Sean Gomes: Organ Donor X 2

If you are looking for an extraordinary New Year’s resolution, here is an inspirational story that may give you a new view of being an organ donor.

Sean Gomes, Finance Systems Manager with the Treasurer-Tax Collectors Office, is a living organ donor. He has donated not once, but twice to family members: a kidney to his father-in-law and liver to his cousin.

Sean is sharing his story in hopes others will consider this incredible gift.

Q. Why did you decide to be an organ donor?
A. I figured if I could help save or prolong a life, why not do it? I always had the donor sticker on my driver’s license, so when the opportunity presented itself to be a ‘living donor,’ and for a family member, it was an easy choice.
Q. Why become a living donor?
A. My first donation came about because my wife Maria wasn’t able to donate a kidney to her father. I turned out to be a match for the donation which gave him another seven years of life. We had a good relationship before that, but after that we had an even stronger bond.

Q. How did you prepare to be a donor and what was the process and recovery like?
A. The kidney donation was the easier of the two. The liver donation was more of a life changer. The doctors required a change in diet and I had to lose 10 pounds to be considered. They also told me to train like I was running a marathon, so I was running a few miles a day. I really think that helped with the recovery.

The process was long with many scans, tests, lots of blood work and a liver biopsy.

Recovery after the kidney donation was pretty easy with little change in my activities. The recovery from the liver donation was much harder. I was out of work for eight weeks and worked half days for an additional two weeks. The incision was just below the rib cage and went almost all the way across. They have to cut through the stomach muscles, so the recovery took more time. I have resumed all the activities I did before surgery and feel normal.

Q. How does your wife feel about your donations?
A. She was a bone marrow donor to a patient with Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, so she understood why I wanted to do it. She was thrilled that I would be able to help her dad with the kidney; a bit more nervous with the liver donation as I was older. She was very supportive and a great nurse!

Q. What do you say when asked about organ donation and how to make the decision to do so?
A. It is a life changing decision each person has to feel comfortable in making. For me it was for family members, so it was an easy decision to make. I am a spiritual person, so I prayed for guidance and knew I wasn’t taking the journey alone.
2020 Brings New Board Chair, Focus on Issues

This week kicks off a new year for the Board of Supervisors. That means a new Chair for the panel and this year, Third District Supervisor Chris Lopez was selected.

During this 'changing of the guard,' outgoing Chair Supervisor John Phillips shared County accomplishments from his year in the center seat of the dais before being thanked by his colleagues.

In accepting his new duties, Lopez gave a brief rundown of some of the key issues he will be focusing on: housing, housing insecurity and homelessness; infrastructure, access to healthcare, animal services and First 5 and the services it provides to children and families.

He also gave a shout out to the County’s 5,400 employees.

"I know I can’t achieve any of the goals I’ve laid out without the help of the County family," says Lopez. “So to the 5,400 employees who help us every single day, I want you to know that my door remains open. I know my schedule will be a little fuller this year with everything I have going on, but I also understand that without you, none of this is possible."

And with that, the new year of service begins.

Natividad Names Physician of the Year

Congratulations to Dr. Christopher Burke, Natividad’s 2019 Physician of the Year.

Dr. Burke has served as Medical Director of Natividad’s Emergency Department for three years and has been with the hospital for 20.

“One of the core areas of Physician of the Year is Leadership, and Dr. Burke leads by example,” said Chad Harris, MD, Natividad’s Chief of Staff and Chief Medical Information Officer.

“We are always available to help patients through some of the worst days of their lives, whether it be a life-saving procedure or merely holding their hands and reassuring them they are well,” said Dr. Burke. “I love teaching the Family Medicine Residents. It is inspiring to be part of the tradition of shaping the next generation that will continue to improve our patients' lives.”
Library Resources Highlighted on State Website

You may know the Monterey County Libraries as a great source for the latest books, music and fun activities, but the Library is also renowned for its historical and cultural preservation.

Monterey County was selected as a County of the Month towards the end of 2019 by the California History Section of the California State Library.

As a County of the Month, Monterey County was featured on the History Section’s webpage with a description of the area and a link to a research guide. The guide highlights what types of resources about county history are available (digital, maps, documents, etc.) at the State Library in a well-formatted and easy to use form.

But knowing there is much more out there, the guide provides links for researchers to our local libraries which have significant collections as well as local organizations involved in local cultural preservation. You can see the research guide here.

Tell Us About It!

The County Newsletter is a great place to share personal as well as department successes and milestones. Have a hobby, volunteer passion, talent or major life event you’d like to share? Tell us about it! Send your stories and suggestions to Maia Carroll.