



Transplant Recipient International Organization Pittsburgh Chapter Newsletter

TRIO MISSION STATEMENT

TRIO is a non-profit international organization committed to improving the quality of lives touched by the miracle of transplantation through support, advocacy, education, and awareness.

TRIO PARTICIPATES AS “TEAM TRIO” AT THE AMERICAN LIVER LIFE WALK



Team TRIO Members (L-R): Ed Armbruster, Jed Deal, Lynn Deal (living donor liver recipient), Jacob Deal, Kara Bumbernick, Alfie (the ALF Allegheny Division mascot), Joe Armbruster, Jackie Billick, Lucas Billick, Jessica Fascetti, Pat Crawford (liver recipient), Tammy Robson, Chris Armbruster, Joanne Wright, Debbie Uhl, Fred D’Ascenzo, Patty D’Ascenzo and Domenic Fascetti. Team members missing from the photo: Susan Chincheck, Leslie Lynch, Mary Alice King (liver recipient and TRIO President) and Paul Armbruster (liver recipient and TRIO Secretary).

Sporting their new TRIO tee shirts, Team TRIO stopped to pose with Alfie, the ALF mascot, during the Liver Life Walk on Sunday, June 9 at the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium. Team TRIO raised over \$600 for the Walk. As of June 9, over \$67,000 has been raised by The Allegheny Division to support research, education and advocacy relating to liver diseases.

On a personal note:

One thing that I currently enjoy doing is volunteering as a member of the St. Teresa Players. The St. Teresa Players is a group of 16 men and women who love to sing and dance. Actually, tap dance. We perform for residents of nursing homes, personal care centers, AARP groups and other organizations. I first saw them when my mother-in-law was a resident at a personal care center. They were performing a St. Patrick's Day Show. I recognized and already knew most of their songs. When I was a boy, my aunts and uncles often came to our house, especially during the holiday seasons. They would sit around the kitchen table laughing, singing and having a great time. A cold beer or two may also have been present as well. It was a great time for all the cousins, too. We would play all the yard games, Hide & Seek, Release the Den and more until the street lights came on. As I grew older, I learned many of the songs and joined in with my parents, aunts and uncles.

While watching the St. Teresa Players perform that evening, I could not help reflecting on those memorable times growing up. At one point during the show, I leaned over to my wife, Chris, and asked if she would mind if I asked the group if I could become a member. I was glad to hear her say yes. Then I had my big break! One of the singers was doing a solo of "Dear Old Donegal", a favorite of mine and of our family, for you see, our ancestors came from County Donegal in Ireland. Right in the middle of the song, he came to a complete stop. He apologized and told us that he was filling in for someone who was no longer able to participate and he really did not know the song. Chris looked at me and said, "Finish that for him." At once, I stood up and picked up right where he left off, and finished the song. The members of the St. Teresa Players were quite surprised. Then one of them said, "You should join our group." Which of course, I did. The next night I was performing with them at Arden Courts, an Alzheimer center on Perry Highway. I could not help getting a little choked up when seeing members of the audience singing along with us and with their eyes smiling. That was nine years ago! And yes, "Dear Old Donegal" was and still is my solo.

I share that story with you because of what happened last year. In June of 2012, I had my annual clinic visit with Dr. Paulo Fontes at the Thomas E. Starzl / Frank Sarris Clinic in Montefiore Hospital. As always, I came prepared with my list of written questions. One of my concerns at the time was with my voice. My voice was not as strong as it used to be and was raspy as well. I noticed that my singing had degraded also. I did not have the range as I once had. (Hey, I can hear some of you saying, "When did I ever have it?") After mentioning this to Dr. Fontes, he immediately said that he wanted me to see an Eye, Nose and Throat Specialist. He informed me that when some recipients are out as long as I am, my liver transplant was on October 5, 2002; sometimes other issues arise because of being on immunosuppressants for so long.

I made an appointment and met with an ENT surgeon, Dr. Vy Vy Young. With an insertion of a video probe into my throat, Dr. Young observed a lesion growing on my right vocal fold, or vocal chord as most people say. Last August, I had two surgeries consisting of removing cancer lesions on my right vocal chord. In September, I had a laser treatment on a third area on my right vocal chord. The locations where cancer was removed last year caused a gap between my right and left vocal chords when they move back and forth during speaking. On Friday, June 7, 2013, I had a procedure of injecting fatty tissue into my right vocal chord to close this gap. This should improve the raspiness in my voice and hopefully, improve my singing. I really want to sound like Frank Sinatra but my doctor doesn't think that's ever going to happen. Ha, ha, ha. I had a temporary injection of a jelly substance in January, the raspiness improved, and I think I was able to sing better. Well, at least I thought so. However, the jell was only temporary, a test to see if it would help. After about two months, the jell began to dissolve and my voice was raspy again and my singing degraded again. The test did prove to me that it was worth going through with the permanent fatty injection, which is what I received on Friday.

The fatty tissue that they used was from my stomach area near my belly button. When using ones own tissue in a procedure, there is no chance of it being rejected by our immune system. Unlike receiving a transplanted organ, in which you need to take anti-rejection medication to weaken the immune system so it does not destroy the new and foreign organ.

Well, guess how they got the fatty tissue from my stomach area? Lippo-suction!!! Can you believe that? I had lippo-suction! Ha, ha, ha.

When Dr. Young looked at my right vocal chord, she didn't like what she saw. There was a new lesion growing where cancer spots were removed last year. She was very disappointed and needless to say, so was I, when Chris told me after I awoke later. Dr. Young removed the lesion and continued with the fatty cell injection procedure as planned.

I am now on one week of total voice rest and will have follow-up appointments with Dr. Young. However, I know that after my week of voice rest, I am going to begin working on Sinatra's greatest hits! "Doobie-doobie-doo..."

