

My husband, Chris donated back in 2020 and became active in the KDA community. Because of that, I've been around many living donors over the years, but wasn't necessarily called to donate myself until a few years ago. I was with my daughter attending an event at UC Health where Chris was speaking about donation to kidney patients and their friends and family. A woman in the audience got up and spoke about her dialysis group and how the group was getting smaller. It was in that moment that I realized I needed to do something to help.

Unfortunately, that was also the day that our daughter was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma, and so I made a promise to myself that when she was healthy, I would make that donation. Fast-forward through nearly two years of chemotherapy and a stem cell transplant and the doctor said she was cancer free.

I had done all my testing during that time so that when we got that news, I called UC Health and let them know I was ready to go. It only took a few days for them to find a match so in July of last year (2025), I donated my kidney to a stranger.

(Sidenote: our daughter is now one year post transplant and in full remission!)

When people hear about my donation, they will sometimes tell me how generous or brave I am. They will ask about my recovery and about how hard it might have been. Honestly, it just felt like the right thing to do and it wasn't all that hard. Truth be told, I have so many scars from broken wrists and blown out knees, that a couple of scars on my belly is not a big deal. And while it may not be for everyone, it is something that has changed my life in a positive way. I am grateful that I have had the chance to impact not just my recipient but his whole family. And also to have a positive influence on the community around me. Chris and I have had several friends who were curious about donation and after talking with us and attending a Kidney Convo in October, stepped forward and got tested to donate. We have two friends who donated within a week of each other, one to a family friend and the other to a stranger. And another friend set to donate soon! I am excited to keep spreading the word and increasing awareness of living donation, through the kidney Convo program, and through challenging but inspirational activities like the Rim-to-Rim. The ripple effect is real, and hopefully someday we can knock that waiting list down to zero!