



DANIELLE DELGADO

Liver Recipient

“Because of my liver transplant, I have learned not to take life for granted.”

At eight weeks old, I was diagnosed with biliary atresia, a disease in which the bile ducts that work with the liver have abnormal openings, eventually leading to liver failure. My parents were told that I would need a liver transplant to survive.

Prior to my transplant I needed constant care. When I was sick I couldn't eat solid foods or gain weight, and I suffered from jaundice. My mom fed me intravenously with food called TPN which caused me to be very bloated. She felt like she had become a nurse.

During the time I was on the waiting list, my parents wore beepers that alerted them when a liver was available. I received “the call” from twice for potential liver transplants. The first time they were “beeped”, my mother and I were whisked to UCLA Medical Center on a helicopter and landed on the hospital's roof. Hours later my mother was told that the liver's configuration wouldn't work with my body. My mom said that was fine – she'd rather wait to find me the perfect liver that would function best with my body. My dad drove us back home to San Diego.

At nine months old, on Mother's Day of 1999, I received a life-changing split-liver transplant at the UCLA Medical Center. My mom said that was the best Mother's Day present she could ever have. In a split liver transplant, the donor's liver is divided and given to two recipients. The other portion of the liver was given to an older woman. My donor was an 18-year old male who was hit by a car while rollerblading. Even though his death was a horrible tragedy for his family and friends, it was a miracle for mine.

I'm very involved with my school, playing field hockey, acting in my school's play, and singing in afterschool women's choir. Every summer I enjoy going to The Painted Turtle camp, a camp for children faced with life-threatening and chronic illnesses. I have met a lot of other people with organ transplants there that I see year after year.

Because of my liver transplant, I have learned to not take life for granted. I am truly thankful for the liver transplant I received and the donor who saved my life. I have had a very healthy and wonderful life. I am thankful for every day God gives me.

For more Stories of Hope, visit www.donateLIFeCalifornia.org/storiesofhope.

