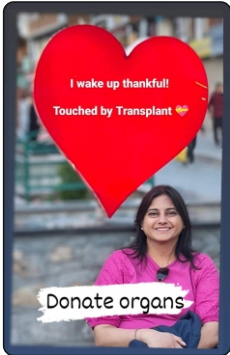


Recipient Speaks

Poonam Sharma
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While working on my doctoral studies at IIT Kanpur what started off as mild exhaustion and dismissed as anaemia in 2006, escalated making routine tasks impossible, and later progressed to stage 3 chronic kidney disease (CKD) by 2008. CKD however, isn't something you can outwalk with willpower alone. Despite my efforts, I had to drop out just short of completion in 2012.

After my diagnosis, my family did everything they could. My parents offered to donate their kidneys, but were found ineligible. Unlike the many stories I'd heard of relationships collapsing under pressure, one person stood by me unwaveringly from day one - my long-time friend who later became my life partner. At that time, we had no idea, deceased organ donation was even an option - until a family friend, a urologist introduced me to it and helped me get registered on the waiting list.

Each day became a test of patience as my health declined and uncertainty grew. The physical exhaustion was tough, but the emotional toll was worse. After more than 2 years of waiting and four unsuccessful calls, I finally received a transplant in 2014. I nearly missed my chance-not due to lack of donors, but because I didn't know such a path existed. That gap in

awareness, and the unethical shortcuts I was offered, still haunt me-but they also drive me to speak up and help others find the right way forward.

Guided by my nephrologist, I turned to MOHAN Foundation and I found my window of opportunity- their online Post Graduate Diploma in Transplant Coordination. I enrolled and trained to become a transplant coordinator but couldn't start at the hospital due to COVID restrictions. Today, I have been employed with MOHAN Foundation since 2022 as a Curriculum Coordinator. From being a student to now guiding others - it feels like life has come full circle. Now, I utilize my journey - from diagnosis to cure - to guide others through theirs. Words of my Nephrologist lingered with me, "After transplant, don't live in a shell - spread your wings." I took those words to heart. What began as simple travel became a deep passion for the Himalayas. From treks at altitude above 10,000 feet, visiting remote lakes (above 4500m) and high altitude passes (above 5300m), I've explored the country from Ladakh to Kanyakumari, Rann of Kutch to the Bay of Bengal. These experiences have taught the reality that life after transplant, is an opportunity to do what seemed impossible before. This second chance at life - granted by a generosity of a donor family - is truly a life worth living and is frequently a lot more verdant than the first.

This poem, written by me, is my small tribute to "The Life"

जीने की कितनी पुरजोर खाहिश है
हर साँस उम्मीद से लबरेज़
उमंगों भरा मन
आशा के तराने गाने को उसुक हृदय
आई थी दबे पाँव मौत दरवाज़े पर,
पर देख मेरे जीने की चाह सहमी सी वो लौट गई
जीने की तमन्ना, हर बार मौत से दो कदम आगे निकल गई
मौत भी तो जिंदगी की तरह बरहक है, आज नहीं तो कल मिलेगी मुझसे।।
इतना है वादा खुदसे
मौत के आगोश से पहले
जिंदगी से मेरी दोस्ती ना खत्म हो पाएगी
उदास लम्हों में भी आभार रहेगा तेरा ए जिंदगी
तूने हर पल इसे वीराने जीवन को रोशान रखा है।।

How Fierce is This Desire to Live
Every breath brims with hope,
A heart full of joy,
A soul eager to sing songs of aspiration.
Death came quietly, tiptoeing to my door-
But seeing my yearning to live,
It shrank back and left in silence.
This desire to live,
Each time, stepped two paces ahead of death.
And death-like life itself-is certain,
If not today, then someday, it will come to meet me.
I've made this promise to myself:
Before I surrender to death's embrace,
My friendship with life will not be broken.
Even in my saddest moments,
I will remain grateful to you, O Life-
You've kept this desolate soul alight, every single moment.

- Translated with the help of ChatGPT



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