

# The Neighborhood

## Giving life to others through transplants

When **Jeanine Nobriga** first started dating her future husband **Augie** they were 19 and his mother was in dire need of a transplant due to a disease that causes a buildup of cysts in the kidneys.

Augie and his brother volunteered to donate a kidney but both of them were ruled out. During the screening process, Augie found out that he also had the same disease as his mother and would one day lose kidney function.

Teenagers aren't usually faced with such life-changing knowledge.

Augie's mom had to go on a waiting list for an organ, and luck-



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AROUND LIVERMORE

ily she received one from a deceased donor. Augie's mother lived 29 years with that kidney before she finally needed dialysis a few years ago and then passed away in April from unrelated health issues.

But now two of Augie's three daughters face the same knowledge that some day their kidneys will lose function. But for this Livermore family, they know there is hope. Jeanine and Augie are living proof.

In 2004, Augie was facing dialysis, or years of waiting on a list for an organ from a deceased person. Some people die without ever receiving the organ they need. Friends and family stepped up to donate a kidney to Augie, but some, like his brother, were ruled out due to health issues, and Augie wouldn't allow some others



(CALIFORNIA TRANSPLANT NETWORK)

Livermore resident Jeanine Nobriga with daughters, Rachel, Megan and Laura.

to donate their kidney, such as his niece.

"My niece, she is too young, she has her whole life ahead of her," said Augie. "Who knows what can happen down the road." But one person close to him had all the reasons in the world to donate. Jeanine stepped up and volunteered to give her kidney to her husband.

"I am the one who needs him the most, it's only fitting that I be the one to do it," said Jeanine. "My daughters needed their father." Now one of Augie's kidneys works great, while the other one slowly loses all function. But, amazingly, the human body is able to function just fine with only one kidney.

Both Jeanine and Augie are able to live active lives with only one kidney and have no health issues stemming from the transplant. In fact, Augie works hard all week as a pipefitter, and Jeannine even runs marathons.

After donating her kidney to her husband, and

knowing her daughters will some day need a donor, Jeanine has devoted lots of time trying to spread the word about organ donation, and raises funds for the California Transplant Donors Network.

As a longtime employee at Safeway headquarters in Pleasanton, Jeannine has been able to mobilize her coworkers for the cause. Jeannine formed Team Safeway, and later this month Jeanine and at least 30 of her coworkers will participate in a race to raise money for CTDN.

She asks everyone to register as a donor at [www.ctdn.org](http://www.ctdn.org), or to come to the 2013 Donate Live Run/Walk at Great America in Santa Clara on Sept. 21. Register at [5k.ctdn.org](http://5k.ctdn.org).

"There's so many misconceptions about organ donation," said Jeannine.

Jeanine said that in this state there are not enough organ and tissue donors, and that there are more than 10,000 people in Northern California wait-

ing for organ transplants. You can't even get on the list without dire need, so the people waiting for organs need them quickly.

Last year in this column, I told the story of a young man named **Ruben Bernal** who died in 2010 and **Bob Moss**, of Livermore, who received Ruben's heart and kidney. Moss, who has diabetes, is alive and well today because of these organ donations.

**Megan Nobriga**, 22, and **Rachel Nobriga**, 19, both might one day need an emergency transplant, and they have seen how important organ donation was for their grandmother and father.

"I try to get the message out to people how important organ donation is," said Megan. "All the stories are so touching, when you hear about how an organ helped someone. It's all about the personal stories."

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