

## PHIL

RECIPIENT OF: CARTILAGE ALLOGRAFT



## ACTIVE FATHER FINDS HEALING AFTER TISSUE TRANSPLANT



Phil's soccer career took him all over the United States and Europe, but years of competitive play took a toll on his knee. As a former Division 1 goalkeeper, he was constantly diving for the ball. In 2011, the problem became painfully apparent.

*"In the matter of one week, I completely lost the use of my left leg and had no idea why,"* said Phil. *"I thought and feared the worst. I didn't understand what was happening."*

When his condition did not improve, Phil sought a doctor's opinion. He was diagnosed with Osteochondritis dissecans, a joint condition causing cartilage and bone in the knee to become loose. He underwent surgery to correct the problem, but the pain persisted.

*"Being a physically fit, active, competitive ex-athlete, I was determined to work like crazy to heal as fast as possible,"* he said. *"I pushed hard through six months of therapy and worked hard for a few years post-op, but I still had nagging pain almost all the time."*

Though he lived with pain for several years after his first surgery, his wakeup call came in early 2014 when Phil and his wife welcomed a beautiful baby boy. He knew he needed to take action.

*"I struggled to walk with my son in my arms, could not go up or down stairs with him, and couldn't get down on the ground to play with him,"* Phil said. *"It really forced me to face the harsh reality of my problem. I feared I was going to be the dad who couldn't play with his son, the dad who couldn't go to the park and play."*

After doing some research, Phil met with a doctor who told him he was a candidate for an allograft, tissue recovered from a deceased human donor. In November 2014, he received a medial femoral hemicondyle transplant. He is still in the recovery process, but makes strides every day.

*"As soon as I returned home, I could not stop thinking about the donor family and their loss,"* he said. *"I know I will be pain-free in time to get back to the old me. The active, athletic me. The me that can't wait to pick up my son and walk around the house with him or take a long walk with my wife."*

Phil hopes to someday connect with his donor's family so he can truly express how grateful he is.

*"I cherish the selfless act demonstrated by my donor's family,"* he said. *"I hope they always remember that they changed a life more than they can imagine."*