



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April is *BeADonor* month and Northumberland's Sarah Marshall has an inspiring message for all of us to help build a donor nation

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Tuesday, April 17, 2018—Most of us support improving and saving lives through organ and tissue donation, but only a fraction of us actually take the time to register online.

This gap between good intentions and actions has real-world consequences.

While thousands of people have received the gift of life, others have died waiting because there are simply not enough organs to meet the need.

Sarah Marshall is a local woman who is here today because she received the gift of life 21 years ago. She's a dedicated advocate for organ and tissue registration, speaking every opportunity she gets about the gifts that are in each of us to give if we take a few minutes to register.

The youngest multi-organ transplant recipient in the world (she has the Guinness Book of World Records certificate to prove it!) Sarah was born in Cobourg on Valentine's Day in 1997, five and a half weeks early.

Diagnosed shortly after birth with *Megacystis microcolon intestinal hypoperistalsis syndrome (MMIHS)*, a rare, congenital form of intestinal obstruction, Sarah spent the first five months of her life at [SickKids Hospital](#) in Toronto until doctors at the [Children's Hospital at London Health Sciences](#) in London, Ontario successfully transplanted not one but four organs (stomach, pancreas, liver and bowel) into her small body.

Flash forward to today, and Sarah is an outgoing big sister to her brother Austin, and about to graduate from Loyalist College in Belleville with a diploma in business administration. Her sights are also set on her next personal goal: a Public Relations and Event Management Certificate, which she plans to begin this September, also at Loyalist, completing a key step toward her ultimate plan to work in the field of health care fundraising where she will have a chance to give back to institution that gave so much to her.

At a recent trip to Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH), which she still visits regularly, alongside the specialty centres in Toronto and London, for support managing the ongoing symptoms of her syndrome, Sarah took the opportunity to chat with some of the nurses, doctors and Foundation staff she has grown to know through her journey.

She is grateful for each and every relationship she's built. She is also consistent in her message: "Sign up at www.beadonor.ca!"

"Thanks to my special donor," Sarah said, "I've been able to have a second chance at life... to be a big sister to my brother Austin and, soon, to be a college grad! I'm living a dream that would not have happened without my donor."

According to [Trillium Gift of Life Network](http://www.trilliumgiftoflife.ca), the agency responsible for overseeing organ and tissue donation in Ontario, more than 1,500 people in Ontario are currently on the waitlist for a lifesaving organ transplant, and every three days someone will die without one. Some patients have been on dialysis for years; others are waiting for lungs to breathe on their own again; while others have burns so severe that they require skin grafts.

Sarah Marshall reminds all of us that, by registering to become a donor, we could save or change someone's life. Just one organ donor can save up to eight lives and enhance as many as 75 more through the gift of tissue, and age is not necessarily a barrier.

"Registering as an organ and tissue donor is one of the most selfless, altruistic decisions anyone can make," says Ronnie Gavsie, president of Trillium Gift of Life Network. "Based on the support we know exists for donation, we could put an end to preventable deaths on the waitlist if more people registered."

April is *BeADonor* month. This year, find out more and considering registering at www.beadonor.ca. Read more on Sarah Marshall's inspiring story in our Feature Story this month, at www.nhh.ca

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About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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