



**Transplant Recipient International Organization  
Pittsburgh Chapter  
February & March 2013 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 SUPPORT GROUP MEETING on FEBRUARY 17, 2013**

At the support group meeting last month I witnessed firsthand what TRIO is really all about. The meeting was held at Allegheny General Hospital. The planned guest speaker, Dr. Amresh Raina, was unable to attend. Joe Cundiff, a heart transplant coordinator at AGH, spoke on his behalf. Joe fielded questions regarding duties as a transplant coordinator, which are many. There were two new TRIO members present, Patty D'Ascenzo and her mother, Pat Crawford. Pat is a liver recipient who recently celebrated her one-year anniversary on March 9. Both Patty and her mom shared their experiences while waiting for "the call", going through the operation, and the recovery period post-transplant. As most of us realize, the road is long and has many turns and a few potholes as well. They both had many questions, which were not only answered by Joe, but by many in the group as well. The questions and concerns they had addressed the physical demands of the transplant and covered the costs of the medicines and health insurance. It was nice to see all the support provided to Patty and her mother. One member handed Patty her phone number and asked her to call her anytime. Seeing the support that was given made me feel proud to be a TRIO member.

**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 UPMC Montefiore Hospital in the LHAS Auditorium on **Sunday, March 17 at 1:30**. The guest speaker is Mike Leyritz, a Senior Transplant Account Manager for XDx, Inc. Mike will be talking about and taking questions regarding AlloMap testing.

**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](http://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, DeeAnne Seeger and Nancy Underwood.

## **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 FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

James Beggs: Recipient: Liver: 2-1-90  
Patty Dippold: Recipient: Heart: 2-16-08  
Mary Alice King: Recipient: Liver: 2-17-03  
Rudy Molnar: Recipient: Heart: 11-6-89 and 2-25-05

## **HAPPY MARCH ANNIVERSARIES**

Jane Barrett: Recipient: Kidney: 3-2-88  
Patricia Crawford: Recipient: Liver: 3-9-12  
Jeffrey S. Gill: Recipient: Heart: 3-3-10  
Anthony Pugliese: Recipient: Heart: 3-26-09  
Bonnie S. Richards: Recipient: Partial liver from son, Greg Takacs (Living Donor): 3-25-10  
John & Kathy Staniszewski: John (Recipient): Partial liver from his mother, Kathy (Living Donor): 3-12-07  
Steve Wicks: Recipient: Heart: 3-18-10

## **LEARNING EMPOWERMENT ANSWERS FORUM (LEAF)**

The Western PA Kidney Support Groups, in conjunction with West Penn Allegheny Health System, Renal Support Network and ESRD Networks 4, 9 & 10, sponsored a "Learning Empowerment Answers Forum" (LEAF) on Sunday, March 10, in observance of World Kidney Day. Over 100 people registered for the daylong symposium held at Allegheny General Hospital, which featured speakers from transplantation, dialysis centers, Medicare, CORE and Second Chance at Life.

## **CONGRATULATIONS TO TRIO MEMBER, TRACIE SABATINE**

The American Liver Foundation Allegheny Division chose Tracie Sabatine as one of their Honorees at their seventh annual "Tribute to Excellence" luncheon. The event was held on March 8 at the Fairmont Hotel. Tracie has been a Board member for the Allegheny Division ALF since 2007 and is currently the Vice Chair. She has been involved with many of their fundraising events, in particular, Flavors of Pittsburgh. Congratulations Tracie on a job well done.

## **"PSC PARTNERS SEEKING A CURE" NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The purpose of this conference is to provide a forum on the latest medical advances in the search for better treatments and a cure for primary sclerosing cholangitis and to offer PSC patients and caregivers the chance to network with speakers and fellow PSCers in an informal setting. The conference is held at the Pittsburgh DoubleTree Hotel on Friday, April 26 to Sunday, April 27, 2013. To register and for more information visit [pscpartners.org/nextannual](http://pscpartners.org/nextannual)

## **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](mailto: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](mailto:antoniaredigan@hotmail.com)

## CIRRHOSIS ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP

Online cirrhosis support group at [www.mdjunction.com/cirrhosis](http://www.mdjunction.com/cirrhosis)

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

### **Isabelle Christenson Memorial Scholarship 2013-2014**

The Isabelle Christenson Memorial Scholarship awards a scholarship to an individual or family member of someone directly impacted by organ donation including transplant candidates, recipients, their immediate family and donor family members.

The scholarship is funded through the Izzie's Gifts of Hope Foundation in memory of Isabelle Christenson. Izzie was spunky smart, feisty, caring and thoughtful. She loved Tinkerbell and the movie Annie. Izzie approached each day with a positive attitude and displayed a never give-up spirit that naturally drew people to her. During her short life Isabelle required two transplants. She received a stomach, liver, small bowel, duodenum and pancreas in 2004, when she was 6 years old, and a kidney transplant two years later. Isabelle's transplants were her "Gift of Life" and even at such a young age, she was a strong advocate for the importance of organ donation because Izzie was always looking out for others. Isabelle died when she was 10 1/2 years old, this scholarship honors her life, and helps carry out her dreams.

### **Scholarship Requirements:**

Be an organ transplant candidate, recipient, donor family member, or immediate family member of a transplant candidate or recipient. The applications must be postmarked by March 24th, Izzie's birthday.

For additional information on the scholarship you can go to [www.izziessgifts.org](http://www.izziessgifts.org) or email [izziessgifts@gmail.com](mailto:izziessgifts@gmail.com)

### **In closing:**

*May the leprechauns be near you,  
As you walk along your way.  
And may all the Irish angels  
Smile upon you this St. Patrick's Day.*



Respectfully submitted by Paul Armbruster, TRIO Pittsburgh Secretary

NOTE: Some people have told me that they have not been able to open attachments received by me. If you were able to open and read this newsletter, please reply to the email containing this newsletter with a simple "Got it".  
Thank you,  
Paul