**Heart and Sole: the Dylan Kalambay story**

**Questions for discussion
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**About Heart and Sole**

In November of 2020, high school basketball star Dylan Kalambay’s world turned upside down. He experienced heart failure at the young age of 16. Over the next 6 months he had open heart surgery and not long after, thanks to the generosity of an organ donor and their family, Dylan received a life-saving heart transplant. After after a long and challenging recovery, Dylan stepped back onto the basketball court. The film Heart & Sole follows his journey as Dylan continues to pursue his dreams on the court, while off of it he tries to comprehend his second chance at life and his new identity as a transplant recipient. Directed by Michael Hamilton and Produced by Game Seven Media (@game\_7\_media), Heart and Sole: the Dylan Kalambay Story is presented by Canadian Blood Services.

**Questions and answers**

**Why did Dylan need a heart transplant?**
Dylan needed a heart transplant due a sickness of the heart called dilated cardiomyopathy. The sickness is a condition where the heart cannot pump blood effectively to meet the body's needs. In Dylan's case, the severity of his heart condition reached a point where a heart transplant was the best option for him to have a chance at a healthy life.

**How many people need a heart transplant? How many kids/youth need a heart transplant?**
The number of people needing heart transplants varies from year to year, but hundreds of individuals are on the waiting list for a heart transplant at any given time. Among them, there are children and youth who require heart transplants. The exact number of kids and youth on the waiting list can fluctuate, but a demand for pediatric heart transplants exists.

**How long do people normally wait for a heart transplant?**
The waiting time for a heart transplant can vary widely based on factors like blood type, severity of the condition, and the availability of suitable donor organs. It varies case to case, but it’s not unusual for a patient to wait several years to receive a heart transplant. Unfortunately, some individuals may pass away while waiting due to the shortage of donor organs.

**Are there any alternatives to receiving a heart transplant?**
There are alternative treatments for heart failure, such as medication and implantable devices. These options can help manage symptoms and improve heart function. However, for some individuals, a heart transplant becomes necessary when these alternatives are no longer effective, or the condition has progressed to a life-threatening stage.

**Does a kid need a heart transplant from a kid? How does age factor in?**
While it's ideal to match the age of the donor and recipient when possible, heart transplants can occur between donors and recipients of different ages. The suitability of a donor organ depends on factors like compatibility and size. In some cases, a child may receive a heart from a deceased donor who was an adult. Medical professionals carefully assess compatibility to ensure the best chance of success for the transplant.

**What is organ donation?**
Organ donation, specifically deceased organ donation, is the process of donating one's organs or parts of organs after their death for transplantation into another person in need. A single deceased organ donor can potentially save multiple lives by providing organs such as the heart, kidneys, liver, lungs, and more to individuals on transplant waiting lists.

**How does organ donation work?**
Organ donation involves surgically removing the donated organ or organs from a donor and then transplanting them into a recipient in need. This process requires coordination between medical professionals, organ procurement organizations, and transplant centers to ensure timely and safe organ transplantation.

**What organs can be donated?**
Organs that can be donated include kidneys, liver, pancreas, lungs, heart, and the small bowel. In addition to organs, various tissues such as eyes, corneas, skin, and tendons can also be donated to help improve the lives of others.

**How many people need an organ transplant? / How many heart transplants a year?**
More than 4,000 people are waiting for an organ transplant in Canada. Of those waiting, more than 130\* are waiting for a heart transplant.

\*Based on the latest validated data - 2021, source:
<https://professionaleducation.blood.ca/en/organs-and-tissues/reports/system-progress-data-reporting#dashboard2021>

**Do people die waiting for an organ transplant?**
Unfortunately, yes. Every year, 250 Canadians die while waiting for a transplant.

**Can you donate an organ while still alive?**
Yes, living donation is a possibility for certain organs, primarily a kidney (most healthy adults have two and can donate one) or a portion of the liver (which can regenerate). Living donors must be in good health and undergo thorough medical assessments to ensure they can safely donate an organ or part of an organ to someone in need. Any adult who is in general good health can be assessed to become a living donor.

**Are there any alternatives to organ donation and transplantation?**
Organ donation and transplantation are often the last resort for individuals with end-stage organ failure. While there are alternative treatments and therapies for various organ conditions, they may only manage symptoms and delay the need for transplantation.

**Knowing there’s a need for organs, what can I do to help?**
To help address the need for organs, you can:

* Register and talk with your family about your decision to be an organ donor.
* Encourage others to learn more about organ donation.

**Don’t they just take the organs when you die?** **How many people are eligible organ donors?**
No, organ donation is incredibly rare, only 1-2% of people pass away under the right conditions for organ donation to even be possible. Organ donation also requires consent, typically from the deceased individual's next of kin. Some regions have opt-out or deemed consent systems, but even in those cases, respecting the wishes of the deceased and their family is a crucial aspect of the process.