

Sarah

THE WORLD'S YOUNGEST MULTI-ORGAN RECIPIENT INSPIRES OTHERS THE SARAH MARSHALL STORY

One Life...Many Gifts is a curriculum resource to educate senior secondary school students about the vital importance of organ and tissue donation and transplantation. It brings to life the drama, generosity and the life-saving promise of donation and transplantation.

Sarah Marshall's Speech and Story

Over to you...

- a) Research, Speech Writing and Presenting
- b) Adjudicate a Speech
- c) Research and Discussion
- d) Make a Mini Guinness World Records Display
- e) Photo Analysis and Interpretive Art Project

I am in the Guinness book of world records. Do You want to know why?

Sarah Marshall takes ballet classes, rides horseback, plays the piano, camps with her family, eats pizza with friends, and takes several separate medications each day to ensure that her four transplanted organs remain healthy.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS CERTIFICATE

Sarah Marshall

(Born 14 February 1997)

Became the world's youngest recipient to receive a multi-organ transplant, when on 7 August 1997, she was given a liver, bowel, stomach and pancreas at London's Children's Hospital of Western Ontario, Canada

Keeper of the Records
GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

This is a speech that Sarah wrote and delivered to her class.

My name is Sarah Marshall. I am ten years old. I was born on Valentine's Day in 1997. I arrived five and a half weeks early. I weighed four pounds, twelve ounces.

I was born with a disease called Megacystitis Microcolon Intestinal Hypo-peristalsis Syndrome. Having this disease meant that I had a large bladder, and my intestines did not work.

I spent the first five months of my life at Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto. I was taken to London's Children's Hospital after five months and twenty-four days. At the hospital, I received four new body parts - a stomach, pancreas, liver and bowel.

My transplant was the first paediatric multi-organ transplant in Canada. I am the youngest person in the world to have four organs transplanted at once. I am in the Guinness Book of World Records because of my age and the number of transplants I received.

I came home to my family for the first time when I was ten months old. I have had some challenges along the way, and I have spent a lot of time in hospital when I was small. I am also very lucky.

I have had the chance to help organizations like the Children's Miracle Network, a group that helps to raise money for all the children's hospitals across Canada and the United States. I have also helped teach people about organ donation through the Trillium Gift of Life Network. Without organ donors, people like me would not have a second chance at life. I have also met some really cool kids along the way, children who have been through more than I have. It makes you realize that we are all different and we are all special in our own way.

I wear a green ribbon because it is a symbol for giving the gift of life. This is very important to me because I am one of the lucky people who received that gift. Did you know that the number of students in my school is almost the same as the number of people in Ontario waiting for a liver transplant?

Only you can change that number and give people a gift of life.

I am the Youngest Person In the World To have 4 organs transplanted at once.

So, there's Sarah, totally confident and at ease, speaking to her classmates.

Let's travel back in time to 1997, and meet the people who provided the medical, physical and emotional support for the engaging, self confident, articulate young girl who speaks eloquently about her job as a "teacher," helping people understand why it is so important to donate organs.

Problems began before Sarah was born. During a regular prenatal ultrasound, doctors noticed an enlarged bladder. That much was known, but one manageable problem quickly multiplied into several life-threatening situations. On the second day of her life, Sarah was throwing up a green, bilious liquid. Immediately, she was transferred to Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.

Tests showed there was an intestinal obstruction; an enlarged bladder prevented the normal development of her intestines. An immediate surgical intervention was required. Initially, all went well. Sarah had a central line for intravenous feeding, and a nasogastric tube to relieve pressure and allow for healing. For her dad, it was a time of mixed emotions. Of course, he was thrilled that Sarah came through the operation so well, but "it was horrifying to see my newborn with a huge scar across her abdomen and tubes everywhere."

That was the first of many surgeries. Both Cindy and Dave - Sarah's parents - were determined to fight for her life, and so was Sarah: "She was a fighter." By the end of five months, it was clear that the nutrients keeping her alive were also killing

her. The TPN (total parenteral nutrition) was destroying her liver.

