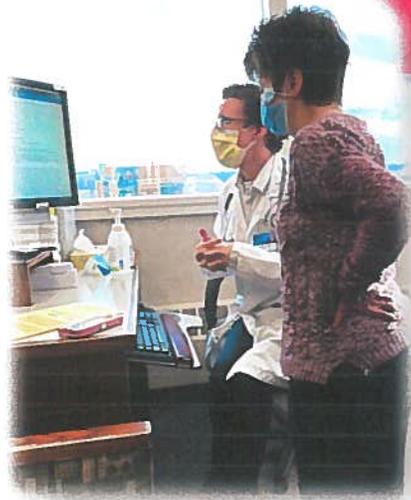
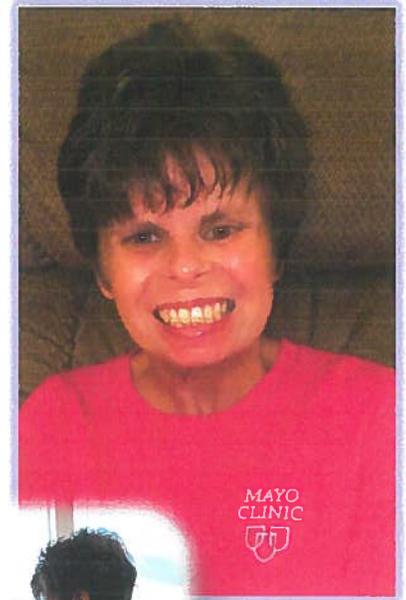


## Hope For Holly



New Year's greetings from Holly Jernigan and her parents!!

Dear friends and family,

It's been a challenging year for Holly Jernigan. First, because of Covid, Holly was unable to continue working at Rolla High School; a job she loves. She stays connected with occasional visits and many cards and letters from the staff and students at the school.

Then this fall, her blood work showed that her one (and only) kidney is failing, and she enters the New Year hoping to receive a transplanted kidney from a living donor.

Holly was born with one kidney due to having Williams Syndrome, a genetic condition that brings with it a host of medical issues, including kidney disease. Over time, that has gotten worse, causing her kidney to not work well enough to keep her alive. This is what she faces now, and her treatment options are limited to dialysis or a kidney transplant.

Dialysis treatments would be three times a week, for approximately four hours at a time, and she would remain on a really restrictive diet (*some* vegetables, *some* fruits and

white rice) for the rest of her life; a diet she is on now and which she finds difficult to handle. A transplant would offer her more freedom and the ability to live a longer, healthier, more normal life.

In November, we went to the Mayo Clinic to explore a possible transplant for her. Holly had to be approved by a team of doctors at their Transplant Center. This was after a series of tests that would challenge anyone's outlook, but Holly remained upbeat. The Transplant Team met just after Christmas, and found her to be an eligible candidate for a transplant. We received that approval letter just as 2020 ended.

Now we wait, and time is not on our side. Finding a kidney is not easy. Just ask the 100,000+ people like Holly who are on the waiting list for a deceased donor kidney. Some wait for years; many die while waiting. Doctors tell us that the average wait time is 3 to 5 years for a kidney from a deceased donor.

So the next, and best, option is trying to find a kidney from a living donor.

For Holly, a kidney from a living donor is the best of all her options. A living donor improves her chances for long-term success with the new kidney. A kidney from a living donor typically lasts longer and has better function. And, the transplant could happen a lot sooner, hopefully before her kidney fails completely. The transplant team tells us that if we can find a kidney for her before she is forced to begin dialysis, her chances of a successful transplant increase dramatically.

You might not know a lot about donation from a living donor – we didn't before kidney disease affected her life. We know more now from talking with the Transplant team. Asking a family member or a friend to consider donating a kidney to Holly is difficult for her and us, but it greatly improves her chances.

We certainly understand a donor will face fears about the surgery and have questions about what living with one kidney will mean for them. Here's some basic information about kidney donation that we received from the National Kidney Foundation:

- You only need one kidney to live a healthy, long life.
- Most donor surgery is done laparoscopically, meaning through tiny incisions.
- The recuperation period is usually fairly quick, generally two weeks.
- The cost of your evaluation and surgery will be covered by our insurance. The hospital can give you extensive information on this.
- You will have a separate team of healthcare professionals to evaluate you as a living donor. Their job is to help you understand the risks and benefits and look out for YOUR best interests.

You can also learn more about living donation on the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) website: [www.kidney.org/livingdonation](http://www.kidney.org/livingdonation) or by contacting the NKF's free, confidential helpline at [855.NKF.CARES \(855.653.2273\)](tel:855.NKF.CARES) or [nkfcare@kidney.org](mailto:nkfcare@kidney.org). If you want to talk to someone who's already donated a kidney, NKF can also help.

You can also initiate the process, and get more detailed questions answered, by contacting the Mayo Clinic's living donor coordinators via the donor website: [mayoclinic.org/livingdonor](http://mayoclinic.org/livingdonor) and click the link to the Health History Questionnaire, or talk to them by phone at 866-227-1569.

We are confident that Mayo will take excellent care of you, and be thorough and cautious in discovering if you are a good candidate for the process, just as they have been with Holly.

Holly is *hopeful*, as we seek to find a living donor before she would have to begin dialysis. Unfortunately, we don't know how much time that gives us. The docs do blood work often to monitor her kidney function, and we watch for symptoms of actual kidney failure. And, in an effort to urge a little more function out of her failing kidney, we have her on the restrictive diet recommended. But while that diet has caused her blood work to stabilize somewhat, we are struggling to keep her strength up, as she has lost 13 pounds in less than two months.

Please know that even though she is excited about the prospect of getting a new kidney, Holly still places the care of others first. So she would not, and does not want, anyone to consider this if it is too hard to contemplate. She still loves you!

Thank you for taking the time to read Holly's story. If donating a kidney to Holly is something you would like to consider, we would be happy to tell you more and help determine if you might be a match for Holly.

Holly, and we, know that living donation may not be right for everyone — but you can still help! Please consider being an organ donor after death.

Also, please help Holly by sharing her story with everyone you know. At the very least she wants to bring awareness to kidney disease and living donation.

She is hopeful her efforts will help her receive a new kidney. She would like to be able to drink hot chocolate again (a "no-no" right now)! A transplant would also give her more time to do the fun things she enjoys most, like spending time with, talking with and sharing hugs with family and friends.

Thank you for letting us share our story with you,

HOLLY  
Buck Floyd

Floyd's cell (573) 647-1285

