



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 17, 2018

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## **The Goodness of America**

### **Here, Take My Kidney**

Two teachers in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, set off an organ-donor chain last year after volunteering to donate their kidneys to someone in need. The two are now using their stories to advocate for living kidney donation, Today.com reported.

Neil Emmott was diagnosed with polycystic kidney disease in 2001, and in 2016, his kidney function dropped below 20 percent, making a kidney transplant a necessity. Unfortunately, Neil's wife, Lisa, and his brother-in-law had both been rejected from donating their own kidneys because of minor health reasons, and the family began to feel a sense of urgency.

Though the Emmott family had kept Neil's health problems relatively quiet, the revelation compelled his wife to begin to confide in a few people at her daughter's school, Bethany Christian School, including her daughter's teacher, Allison Malouf. Just eight years earlier, Malouf's husband had donated a kidney, so Malouf was familiar with the process. But Lisa could not have predicted Malouf's response to her family's plight. "I had complete peace and a strong desire to donate," Malouf told Today.com. "Being their daughter's teacher, I desperately wanted to help this wonderful family."

"When you are a teacher, you feel like a part of these children's lives," she explained. "Their daughter was like a child of my own. I didn't want to see her without a dad.... God gives you two kidneys, but you only need one."

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to the Emmott family, one of Lisa's best friends, nursery-school teacher Britani Atkinson, had been quietly researching the evaluation process to learn whether she was an acceptable candidate to donate her kidney to Neil.

"I knew how desperate I would be if I found myself in their situation, and the solution seemed so easy," said Atkinson. "I had two kidneys and I only needed one. If I could give one to Neil to keep their family whole, why would I not?"

Unfortunately, neither Malouf nor Atkinson proved to be acceptable donors for Neil owing to their blood types and kidney sizes, but even after learning that they could not serve as donors for the Emmott family, they knew that they wanted to donate their kidneys to anyone in need.

Both women were placed on the National Kidney Registry in 2017 on Neil's behalf and were matched with strangers in cities across the country who were awaiting kidneys. And as a result of their generosity, Neil was also able to be matched with a compatible stranger in California. The Johns Hopkins Medicine website explains how this is possible: "If a person is healthy but not a match for an intended recipient, a paired kidney exchange, also known as a kidney swap, matches an incompatible donor/recipient pair with another incompatible donor/recipient pair."

According to Today.com, Atkinson's and Malouf's donations resulted in a total of eight people receiving new kidneys as a result of the paired kidney exchange.

The Emmotts were touched that their friends proceeded with kidney donations despite being unable to donate to Neil, especially as it resulted in finding a kidney for Neil, but the women state it has been as much of a blessing to them as it was for the strangers who received their kidneys. "It is a gift that gives



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as much to you as the person to whom you donate,” said Atkinson. “There are very few opportunities in life to truly give something that is infinitely priceless to someone that costs you nothing.”

“This has been one of the most rewarding things I have ever done,” said Malouf.

It has been nearly a year since Neil received his new kidney, and his wife, Lisa, has made it her personal mission to use her family’s story to advocate both for living organ donation and for reaching out to others for help. Were it not for that, Neil may still be awaiting a kidney today.

“One very private man needed a kidney and didn’t want to ask a single soul, but because Neil opened up to going public, eight people have now received new kidneys thanks to the paired exchange program,” she said. “If you also consider those waiting for a kidney on the deceased donor list, there are also now eight people who will ‘move up’ on the list and receive a new kidney sooner.”

Neil and his wife believe their story needs to be told, if nothing else, to show others that the world is full of good people. “At a time when we are so disenchanted with the way people behave, to have such gestures and true altruism is phenomenal,” Neil told Local ABC 10 News.

## **Generous Tip Inspires Generous Donation**

When single mother Anna Hofsetter of Brown County, Indiana, received a very generous \$1,000 tip from one of her customers, she could have put that money to personal use in a number of ways: bills, college funds, savings, etc. Instead, she decided to finance a gift to the children in her community.

Hofsetter works three jobs to support her two children, reported Fox 13 News. While tending bar one night at the Hotel Nashville in Nashville, Indiana, she met an older couple who was there celebrating their wedding anniversary. The couple was impressed by Hofsetter and her hard-working efforts to provide for her family, and they wanted to do something for her. When it came time to pay their \$32 check, they gave Hofsetter the surprise of her life when they left her a \$1,000 tip with a note that read, “Give something for kids.”

Hofsetter decided that the \$1,000 should benefit not only her kids, but also all of the local children in her community. After meeting with Clara Stanley, president of the area’s Enrichment for Teens Association, she decided that she would use her \$1,000 to finance a local skate park.

“Brown County has been lacking a healthy, wonderful place [where] little children or youth — especially youth — can go and express themselves, hang out,” Stanley told WXIN.

Stanley and the local children had been working to collect donations to pay for a community teen and skate park in Brown County through a group they created called Kids on Wheels, and were delighted to learn of Hofsetter’s kind donation.

Hofsetter contends that using the money to help finance the skate park will allow it to have a more lasting impact.

As of August 17, Kids on Wheels had raised approximately \$25,000 for the skate park.

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