

Local woman needs kidney to live a long life

By Mark PavilonsEditor

A local woman is struggling with a medical condition that could cut her life short. But Schomberg's Jodie Wilson, who works at Tru Country, retains a positive outlook. Those who know her attest to her friendly and helpful nature, hiding the fact she suffers from a rare kidney disease known as Focal Segmental Glomerular Sclerosis (FSGS). This rare disease causes scarring of the kidneys leading to kidney failure and death. FSGS can only be treated with dialysis or kidney transplant. Doctors told her she wouldn't make it to 30 but Jodie is 31 this year. She is in urgent need of a live donor to extend her longevity. The community has rallied around her with social media posts about her and her condition. Jodie explained that currently, she doesn't have much limitation. "I just do what I gotta do to keep on going." She pointed out she was born with renal failure but it wasn't until she was 16 when she went for a kidney biopsy and discovered she had FSGS. "It's been alright living with this disease; I have my up and downs." She hasn't reached the stage where she's heading for dialysis and so the live donor option is one of the best. She retains hope, and was grateful to have found someone who's willing to go through the process. But it's a considerable one. According to the University Health Network (UHN), a kidney transplant is the treatment of choice for individuals experiencing kidney failure. Many patients currently on the waitlist for a deceased donor kidney have a long and difficult road ahead. Living donation offers a shorter pathway to transplantation. They have the largest kidney transplant program in Canada and the UHN team is dedicated to helping patients through every stage of a successful transplant, offering transplant services to patients with even the most complex medical conditions. They are also home to Canada's largest kidney living donor program, providing exceptional patient care and achieving excellent results for recipients and donors. They've done more than 5,000 kidney transplants since the program started over 50 years ago, and more than 1,600 living donor transplants since 1966. To become a Living Kidney Donor, you first have to apply, and complete a form. After it's submitted, the donor assessment office will review your health history and then ask you to attend an educational session. It moves on from there. For more, visit https://www.uhn.ca/Transplant/Living_Donor_Program/Pages/living_kidney_donor.aspx. Sadly, Jodie doesn't have support from her parents. Both died when she was younger and she's pretty much on her own. The Angus native attended Banting in Alliston through Grade 11 when her dad became ill and passed away in August of 2010. "Between all of this I had to go to the kidney doctors and I had a kidney biopsy and found out I had FSGA at that time. It was a new kidney disease no one really knew about its impact on kidney filters. Weeks later, her mom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and she passed away in 2014. "The last 2 years of my high school I went to school and had to take care of my mom. I was at stage 2 and as the years went on my kidneys kept declining. "Fast-forward to last year and Jodie and her boyfriend were in a serious car accident outside of Tottenham. Her kidneys kept failing and as of December 2023, they were at 14%. Physicians felt she was a perfect candidate for a transplant and the process began in January of this year. She is o-positive and her kidney output rose a few percentage points. Now it's a bit of a waiting game to see if there's a willing donor and a match for her. Local friends launched the social media post and customers keep coming in to check on her progress. Check out the UHN Living Donor site and for more, email Jodie at jodiew219@gmail.com