

KELSI

RECIPIENT OF: SPINAL ALLOGRAFT



“TWENTY-SOMETHING” FEELS YOUNG AGAIN AFTER SPINAL ALLOGRAFT

At the age when everyone starts enjoying their independence and staying out late, a 21-year-old Kelsi was debilitated by pain.

“I never understood why I was in so much pain, and attributed it to my line of work. I can’t tell you how many concerts I had to leave early, nights I had to stay in and days where I would just want to stay in bed and cry,” said Kelsi.

With the pain growing worse, Kelsi sought an answer. At 22, she was diagnosed with Adult-Idiopathic Scoliosis. In her case, the curve in her spine was so severe it would eventually compromise her lung function. With an official answer, Kelsi took action.

“From the time of my diagnosis, I tried everything from chiropractic adjustments, to steroid injections to acupuncture and everything in between, just to make sure surgery was my last resort,” she said.

After alternative options failed to treat her condition effectively, Kelsi prepared for surgery.

“I had a lot of physical and mental preparation before my surgery and I like to think it paid off,” said Kelsi.

“I did Pilates and worked out so I could ensure my body was strong enough to handle the change I was about to endure. I had a counselor to whom I could explain my excitement and fears and the best help of all was meeting a mentor; someone my age who went through the same surgery for the same reason!”

Kelsi’s five-hour surgery consisted of placing two corrective rods along with donor bone on the sides of her spine. With the lengthy surgery came a grueling recovery process.



Left: Kelsi after **Right:** Kelsi before surgery

“I did an intense five months of physical therapy. I had to re-learn how to dress my new body and do a lot of things differently. Even little tasks like getting in and out of bed and putting on pants and shoes became a challenge.”

Month by month Kelsi improved. Today, she is one week shy of being a full year post-surgery. She also serves as a mentor to those her age going through the same surgery.

“I am happy to say that at one year after my surgery, I feel so much better than I did the last four years of my life. I am a much more positive person and I get the privilege of knowing that I got a second lease on having an amazing life.”

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For that new lease, Kelsi thanks her donor.

“Being a tissue recipient totally affects my feelings about tissue and organ donation. I have been a registered donor since even before my surgery, but I never quite understood it; the fact that I have the opportunity to save and enhance the lives of other people is an amazing gift to be able to give,” said Kelsi.

“My donor’s gift to me means so much more than anyone will ever know. Thank you!!!”
