

GREAT NEWS

RIVER HEALTH SYSTEMS

Jan. 27, 2016

ULTIMATE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

SUPERVISOR GIVES NURSE THE GIFT OF LIFE WITH KIDNEY DONATION

Samantha Ripple and Margo White have several things in common. They are about the same age. They began working as certified nursing assistants at the Klein Center around 10 years ago, and they worked their way through the nursing program at Southeastern Community College.

But about one year ago, something happened that made Samantha and Margo very different: Samantha's only functioning kidney began to fail, and Margo had two that were working well.

On Thursday, Jan. 21, Margo, who is Samantha's supervisor in the Klein Center's Black Hawk Boulevard neighborhood, donated one of her kidneys so they would have another thing in common – one good kidney apiece.

Continued on next page



Klein Center nursing supervisor Margo White, left, poses with Klein Center staff nurse Samantha Ripple before their surgeries Thursday, Jan. 21. White donated a kidney to Ripple.

The kidneys are bean-shaped organs about the size of a fist. They sit just below the rib cage on each side of the spine. They filter blood to produce urine, which consists of wastes and extra fluid. According to the National Kidney Foundation, most people live healthy, normal lives with one kidney.

"I'm grateful to make it to 40," said Samantha in an interview the day before her Jan. 15 birthday. "Margo is giving me a great birthday gift – even if it is an older kidney!"

Margo is 41. The way they kid around with each other, the two nurses appear to be lifelong friends.

But they didn't know each other in 1987 when Samantha was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, which runs in her family. And they still hadn't met when the disease led to her name being placed on the list for a kidney and pancreas transplant. She received the new organs from a deceased donor in 2003.

About one year ago, Samantha noticed symptoms that her kidney was shutting down. In October, she began peritoneal dialysis at home, an eight-hour daily procedure that does the job of her kidney while she is sleeping. During the procedure, a long tube implanted in her abdomen is attached to a 20-foot tube that allows her to walk to her kitchen and bathroom.

Samantha hooks herself up to the dialyzer at 9:30 every night to be finished in time to get her six-year-old daughter, Harlow, and herself ready for the next day. She adopted her daughter as an infant with the help of Great River Health Systems' adoption assistance benefit.

Several Klein Center co-workers and one co-worker's mother volunteered to be tested for a match. Margo was the one. They were notified a couple of days before Christmas.

For Margo, testing continued to prepare for the procedure and ensure Margo was physically and emotionally healthy enough to live with one kidney. In one blood draw, 31 vials of blood were filled.

"I really hate IVs and blood," Margo said. "I don't mind doing them but I don't like getting them. I was exhausted for four days after that."

She also had a CT scan, echocardiogram, pap

test and mammogram, and she met with the transplant coordinator, surgeon, psychiatrist and an independent nephrologist who isn't part of the transplant team.

"She's really jumped through a lot of hoops for me," Samantha said.

"It's almost like I've lived my whole life for this," said Margo. "I don't have any new scars. They inserted the laparoscope through the incision made when I had my gallbladder out, and removed the kidney through a scar from a tubal pregnancy surgery."

Samantha has a new C-shaped scar under the scar from her pancreas transplant on the left side of her abdomen, the opposite side of her previous kidney transplant.

"I have four kidneys and two pancreases. I hope they all get along," she joked. "They say it's more detrimental to remove the organs. They reroute the blood supply and the unused organs shrink."

One week before the surgery, both women said they weren't nervous. Neither is Margo's husband, Ken.

"I could see day by day that Samantha's condition was getting worse [before she started dialysis]," Margo said. "When my husband and I talked about it, he wanted to fill out the organ donor application too. I think he's more worried about keeping me down after the surgery. I don't stay still very well."

Margo was released from the hospital Sunday. She will be off work for three to six weeks. Samantha returned home Monday, and she will be off work for at least six weeks.

Although others who were tested weren't a transplant match, they are supporting their coworkers by selling and wearing shirts with the couple's blended name – "Samargo."

"They came up with it," the two friends said in unison. Unlike celebrity couples like "Bennifer" and "TomKat," Samargo is a blood relationship they hope lasts a lifetime.

Great News will publish updates about Samantha and Margo as they heal from their surgeries and return to work.

New provider



Terry O'Neal-Cox, M.D., M.P.H.
Great River Business Health
Great River Wellness Plaza
1401 W. Agency Road
West Burlington, IA 52655
319-768-4100

Medical degree: St. Georges University, West Indies
Residency: Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center,
Plainfield, New Jersey

Great River Friends scholarship deadline is Feb. 15

Applications for Great River Friends scholarships for the 2015-2016 school year are available. The deadline is Monday, Feb. 15.

Two types of scholarships are offered to students pursuing health care careers:

- High school scholarship – Applicants must be seniors in high school, have minimum 3.0 grade point averages, and live in or attend schools within Great River Health Systems' service area (approximately 60 miles).
- Continuing college student scholarship – Applicants must have graduated from high schools in Great River Health Systems' service area in the last 10 years and have completed at least one year of college. Students in graduate school may apply.

