

5K FOR TRANSPLANT SPEECH

Date: March 30, 2024

Speaker: Shreya Madan

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this 5K walk! My name is Shreya Madan, and I'm a freshman at Basis High School. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all of you who took the time to join us today.

First and foremost, I want to express my appreciation to **Ms. Hunnicut**, our HOSA sponsor, for her **unwavering support**. This event would not have been possible without her personal **interest** and **involvement**. I would also like to thank **Ms. Villareal** for the amazing biology teacher that she is and for being here. Additionally, I want to acknowledge **Ms. Parker**, our head of school at Basis Shavano, **Ms. Halfhill** at Basis Elementary for their support, and **Ms. Vicencio**, our school NJHS sponsor.

Organizing this event has been a humbling experience for me. I didn't realize how much work and assistance it would require to bring everything together. Along the way, I've also learned a great deal about organ transplantation, which brings us to the purpose of this walk – to raise awareness about **living donation** and discuss **transplantation**.

We are fortunate to have experts from the area here with us today, generously providing their time to educate us on this important topic.

Dr. Elizabeth Thomas is a transplant surgeon and the director of the living donor transplant program at UT Health. She is an amazing leader, and under her leadership, the program has doubled in size but more importantly, **she is an awesome surgeon who performs some super cool donor surgeries using robots.**

Next, we'll hear from my favorite **Dr. Hitchman**, the director of the histocompatibility lab. Dr. Hitchman is not only an expert in her field but also a living donor herself, having donated her kidney to a **complete stranger**. She was also very generous to let me work in her lab last summer, and she even agreed to deal with me again this summer, and if that does not show her resilience, her **hike on Mount Kilimanjaro** definitely does. She and other living donors climbed a difficult hike on Mount Kilimanjaro to prove that **great things can still be accomplished after living donation.**

We will also have a guest sharing her personal story, Ms. Adriana, someone who has **received the gift of life** through transplantation and is currently awaiting a second transplant. Her experiences will shed light on the challenges faced by those with organ failure and **the hope that transplantation provides** to thousands of people like her.

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to **Ms. Veronica Acosta** and **Ms. Shanna Puente** for their instrumental roles in organizing this event. Their attention to detail and expertise have been invaluable. Ms. Puente will provide us with an overview of the walk's rules and help us familiarize ourselves with the route and

water stations. Additionally, we'll be awarding medals to the first 25 finishers at the end of the walk.

None of this would have been possible without the **generous donation from Malu and Carlos Alvarez**, who have supported the University Transplant Center.

I also want to express gratitude to our volunteers who have **bravely rocked those ugly blue vests** and dedicated their time and effort to make this event a success– you guys are the fashion icons of the century!

I would also like to express my gratitude to the officers from the City of Shavano, particularly **Officers Schumacher and Nakazono**, for keeping us in check!

And last, but certainly not least, I would like to acknowledge my family, especially my mom who has guided me each step of the way.

Once again, thank you all for being here today, and let's make this walk a memorable and impactful event!

Let's start off with some words from Dr. Elizabeth Thomas