



JULIE'S STORY

After 28 years living with Type I Diabetes, I developed severe hypoglycemic unawareness that caused hypoglycemic seizures. I lived in constant fear. My children were scared for me (and of me) and my husband didn't sleep at night because he was worrying about me and always checking on me. I could be fine one minute, and the next minute my children would be telling me to check my blood sugar because of my erratic behavior. I had three car accidents due to hypoglycemia, and could no longer drive. My doctors told me again and again, that it was not a matter of 'if', but a matter of 'when' the hypoglycemic seizures would either cause permanent brain damage, or kill me.

Then I heard about 'Islet Cell Transplant'. I called UW Hospital and spoke to Nancy, my nurse coordinator, several times. I had a clinical visit with Nancy, Dr. Odorico and Dr. Fernandez in January 2004. They, and the transplant, changed

my life. Their care, understanding and expertise in this area is unrivaled. I had not found any endocrinologists until I met this team who really, really understood what I was going through.

Because my pancreas donor took the time to share their wishes to be an organ donor, I have a new lease on life. I no longer live in fear of injuring myself from a seizure or causing injury to others. I am off insulin for the first time in 28 years! I have a freedom I have not experienced in 17 years when the seizures started. I now know I will be around to see my children graduate from school, and I will see my grandchildren one day. I have hopes and dreams I have not dared to think about. I can live for the future for the first time in a long time, and most importantly, my son, who was diagnosed with Type I diabetes three years ago, has a possible choice in his future. Should the need arise; there is hope for him to have a better, stronger future. Just like his mom.

If you chose to become a donor:

- Answer “yes” to the organ donor question on your driver’s license renewal application.
- Sign your license or ID card.
- **Tell your family** about your decision, to help ensure your wishes are honored.

For more information on organ donation, visit uwhcpo.org.