After an interview and screening, Sarah was listed as a candidate for a liver-bowel-stomach-pancreas transplant because her intestines refused to work, and her liver was just about to fail. It was great to be chosen as a candidate. But given Sarah's age, the possibility of finding a donor with the same blood type and organ size was very slim.

Worse was to come. Sarah started to bleed internally. Nurses were draining clots from her stomach tube. Blood samples were very difficult to collect because her veins were collapsing so quickly. This was the end. Without a functioning liver, Sarah would die.

Cindy started to call family and friends to suggest that they come to the hospital to visit with Sarah one last time. Dave was adamant. He was not ready to have his daughter die. At the very moment that Dave found new resolve, Cindy was told that a potential donor had been found. Sarah was transferred to Children's Hospital in London, Ontario, for the life- saving transplant surgery.

Again, Dave and Cindy had mixed emotions - empathy for the donor family and gratitude for their own: "They had the clarity of mind in their moment of grief to donate their child's organs. We will never be able to fully express the gratitude we have for these total strangers."

Sarah stayed in surgery all night long, from midnight until nine in the morning.

It was a medical first, both for Sarah and for the surgical team. It was a first, not just in Ontario, but also around the world. Dr. David Grant and Dr. Bill Wall were her lead surgeons for this history-making surgery. After the operation, Dr. Paul (as he is known to his young patients) attended to Sarah's follow-up visits. Dr. Paul is really Dr. Paul Atkison, transplant paediatrician.

Surgery was critical, and saved her life. The recovery was difficult. Sarah's mother just kept saying to herself, "We'll be home by Easter. We'll be home by Mother's Day. We'll be home for summer." What actually happened is that February turned to March, then to April, May, June, July and August. The long wait for Sarah was filled with a lot of sucking of her soother, and constant care from her immediate and extended family. After Sarah came home from hospital, her grandfather, Jerry Wildey, immediately took early retirement and has not missed one of Sarah's medical appointments in a decade: "I couldn't have made it without him," Cindy asserts, praising her father's generosity as an absolutely essential gift. Usually, the focus in transplantation is placed on the patient. What is often overlooked is the number of people who are called upon to make ongoing contributions to a recipient's care. Jerry was called, and he answered. Cindy, Dave, the transplant recipient coordinator, Sandy Williams, and Sarah's doctors are always there.

Today, Sarah leads an almost normal life. She enjoys ballet, horseback riding, camping and hanging out with her friends. Her silver MedicAlert leg bracelet is the only external sign that she is different in any way. The fact that she can list the

many medications which she takes daily without missing a beat tells a visitor that there's a story hidden within her.

Of course, Cindy, Sarah's mother, has her story hidden within her too. But there is nothing about Cindy's demeanour to suggest that she is unusual in any way: "I just did it. She's my child. Most parents would do absolutely anything for their child. That's what we all did. I used to be with Sarah and think of it as borrowed time. I don't think that way anymore.

Dr. Wall told me that Sarah should live until she gets old. I said, 'Okay.' The one difference between me and many other people is that I don't take life for granted. I've walked that line, along with my parents and my husband."

Sarah Marshall: " I do a lot of speeches, and I am on radio too. You have to convince people how important it is to donate."

Over to you...

You only have to look at Sarah's baby and growing-up pictures to see how far she has travelled since her arrival as a tiny, premature infant. In the first three years of her life, she was in the hospital as much as she was at home. Now she's out there, spreading the word about organ and tissue donation.

A. Research, Speech Writing and Presenting

Working with a partner, research the information required to deliver a five-minute speech that will convince people to become organ and tissue donors. You can choose any organ or tissue that can be transplanted as your starting point. Sarah could speak from personal experience, experience that is extraordinary because of her unique circumstances. You will have to think of a way in which you can be equally compelling in your presentation. When you have completed the research with your partner, write the speech. Use visuals and audio components that will support the presentation. Each partner should deliver the speech to a group in the class or the school with the other partner observing. Compare your experiences delivering the speech and the audience reactions to it.

