



Contact: Erica Castellanos, Board of Directors
tf: (833) 486-5483 (ext 200) c: (760) 580-7440
e: erica@freetolive.org
w: www.freetolive.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

San Diego Kidney Donor Saves a Life and Launches Nonprofit To Help Other Living Donors Do The Same

San Diego, California, October 18, 2021 — San Diego resident, Glenn Cogan's journey as a living kidney donor will not be stopping at saving just one important life this October 25th, 2021, when he donates a kidney to his wife Lisa's cousin Kim in Dallas, Texas. That is because Glenn is not the type of person to sit idly by knowing there is a loophole that might be at least partly to blame for some of the 17 daily deaths for people on organ transplant waiting lists. "Money or financial situations should never delay a living organ transplant surgery or prevent a person from considering donating a lifesaving organ.", Cogan said. To help facilitate and simplify the process for living donors needing financial support with non-medical related expenses associated with donating a lifesaving organ, Glenn launched FreeToLive, a dba of the Living Donor Support Network, the nonprofit he officially registered as a 501(c)3 text exempt charitable organization on September 29th, 2021,. Glenn hopes his nonprofit will also encourage more potential living donors to consider donating an organ.

The idea to launch a nonprofit was put into motion on June 14, 2021, when Glenn's wife Lisa received a call from her aunt Karen delivering the devastating news that Lisa's cousin, one of Lisa's lifelong best friends, Kim, was diagnosed with end-stage, terminal kidney failure. Kim would need kidney transplant surgery to live. That night Glenn and Lisa filled out the online living donor application for UT Southwestern in Dallas, Texas, where Kim lives and where Kim's surgery would take place if she found a donor.

Unfortunately...Cogan said, "there are 650,000 people in the US today living with kidney failure, 470,000 are on dialysis, and 117,000 of these people are diagnosed with end-stage, terminal kidney failure, a diagnosis that allows them to be placed on the National Kidney Registry list, a list that adds 3,000 new names every month." Being on the list does not guarantee a person will get the lifesaving donor organ they need according to Cogan, "The average wait time to be matched with a donor is 3-7 years and, sadly, 17 people on this list die every day."

Kim is among the fortunate few to find a donor quickly. On August 19, after submitting to a battery of health and medical examinations, blood labs, kidney function tests, and a series CT scans, ultrasounds, MRI's over a two month period between CA and TX, UT Southwestern in Dallas called Glenn to let him know he was approved to donate, and told him he could call Kim to share the good news. Glenn said, a few weeks later, when the tears of joy and celebrations calmed down, he realized he hadn't thought once about how much it might cost to have his with him in Texas for the three-week pre-op, surgery and post-op period; he said, "I just knew I wanted to help Kim."

Glenn's UT Southwestern donor advocate provided him with information about a few great nonprofits that offer financial assistance to living donors with non-medical transplant-related expenses. However, Glenn fell into a loophole that disqualified him for financial aid. Glenn is a semi-retired, unemployed, full-time

student at San Diego State University working toward getting a Law Degree; being unemployed disqualified him for help from one of the options. Glenn said, the other foundation he contacted required him to have his recipient complete a financial disclosure, which he was not willing to do. Cogan said, "It didn't seem right to me that I should have to ask someone who was just diagnosed with end-stage, terminal kidney failure, who needs a kidney donor very soon to live, to fill out a financial disclosure to help me cover my expenses so I can give them a lifesaving organ, I couldn't do that."

As in Glenn's case, not every donor who wishes to donate a lifesaving organ is employed. The same employment requirement that disqualified Glenn for financial assistance as a living donor would also disqualify stay-at-home moms, people over 18 who are unemployed, or still at home, full-time students who cannot work and manage to keep up with schoolwork, retirees, etc. As for the requirement to obtain a financial disclosure from a recipient, this also seems like a difficult position for a living donor to be put in, let alone to put an organ recipient in, who is already dealing with a life and death struggle.

Something often not considered in the living donor transplant scenario is how the living donor will manage this commitment financially. Donating an organ requires a long transplant surgery, and there will be a recovery period. Medical technology and surgical advancements have nearly eliminated the risks of this surgery, but there is risk in any surgery. It is unlikely a donor would want to be alone, or away from his/ her family during the entire 3-4 week pre-op and post-op period. A donor would likely want his/her significant other, wife, or husband present, and if there are minor children in the donor's family, they will probably want to be where the family is for the surgery. The financial challenges of this process come into view when we consider the financial aspects associated with the living donor process.

Glenn needed to rent a home large enough to accommodate his family in Dallas, TX. Glenn is married and has (4) adult daughters and (2) adult sons. Glenn said, "All of my kids want to be in Texas together, with mom when I have surgery." The travel, accommodations, car rental, lost wages, and other expenses associated with Glenn's kidney donation surgery quickly added up to over \$12,000.

Glenn saw a loophole in the system for eager living donors that allowed healthy, willing living donors to be disqualified for financial assistance simply because they cannot afford the additional non-medical expenses associated with their donor transplant surgery, because they are not employed or, because they are not willing to add to their recipient's stress by asking them to complete a personal financial disclosure to help them with their expenses as a donor. Glenn wanted to fix that.

Glenn is resolute the nonprofit he created with the help of his wife, friends and neighbors, all of whom hold positions in well-known businesses and corporations, will one day help to save 10's of 1,000s of lives every year. He set a goal for himself and his nonprofit that while he will see the day soon that donor waiting lists for organs that can be donated by living organ donors will no longer exist.

Contact: Erica Castellanos, Board of Directors

tf: (833) 486-5483 (ext 200) c: (760) 580-7440

e: erica@freetolive.org

w: www.freetolive.org