

Lung transplant saved Scott's life and now he fights for others

By JEFF MAHONEY
The Spectator

SCOTT YOUNG looks like he's got enough puff in him to blow up the Goodyear blimp.

At 30, he's an avid hockey player, robust-looking and more physically fit than he has ever been. But two years ago he had to be attached to an oxygen machine 24 hours a day.

If he had been born a few years earlier, he probably never would have seen the ripe old age of 28. But a double lung transplant in May 1992 not only kept him alive, it transformed his life.

Which brings us to the Hamilton-Wentworth Lung Association's annual art auction this Friday. It is one of the association's main fundraisers and Mr. Young is a volunteer organizer.

He knows better than just about anyone the value of the research the association helps finance.

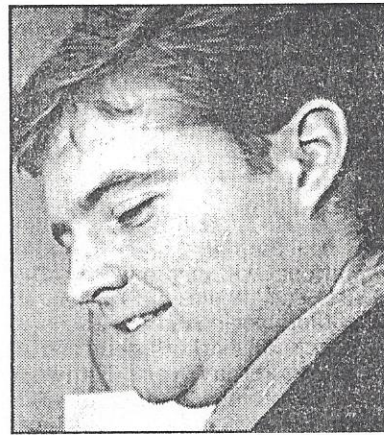
The auction, at the Hillcrest, 510 Concession St., Hamilton, will feature the work of local artist E. Robert Ross, though there will be works by many others as well.

Mr. Young, who has suffered from cystic fibrosis all his life, says he was fine until he reached the age of 16 or 17, when he went into a slow decline.

"By the time I was 25, my lungs had deteriorated a lot and I was in and out of the hospital constantly with lung infections," says Mr. Young, who lives in west Hamilton.

In March 1991, his name went on the lung transplant waiting list. "By that time, I had to be put on oxygen 24 hours a day," he says. Fourteen months later the operation was performed.

"Since then, things have been wonderful. I got back to doing a lot of physical things I did when I was younger. I play hockey now. Before, physical activity was not in



Scott Young: plays hockey

the cards. It's a horrible feeling being not able to breathe enough air. It was like breathing through a straw.

"The first double lung transplant ever was in 1986. Without the operation, I would be dead now. That's why I'm so involved (with the lung association) now."

He says his lung difficulties were extreme, but there are thousands who suffer from problems such as emphysema and have trouble breathing. And the lung association is there to help.

The lung association sponsors an array of education, service, smoking cessation, lung rehabilitation and research programs. The money from the auction will support that work, which can literally mean the difference between life and death.

"I have had a lot of friends with cystic fibrosis die in the past because the technology was not available," says Mr. Young. "And many who have died waiting for transplants."

The auction begins at 8 p.m. with a silent auction and art preview at 7. Tickets are \$8 a person. A pre-reserved table for eight goes for \$64. Call 383-1616 to reserve.