

Karen McDermott - A New Life!

Written by Administrator
Tuesday, 12 April 2016 16:38 -

Karen McDermott writes:

" My name is Karen McDermott mother of 2 from Clonakilty in West Cork.

In October 2011 I attended my local gp because I was feeling unwell. I felt bloated and unable to eat. After initial diagnosis Of acid reflux it progressed that I needed a chest X-ray. In January 2012 The X-ray noted that my heart was enlarged too much for a 37 year old female. After spending months in Cork hospital it was diagnosed that I had end stage heart failure due to cardiomyopathy and mitral valve disease.

This was a blow to me and my family but we remained positive especially when I was transferred to Dublin and put on the heart transplant list in June 2012. My heart was pumping only 16% and I had icd and pacemaker fitted to get me to Transplant.

Being on the waiting list was something that I would never wish upon anyone but unfortunately there are still many waiting on organs. It is a difficult time as it is your every thought and especially as you become weaker everyday that passes.

I was finding it so difficult to do everyday tasks. Even having a long conversation was hard and I'm a chatter box! Standing brushing my teeth was too much and on one occasion there was an emergency ambulance drive to cork hospital because I had lifted a 3 litre milk drum from one side of my sisters kitchen to the other side. Maybe 8 steps. I used a wheelchair to get me about because walking any distance always set off my icd or pacemaker.

In August, I got a call that a heart was available for me. After a long trip to Dublin from Clonakilty with the whole town behind me we prayed for a good result that night but unfortunately it did not go ahead.

I felt so sorry for the donor family but worse for mine as they were so excited and scared and we headed back down the road that night.

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I was blessed to get a second call a week later. And again with family and friends and the amazing hands and care of the mater hospital staff I am here today.

It was a rocky recovery at the start but I always remained positive and had a good outlook. I have great faith and I believe that I was protected through all of it and it all happened me for good reasons.

Since my transplant I have had a new life. The first year was rocky. I developed pneumonia and had skin infection called cellulitis. Yes the medications do have their negative affects but overall I am doing very well.

I am in a new relationship which would never have happened only for my donor. My kids get to see me being active, being at work, helping with many volunteering groups and just being plain annoying mammy.

I try to be as active as possible and this year to honour my donor I am participating in the European Heart and Lung Transplant Games in Finland.

When I was well I used to play badminton now I want to show the world that organ donation works because I'll be back on that court more eager than ever and definitely more proud. I've gone from wheelchair to playing a match. How good is that! "

Thanks Karen for sharing your story.