NEXT TRIO SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

TRIO Support Group Meetings are held on the third Sunday of the month, except in the months of August, due to our picnic, and in the month of December, due to our Holiday Party. The meetings begin at 1:30 PM and alternate between Allegheny General Hospital, Snyder Auditorium and UPMC Montefiore Hospital LHAS Auditorium. Flyers are normally sent out before the meetings as well as being posted on the TRIO website. The next TRIO Support Group Meeting is at Allegheny General Hospital on Sunday, June 16 at 1:30.

SAVE THE DATE

The annual TRIO picnic is on Sunday, August 11, 2013

The location is the same as last year, Cecil Township Park, and the caterer is the same too, Mitch's Barbeque. More details to come as the date nears.

TO CONTACT TRIO-PITTSBURGH CHAPTER:

Phone: 412-647-7461 or 1-877-647-3439

Mailing address: UPMC Montefiore, 7 South / Attn. TRIO President / 3459 Fifth Avenue / Pittsburgh, PA 15213

For more information about TRIO Pittsburgh, visit the website at www.trio-pittsburgh.org

CURRENT TRIO-PITTSBURGH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mary Alice King (President), Rudy Molnar (Vice President), Rich Wegrzyn (Treasurer), Paul Armbruster (Secretary), Chris Armbruster, Joseph Cundiff, Shannon Flynn, Kathy Jacobs, Carol Foglia, Tom Meshanko, Evelyn Ozanich, Jo Anne Schwarz and Nancy Underwood.

DeeAnne Seeger recently resigned from the TRIO Board of Directors. DeeAnne is busily performing new and additional duties at Allegheny General Hospital and felt that she could not devote time to the board that she feels it deserves. Thank you DeeAnne for all your help, enthusiasm and commitment as a TRIO Board of Director.

CURRENT TRIO-PITTSBURGH CHAPTER HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Kareem Abu-Elmagd, Dr. Thomas Cacciarelli, Dr. Barbara Carpenter, Dr. Robert Kormos, Dr. George Mazariegos, Dr. Dennis McNamara, Dr. Srinivas Murali, Dr. Obaid Shakil Shaikh, Dr. Ron Shapiro, Dr. Thomas Starzl, Susan Stuart, Dr. Henkie Tan, Dr. Ngoc Thai, Dr. Kusum Tom and Dr. Steven Webber.

HAPPY APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

Melissa Bell: R: Heart: April 2006

Mike Currin: R: Kidney: 4-14-06 and 6-7-07

Eileen Pistelli: LD: Kidney: 4-19-10 to her Godson

Thomas A. Wilson III: R: Heart: 4-30-97 / Kidney: 11-10-00

HAPPY MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Kimberly Krebs: R: Kidney, bone marrow, islet cell: 5-25-94 / Pancreas: 8-15-00 / Kidney & Pancreas 12-29-11

David G. Simpson: R: Heart: 5-7-02

Matt Repasky: R: Kidney: 5-25-96

HAPPY JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

Mike Currin: R: Kidney: 4-14-06 and 6-7-07

James Farmer: R: Kidney: 6-28-11

Sandy Gallo: R: Kidney: 6-28-99

Timothy Grech: R: Heart: 6-16-10
Thomas J Meshanko: R: Heart: 6-13-09
Jim O'Neill: R: Kidney & Pancreas: 6-24-2009
Philip Rostek: R: Heart: 6-25-08
Lillian B. Ruby: R: Heart: 6-28-88
Sandra L. Waters: R: Liver: June 1996

STUDIES in PEDIATRIC LIVER TRANSPLANTATION (SPLIT)

An upcoming consortium meeting is planned for September 26 and 27 in Toronto, Canada. On Saturday, September 28 a special educational family day is being planned that will be of interest to parents of children with liver transplants. For more information of this worthwhile event go to:
www.splitannualmeeting.com

LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS for LIVER DISEASE

GREATER PITTSBURGH PBC (PRIMARY BILIARY CIRRHOSIS) SUPPORT GROUP

Meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Panera Bread – Waterworks Mall – Fox Chapel
For more information contact Ellen Kerber or email at kerber@kerbers.com

LIVING WITH HEPATITIS SUPPORT GROUP

Meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 330 South 9th Street, Main Bldg., Room 182
Pittsburgh, PA 15203 For more information, contact Jen Warner at 412-535-2670

WESTMORELAND COUNTY SUPPORT GROUP

Meets every other month on the 3rd Monday (Jan, March, May, July, Sept and Nov) at
Hempfield Church of Christ 144 Hugh Black Rd Greensburg, PA 15601
For more information contact Antonia or Mike Redigan at 724-423-5948 or antoniaredigan@hotmail.com

CIRRHOSIS ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP

Online cirrhosis support group at www.mdjunction.com/cirrhosis

For more information go to: AMERICAN LIVER FOUNDATION - WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER
at www.liverfoundation.org/chapters/westernpa/

KIDNEY SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

Sunday, 6/23 2:00 PM CRANBERRY SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Meets at Panera Bread, 20111 Route 19, Cranberry Twp, PA
Contact Nikki McKenna: 412-216-0144 or mckennanr@gmail.com

Sunday, 6/23 2:00 PM WESTMORELAND SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

Meets at King's Restaurant, Route 119, Youngwood, PA
Contact Diana Headlee-Bell: 724-292-9318 or dkbell1981@yahoo.com

For complete information on upcoming events go to: <http://www.wpakidneysupport.org>

In closing:

Fathers are like a lighthouse... when there is fog his children can always depend on seeing the light.
- Christy Borgeld

HAPPY FATHERS DAY!

Respectfully submitted by Paul Armbruster, TRIO Secretary