

Lynn Tetler's Story



In 1994 Essex resident Lynn Tetler's life changed dramatically. She felt tired and run down but with a busy schedule it was expected. No one realized the extent of her illness. She was diagnosed with Auto Immune Hepatitis. Her immune system had been attacking her liver as if it was a foreign body for around 10 years. She was given potent drugs to stop her immune system from attacking her liver, but after a year and half it was obvious that her liver was beyond repair, and she was put on the waiting list for a new organ. It was a hard blow to a married mother with a young child. She waited for six months and then, one day, out of the blue, the phone call came while Tetler was at work.

A liver was available, and she had to be in London in two hours. She did what any mom would do. She went to Holy Name to say good-bye to her 10-year-old son. "I said, I'm going now," she recalled. "I didn't know if I would be coming home again." Tetler's transplant surgery went well but her body started to reject her new liver after three days. "They were talking about a second transplant," she said, "and I was so sick and weak that I didn't want to do that again." Fortunately, one of the doctors took away a medication that she started taking prior to the transplant and that solved the problem. The process reversed itself and Tetler was fine. "And I haven't been sick for 12 years," she remarked. Now, she is living life to the fullest. She has seen her son grow into a young 22-year-old man. She recently retired after working full-time for 33-years and is looking forward to traveling with her husband (who has also recently retired) and spending time at their cottage. She enjoys gardening, bicycling, reading, and boating. She is also an advocate for organ donor awareness.

"We want to get the message out to as many people as possible because there are over 4,000 waiting in Canada for an organ," she said. Tetler stressed that it isn't enough to sign a donor card. You need to express to your family how important organ donation is to you and your wishes. People of all ages can donate. "Tell your family it's the most important thing and be aware that it works," Tetler said. "I'm living proof that it works. There are so many people who can be helped just by a single donation."

Tetler joined Tom Awad and Sport Fest Windsor group and participated in the Chatham leg of the London-Windsor Walk/Relay for Organ Donor Awareness. She participated in the 2008 Canadian Transplant Games in Windsor, competing in Women's Bicycle Racing and Women's 10-Pin Bowling. In 2005, she finished fourth at the World Transplant Games in Women's 20-kilometre bicycle race and fifth in Women's 10-Pin Bowling. She is fully aware of the gift that her donor gave to her. She doesn't know who the donor was or anything about him/her. "I thank them from the bottom of my heart," Tetler said. "There's not a day goes by that I don't think of them and thank them. I wish I could do something to thank them. All I can say is, thank you for life."

"Together we can Turn Tragedies into Miracles" by registering as a donor at www.beadonor.ca