

# THE BUFFALO NEWS

MY VIEW

## Everyone can be a hero by being a living donor

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JEANETTE OSTROM lives in Jamestown

Heroes walk into your life when you least expect them. On Tuesday, Dec. 28, my brother just may have walked into yours.

Anthony Caprino was born April 25, 1948. My parents soon discovered that he had cerebral palsy. Growing up with Anthony was no different than if he had been born able to walk. As a child, I wondered why people would

come to our home and "play" with him on the floor, putting crazy-looking metal things on his legs, telling him to just try putting one foot in front of the other.

But it was never to be. His sharp mind was full of wit and humor, making up for the body that would forever betray him. Although my mother devoted her life to Anthony, the illness finally took its toll and my parents were no longer able to care for him at home.

For many years he went to work at the resource center. Everyone there became family. They all loved Anthony; he could always make them laugh. Anthony was able to live in a group home for 20 years until a few months before his death, when he needed to go to a nursing home.

At 6 p.m. that Tuesday, Anthony slipped peacefully away. That night we received a call from Upstate New York Transplant Services. Because of Anthony, someone will be able to see, a burn victim will have new skin and a dialysis patient will get a much-needed graft to be used for treatments. Whatever else can be used to enhance someone's life will be used.

I can't tell you what it feels like to know that my brother will live on in others. For all of his suffering, what a gift he has given to stop the suffering of others.

But the story cannot stop here. Thousands of people are waiting for such gifts. Be it in the form of eyes, skin, bone marrow, kidneys or countless other organs and tissues that can be used to either enhance or save a life.

My son, Paul Cardinale, Anthony's nephew, is such a person. Paul is on a waiting list, along with 65,000 others, for a kidney. Waiting lists are long and people can wait up to five years for a cadaver kidney.

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But kidneys also can come from the living. Today's technology makes donating a kidney a less invasive procedure.

Please consider becoming a living donor. Be someone's hero - give someone a quality of life he is praying for.

I have to believe that God's master plan in giving people two kidneys when only one is needed was to ensure that no one would have to go without. Speak out, tell your friends and co-workers. Speak before your church group and any organization you belong to - spread the word. Live donors are desperately needed. There doesn't have to be a waiting list for a kidney. You can make a difference now, you can save a life.

If you would like more information about what you can donate as a living donor and how to go about it, please contact me at [rostrom@stny.rr.com](mailto:rostrom@stny.rr.com) or Upstate New York Transplant Services at <A HREF="mailto:info@unyts.org">info@unyts.org or call 800-227-4771. If becoming a living donor is not for you, call to find out how to go about signing a pledge card so that you can "walk in Anthony's shoes."

To the world, you may be just one person, but to one person, you just may be the world.

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