Scholarship applications must be postmarked or delivered to the Volunteer Services office by Feb. 15. There are three ways to get an application:

- [Click HERE](#)
- Call Great River Volunteer Services at 319-768-3340.
- Ask a high school counselor.

Casual days

Employees purchase \$2 stickers for the opportunity to wear jeans to work on designated Fridays. The next casual days and projects they benefit are:

- Feb. 5 American Heart Association
- Feb. 19 Great River Friends

Notes of appreciation

Food drive

The food drive vouchers donated by your employees provided 37 Christmas food bags to residents of Wapello, Grandview and Oakville. The bags were packed by youth groups in our community and distributed by volunteers. Your generosity is greatly appreciated by the Southeast Louisa County Food Pantry.

The Oquawka Food Pantry would like to thank you for the large donation to our pantry. It will help feed many people in these trying times. God bless each of you.

Hat and mitten drive

Thanks so very much for the generous donation of hats, gloves and mittens. The monetary donation will be used for pants, underwear and a few breakfast items for late-comers. We sincerely appreciate it all!

— Deb Trousil, R.N., West Burlington schools

Gift shop temporarily closed

Great River Gift Shop and Cups & Cakes will be closed for at least two months as the Great River Friends Board of Directors works to get merchandise inventoried, priced and entered into the new point-of-sale computer system.

Health system named Fit-Friendly Worksite

Great River Health Systems has been recognized as a gold-level Fit-Friendly Worksite by the American Heart Association for helping employees eat better and move more.

More than two-thirds of American adults are overweight or obese, putting them at risk for heart disease and stroke, and many other chronic illnesses. Making healthy changes in the workplace, where many adults spend much of their day, is an important way to help people be healthier.

A detailed list of activities and programs focusing on physical activity, good nutrition and culture enhancements are the criteria for Fit-Friendly Worksite recognition. A few of the ways Great River Health Systems meets the standard are:

- Having a staff member who promotes wellness and consults with employees
- Having an outdoor walking path around the lake and an indoor walking route
- Having on onsite fitness facility that is free for employees
- Offering free annual health-risk assessments

- Offering healthy food and beverage options in the Cafeteria
- Offering weight-loss programs
- Providing access to smoking-cessation materials

Studies suggest that by encouraging physical activity and healthy eating, and promoting an overall culture of health, employers can:

- Increase productivity
- Reduce absenteeism
- Reduce health care costs
- Reduce turnover

American employers face increasing health care expenses and health-related losses in productivity that cost an estimated \$225.8 billion a year. Employers face \$12.7 billion in annual medical expenses caused by obesity alone.

The American Heart Association's goal by 2020 is to reduce the rate of death from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20 percent, and to improve the heart health of all Americans by 20 percent.



Rachel Hackenmiller, Respiratory Care Services, receives a 2015 Iowa Hospital Education and Research Foundation Scholarship from Great River Health Systems President and CEO Mark Richardson.

State scholarship deadline March 30

The Iowa Hospital Education and Research Foundation awards up to \$7,000 per recipient in its Health Care Careers Scholarship Program. The deadline is Wednesday, March 30.

A subsidiary of the Iowa Hospital Association, the foundation provides up to \$3,500 a year for a maximum of two years. In exchange for that financial support, recipients must commit to working one year in an Iowa hospital for each year of scholarship award.

To receive more information and apply, [click HERE](#).

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Jessica Akey

**Registered Nurse
Intensive Care Unit**

Start date:

I started working as a medical assistant at Great River Medicine Specialists in 2007. While going to nursing school, I also worked in the Psychiatric Care Unit and Great River Cardiology. I have been in the ICU since 2012.

What does a typical day at work look like for you?

I work from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. three days a week. During my shift, I take care of one or two patients, depending on how critically ill they are. All of our patients receive constant cardiac monitoring, and we use many other types of equipment, such as ventilators, continuous dialysis, and balloon pumps for the heart. I like helping my patients and their families.

What I wanted to be when I grew up:

A nurse

Hometown / Where I live now:

Burlington

Family:

- Parents, Lois and Mike
- Brother and sister-in-law, Caleb and Beki
- Nephews, Tylor and Jaxon
- Nieces, Alyssah and Hannah

Things I enjoy:

Last summer, we were a host family for a Burlington Bees player, which we'll do again this summer. I like traveling, especially going to Las Vegas, and being with my family.



If you could choose anyone, whom would you pick as your mentor?

My mom has always been my mentor. She's a nurse at Great River Women's Health.

People would be surprised to know ...

I have nine or 10 tattoos. My name in Arabic is on the inside of my right index finger. It was written by Dr. Alwahdani.

What is your motto or personal mantra?

Just keep going

Given a chance, who would you like to be for a day?

A lottery winner so I can pay off all of my debts

What's the most recent app you've downloaded?

Dunn Bros. Coffee

What are your biggest achievements to date?

Becoming a nurse and buying a house