers people to join New York State’s Donate Life Registry. “I ask people if they are a registered donor. If they say yes, I thank them and tell them I am a recipient. If they say no, I tell them I wouldn’t be alive if it weren’t for a donor. Sometimes they don’t want to deal with such a serious issue at a fun event. But sometimes they come back later and sign up. I feel an obligation to pay my life-saving gift forward. This work that I’m doing may very well be my legacy. Long after I’m gone—unless they come up with cures for a lot of life-threatening diseases—lives could be saved by the people I sign up today.”



TSO is seeking volunteers for tabling, speaking, and ceremonial events throughout our community. Please contact Janet Ocasio at janetmocasio@gmail.com for details. Training is available.



TSO Officers

Co-Presidents

Ira Copperman

212-222-8386

irajay2004@gmail.com

Donna Banks

914-393-7961

dgbanks@gmail.com

Ex-Officio

Janet Ocasio

914-646-2538

janetmocasio@gmail.com

Vice-President

Bill Becker

845-661-5690

mejerk@aol.com

Treasurer

Gerard Marinaccio

917-709-7553

gpm316@gmail.com

Secretary

Bill Seery

914-469-9196

det37k9@gmail.com

Members-at-Large

Leonard Andrew

914-631-6530

len@ldandrew.com

Helen Bellhouse

845-603-6700

hmbellhouse@verizon.net

Ron Cohen

914-980-5499

photoron819@yahoo.com

Glenda Daggert

212-222-8386

gdaggert@gmail.com

William Flynn

914-603-3163

williamflynn@optonline.net

Ted Lawson

646-346-0591

tedlawson320@aol.com

Madeline Marinaccio

Newsletter Editor

917-922-7029

mad705@gmail.com

Carolyn J. Robinson

914-603-3163

cjrobinson@optonline.net

Suzane Sadofsky

914-737-5165

suzane6@juno.com

Medical Advisor

Dr. David C. Wolf

Director Emeritus

Karen Farkas

TSO Meetings - Past and Future

Our meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month starting at 7:00 p.m. The location is the Greenburgh Health Center Community Room, 295 Knollwood Road, White Plains, NY, 10607.

Check out our website (www.transplantsupport.org) or send your email address to us (email4tso@gmail.com) to add your name to our distribution list for the latest information.

Past Meetings

November 15, 2017 – Rabbi Charles Sheer

“The Hospital Ethics for Families Regarding Donation”

December 4, 2017 – TSO 20th Anniversary Holiday Party

January, 2018 – No Meeting

February 21, 2018 – Janet Ocasio, liver transplant recipient

“My transplant Journey”

Upcoming Meetings

March 21, 2018 – Meeting canceled due to weather conditions

April 18, 2018 – Megan Fackler, LiveOnNY

“Organ Donor Awareness Month”

May 16, 2018 – Dr. Donna Mancini, Mt. Sinai Hospital, Cardiologist

“Heart Transplantation and Health Post-Transplant”

June 20, 2018 – Helen Irving, CEO LiveOnNY

“The Future of the OPO”

July, 2018 – No meeting

Education for 16 to 18 year old New York State residents

16 to 18 year old residents can now enroll in the New York State Intent Registry. At 18, their enrollment will roll over into the Consent Registry.

To help this age group understand and make informed decisions about organ donor registration, education modules are being introduced into the State and New York City high schools. LiveOnNY has been at the forefront of helping the New York City Department of Education to develop the transplantation curriculum. Pilot programs have already started in New York City with interactive activities, including case studies, graphics, text, videos, and blogs.



TSO Transplant Support Organization

Participant Application:

New

Renewal

Please fill out this form and mail it with your tax-deductible contribution to:
TSO, 1335 Mace Avenue, Bronx, NY 10469

NAME(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone # - Daytime: _____ Evening: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

PERSONAL INFORMATION (optional)

Birth Date: _____ Sex: _____ Marital Status: _____

Occupation: _____

CANDIDATE / RECIPIENT INFORMATION – Please check appropriate description

Donor _____ Donor Family Member _____ Transplant Recipient _____ Transplant Candidate _____

Family Member _____ Interested Individual _____ Professional _____

Have you already had a transplant? Yes _____ No _____

Type of Transplant(s) _____

Date of Transplant _____

Where did you (will you) have your transplant? _____

PARTICIPANT CATEGORIES & SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTIONS

Regular (Transplant recipient, transplant candidate, family member, donor family)

Individual Participant \$25.00

Family Participant (2 or more members, same address) \$35.00

Professional \$25.00

Please consider a voluntary donation to help support TSO \$ _____

TSO
Transplant Support Organization
1335 Mace Avenue
Bronx, NY 10469

NEXT MEETING: April 18, 2018

Transplant Support Organization's Mission

To help save lives by:

- *Providing* education relating to organ donation and transplantation;
- *Promoting* organ and tissue donation as an important social responsibility;
- *Giving* support to transplant candidates, recipients, their families and donor families;
- *Effectively* communicating to government bodies and the general public, the concerns and needs that affect the welfare of those individuals impacted by the transplant process.

