



## Welcome to the first edition of the Companion!

The Companion is the official newsletter of the *Transplant Companions* program. This quarterly publication is aimed at keeping in touch with participants of the *Transplant Companions* program, including those who may be awaiting a transplant as well as their families and health care professionals. Each issue will highlight new developments within the program, personal stories and useful information on kidney transplantation.

If you wish to add your name to the Companion's mailing list, please email your request to [info@transplantcompanions.ca](mailto:info@transplantcompanions.ca), fax the reply form below to (514) 288-5680 or simply drop the form in the mail. We hope to hear from you soon.

## Facilitator's Corner

An Olympian Challenge by David Smith, Edmonton



I am very excited to have been given the opportunity to be involved with the *Transplant Companions* program since the beginning stages. I really feel that it is such a great program offered to those struggling with the decision of dialysis and transplantation. I know personally what they are going through, as I was diagnosed with kidney failure in 1994, and was on dialysis from September 1996 until receiving a kidney from my brother on February 18th 1997 (ironically on family day).

Before going on the waiting list, I knew there was some information available for those contemplating an organ transplant, but it was not in such a neat package as the *Transplant Companions*. Major surgery can always be intimidating as well as the feeling of going through it alone. By bringing the potential recipients together in a classroom and explaining to them all of the steps required to get you from where you are now, to where you will be after surgery is very empowering. It helps the patients by letting them see others

in the same situation as themselves, and gives them the feeling that they are not going through it alone. In a classroom situation they are able to ask questions on subjects which they are not clear on, and are able to listen to the questions of others. I know when I am telling my story of pre- and post-transplant life; many of those in the classroom will smile and nod their head when I touch on a situation they have been through themselves. The patients are often surprised to hear of all of the things, myself and other transplant recipients have accomplished since being transplanted. I tell them about participating in the first two Canadian National Transplant games, as well as having the opportunity to go to the last two World Transplant games and all of a sudden they are excited to think about their own possibilities for the future.

Many have come up to me after the course is over and thanked me for giving them new hope for the future. That makes me feel great inside to be able to help and inspire others who are going through the same thing I did. The smile on their faces says it all.

After just returning from the 14th World Transplant Games in France this summer with two silver medals, I can't help but remember the over 1500 wonderful recipients who all met for one common goal, to show the world that transplants work.

When I was sitting in a reception area for the transplant clinic just a while ago, one of the ladies I had spoken to about 6 months ago in a previous class, came up to me and told me she had just been transplanted and everything was going great. Her smile would light up a room.



**Please complete the following:**

Would you like to be included on our confidential mailing list?    yes     no   
 How would you like to receive information?                            email     mail

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interest in the program:**

- I am interested in participating in an interactive workshop.
- I am interested in becoming a facilitator.

**Are you a:**

- Patient awaiting a kidney transplant
- Kidney recipient
- Potential kidney donor
- Health care professional
- Patient on dialysis thinking about transplantation
- Kidney donor
- Friend or relative of a patient
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Where or how did you hear about the *Transplant Companions* program?**

- Nurse
- Relative/Friend
- Poster
- Brochure
- Newsletter
- Nephrologist
- Social worker
- Surgeon
- Patient
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Transplant Coordinator
- Internet
- Media (TV/Print)
- Kidney Foundation

My information can be provided to Fujisawa Canada, Inc., to assist with the

*Transplant Companions* is funded through an educational grant from Fujisawa Canada, Inc. and is operated by MECA MedComm. All information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential and will never be sold to any other company. Your information will not be given to any other company, except third party services providers, which Fujisawa has retained to assist with the manage-

# Results from the pilot program

After almost 3 years of research and development, *Transplant Companions* organizers were anxious to know what the transplant community thought about the program. A total of 22 facilitators (health care professionals and kidney recipients) and 255 individuals participated in the pilot workshops and completed evaluation forms to record their feedback. The results were extremely positive. Participants came from the Royal Victoria Hospital (Montreal), St. Michael's Hospital (Toronto), University of Alberta (Edmonton) and through Vancouver General Hospital and the British Columbia Transplant Service (Vancouver). The Kidney Foundation of Canada also played an important role in helping to recruit facilitators and participants for the pilot phase.

All of the program elements received high ratings with the patient workbook receiving the highest scores. Kidney recipients and health care professionals who acted as facilitators both ranked the program to be at a high level. As for some minor differences, the patient facilitators preferred that the actual session last a bit longer and they also liked the homework section. Overall, participants wanted to get more information on living donation and they suggested that adding some light humour would be a welcome addition to the workbook. This feedback was then incorporated into the revised version of the material.

The pilot workshops have proven to be a very effective way to reach out and help the transplant community, whether they be pre-transplant patients, nurses, transplant coordinators or family members. Testimonials indicated how helpful and necessary these workshops are.

## A new name

Through the process of testing, reflection and evaluation the program has also undergone a name change from "*Transplant Friends*" to "*Transplant Companions*". It is felt that *Transplant Companions* more closely reflects the helpful role that the program will strive to play in the years ahead.

## Where are we going

New hospital centres are now being recruited. Due to the nature of the program, facilitators undergo special training on how to organize and conduct a workshop. As a result, only a select number of transplant centres can be added to the program each year. For more information on the locations of participating centres contact: 1 866 446-3030.

## Thank you!

The *Transplant Companions* program team along with everyone at Fujisawa Canada, Inc. would like to thank the steering committee, pilot centres sponsors of the program, and the members of their transplant teams, the facilitators and especially the individuals who participated in this innovative patient education program. We appreciate their interest and commitment and are confident that their effort will grow to be an exceptional learning resource.

## Quick facts

### The Mighty Kidney!

Did you know that about one litre of blood enters your kidneys every minute?

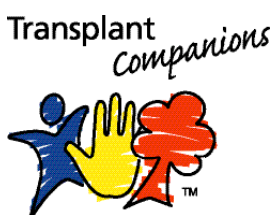
### What's in a Name?

Most medications have two names. The 'generic' name is the scientific drug name. The trade or brand name is the marketing name given to the drug by its manufacturer.

## Answers to your questions

**Q: Do kidneys from living donors come from immediate family members only?**

**A: Living donor transplants have increased in the past several years. Kidneys from living donors usually come from immediate family members. However, extended family, spouses and friends can also be donors.**



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