

## EXPERIENCES OF A TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT

### Scott Young, Double Lung Transplant Recipient

#### Summary of Comments

I want to capture the essence of what organ donation has meant to me. I hope to reinforce how wonderful a gift it was, when Debbie Morrison donated Taiya's organs. And I hope to remind all of us why we are really here this week-end.

I was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at the age of four. At that time I was told I would not likely live beyond age 12. My early childhood was normal. Hockey was my passion. From the moment I first skated out on the ice at the age of five, I dreamt of being a professional hockey player. Unfortunately, my disease caught up with me. My lungs started to fail. The cold arena air caused me to cough. I became easily winded and desperately gasped for breath. My hockey days were over. When that dream died, so did a part of me.

I went on the transplant waiting list in 1991, at the age of 25. I was dying. My only hope for survival was a double lung transplant. For fourteen long months I waited, not knowing if or when a suitable donor would be found. My hope was mixed with feelings of guilt; knowing that for me to live, someone else had to die. After two false alarms, a suitable set of lungs was found and I was successfully transplanted.

Today, life after transplant is wonderful. Just living would be enough but there has been so much more. I'm back playing hockey. For 11 years I had not stepped foot on the ice and I thought I never would again. For 11 years part of me was missing. Well I'm whole again. I no longer dream about hockey, I play it. Every time I walk from the dressing room and head out to the ice, I think of my donor and his family and I thank them for their strength in adversity - for giving me the opportunity to once again live life to its fullest. I also think about people like you who are fighting to increase organ donor awareness. I think of Sandoz (Novartis) and The Mutual Group for giving vital support to this cause and I think of groups like The Kidney Foundation of Canada, of which I am a member, for showing such dedication to finding a way to increase organ donation. I'm alive today because of the synergy that is created by all of the groups and individuals involved in organ donor awareness. I don't want to lose any more friends because a donor can't be found. I don't want to see anyone needlessly suffering on dialysis because a donor can't be found. I don't want to give up the fight. By increasing organ donation, we give children the opportunity to grow and parents the opportunity to see them grow. We give families special time together. We give friendships memories, fun, joy and laughter. We give life and I don't think there is any greater thing that we could do.