B. Adjudicate a Speech

As each set of partners presents their speech, everyone else should be listening attentively to what is said and evaluate the quality of the presentation.

You should assign five marks for each of the following components: the depth of the research, the credibility of the presenter, the persuasiveness of the argument that you become a donor, and the value added by audio and visual elements. Of course, the real test is whether you would or would not become a donor based on what you have heard. A yes earns an extra five points. The total possible score is 25. Out of that number, how many speech writers earned an A, which would be 20 marks?

C. Research and Discussion

Sarah Marshall is in the Guinness World Records book as the world's youngest recipient to receive a multi-organ transplant when, on August 7, 1997, she was given a liver, bowel, stomach and pancreas at the Children's Hospital in London,

Ontario.

Canada is a country of firsts in the organ transplant world. Examine the list of dates and the number of revolutionary transplants that were performed over the last 50 years in “Breakthroughs and Accomplishments in Transplantation” in the Introduction booklet. How many of the groundbreaking procedures were performed by Canadian doctors, in Canadian hospitals? Choose one that stands out for you and share your reasons with a partner.

D. Make a Mini Guinness World Records Display

Pick up a copy of this year’s Guinness World Records book; you may also want to look at past editions. Sarah Marshall was featured in the 2001 edition, along with information about the world’s first hand transplant and the youngest heart transplant patient ever (a one-hour-old baby). How many interesting breakthroughs can you find in the Human Beings or Medical Marvels section of the yearly list of records? Create a collage or poster with the most impressive facts. Be sure to include some of the facts you discovered in “Breakthroughs and Accomplishments in Transplantation” in the Introduction booklet.

Maybe there is a public space where you can display your poster or collage – in the library perhaps, or in the main hall of your school.

Over to you...

E. Photo Analysis and Interpretive Art Project

Sarah was only a baby when she received her four new organs, too young to know the difference her multi-organ transplant would make in her life. Now, as she grows up, Sarah is more aware of the occasions when she can do normal kid things, and the reasons why she has to make a few adjustments in her daily life. Examine the photograph of a young girl playing below.

What emotions do you think she is feeling?

Reread Sarah’s story. Find a photograph, or create an image or collage that represents the feelings of Sarah’s parents as they learn that a donor family had chosen to donate the organs of their child. Remember, Dave and Cindy had very mixed emotions when they heard the news.

One Life...Many Gifts is a curriculum resource to educate senior secondary school students about the vital importance of organ and tissue donation and transplantation. It brings to life the drama, generosity and the life-saving promise of donation and transplantation.

Funding for this project has been provided by the provincial Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. This project would not have been possible without their support or the generosity of an anonymous Ontario resident whose contribution ensures that students in the province understand the life-saving promise of organ and tissue donation and transplantation. The Steering Committee sincerely thanks all of our supporters.

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Sciences Centre and
The Kidney Foundation of Canada.

Educating secondary school students and their families about the need for organ and tissue donation and the success of transplantation was originally initiated in the London region in 2000. With funding received from The Kidney Foundation of Canada, the Multi-Organ Transplant Program at London Health Sciences Centre had the vision to develop a unit of study, One Life...Many Gifts, working with both the Thames Valley District School Board and the London Catholic District School Board. The original program was used in Healthy Active Living Education, Grade 11, Open (PPL30) in Ontario's curriculum. The curriculum resource before you builds on the vision and foundation provided by this original program and the Steering Committee gratefully acknowledges the dedication and pioneering effort of all those involved in the original program.

This curriculum is dedicated to the many Ontarians who have given the gift of life through the donation of organs and tissue and to the many others who will in the future.

For more information on the One Life...Many Gifts curriculum program please contact the Director of Communications, Trillium Gift of Life Network at 1-800-263-2833 or visit: www.onelifemanygifts.ca

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One Life...Many Gifts