

MATT

RECIPIENT OF: PATELLA LIGAMENT ALLOGRAFT



ATHLETIC FATHER BACK IN THE GAME AFTER TISSUE TRANSPLANT

Sitting on the sidelines wasn't an option for Matt. A lifelong athlete, he loved running, biking, and playing softball and basketball.

While running during a playoff game for his softball league, Matt's knee went out. He knew the injury was bad and he tried to heal it with physical therapy and rest, but his knee did not improve.

"I am really active and I didn't want to lose that," he said. "I didn't want to have surgery and be out for a while. I tried to work with it. Being active is such a part of who I am and I didn't want to give that up."

As a father, Matt also considered the potential impact his injury could have on his young daughter.

"If I was carrying my daughter up the stairs and my knee gave out, that would affect her life too," he said.

When it became clear that ACL surgery was his best option, Matt and his doctor discussed the possibility of a tissue transplant. An allograft transplant appealed to Matt because his doctor felt his recovery time would be faster since the tissue would come from a donor, and not from Matt's own body.

Matt's ACL reconstruction went well and he was up to bat on the softball field nine months after surgery. He has also returned to running, biking, and playing basketball.

He understands that his return to the hobbies he loves was made possible by the generous gift of tissue donation.

"For me to be able to have that surgery, somebody died," Matt said. "We don't know who. I was thinking about the family and somebody is still being missed; their family and friends are still grieving, no doubt."

Matt thinks of his donor as he passes milestones in his recovery. He thought of his donor when he started physical therapy and when he carried his daughter up the stairs without worry. He thought of his donor when he ran around the park for the first time and when he returned to playing softball.



In a letter to his donor's family, Matt wrote, "I want you to know the donation made a difference - a real, tangible difference - in my world, and in my daughter's world. Thank you. I will be mindful of you and your family on those bright afternoons when my daughter and I run beneath the pear tree in our backyard."