

Florence teacher needs kidney donation

By TONY REED Siuslaw News | May 31, 2024



A long-time Florence grade school teacher is in need of a living kidney transplant to avoid the possibility of having to undergo dialysis treatment for a hereditary disease.

Charlene Wilson started her teaching career in 1972 and moved to Florence in 1974, and taught first through 6th grade for 25 years. She has a hereditary disease called Polycystic Kidney Disease.

“My mother died from it,” she said, “and my sister got a transplant and she has it also.”

Wilson explained that her sister was able to receive a deceased kidney transplant, and was difficult to match because of her antibody count.

“She got it two years ago in August,” she said, explaining that the transplant does not stop the disease but makes it livable with medication. “It’s pretty harsh medication, a lot of prednisone. When you take prednisone, you really bloat up and it’s very hard on your body.”

However, patients are soon able to travel and eat regular food following a transplant and treatment.

“My life has really changed since my kidney function has gone down,” she said, adding that she eats a lot of vegetables and drinks a lot of water.

“There are a lot of times where I don’t feel good,” she said. “If I do something or eat something I’m not supposed to, I really don’t feel good after that.” She said she also has a lot of skin irritation, possibly due to her body’s inability to flush toxins.

“I pretty much stay home,” she said, later noting that she has taken up watercolor painting.

Asked what will happen if she cannot find a donor, Wilson said she will have to undergo dialysis.

“I’m at stage 4 right now,” she said, “So I will go on dialysis soon, but that’s why I’m really strict with my diet and drinking a lot of water, so I can try to put it off as long as I can. I don’t want to go on dialysis.”

She said her mother was on dialysis for 17 years, but was able to do so at home. She will have to undergo hemodialysis, which is more exhausting and restrictive.

A donor

Asked what requirements a donor would have to meet, Wilson said it isn't always restricted by blood type. Saying she is O positive, Wilson explained that she can receive from some other blood types and options are available, including kidney paired donation (KPD).

Asked if donating a kidney would incur cost upon the donor, her supplement would pay for testing, which can be done here in Florence.

"When it comes time for the kidney, they have to go up to Oregon Health and Science University [Portland,]" she said. "I can't do anything right now, but what I would like to do is start a gofundme account or something. I'm not allowed to help [the donor] and I'm not allowed to give any money out, by law." She said the account could potentially pay the donor's expenses, which could include a few days in the hospital in Portland, a caregiver, travel and so forth.

How to help

Information for prospective donors can be found at [ohsulivingdonor.org](https://ohsu.org/livingdonor)

Wilson has also printed posters and would appreciate any businesses willing to host one on windows and bulletin boards. To help or donate, please send an email to kidney4char@gmail.com

"Life is still good," she said, "I'm just trying to live every day that I can."