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TRANSPLANT SAVES YOUNG MOTHER'S LIFE

Out of eight sisters and only one brother, Randy LeGrand was a perfect match. That meant he would be the one to donate a kidney to his 22-year-old sister Melanie, whose only hope was a transplant.

"I would do it all over again in a heartbeat," says Randy, a 32-year-old network manager. "Her son, Tate, needed his mama."

The LeGrand family traveled from Amarillo to Fort Worth last September, just three months after Tate was born, so Randy and Melanie could undergo a living donor transplant at Baylor All Saints Medical Center.

"We feel incredibly blessed to help a young person in this situation," says Marlon Levy, M.D., director of the transplant program on the medical staff at Baylor All Saints. "Nothing is more compelling than restoring a young mother's health, allowing her to be with her child."

Today, both Melanie and Randy feel great. And Tate is

a happy, healthy toddler. But there were many challenges along the way.

In 2003, Melanie was five months pregnant when she was diagnosed with IgA neuropathy, a chronic, progressive kidney disease. Little by little, her kidneys failed, and within three weeks, she was hospitalized. She required daily dialysis, a treatment that circulates the blood through a machine that takes the place of the kidneys. One day short of her 24th week of pregnancy, Melanie delivered Tate prematurely. He weighed just 1 lb., 5.9 oz.

Tate remained in the hospital for another 110 days. Melanie went home, but continued dialysis three times a week. Finally, in September 2004, almost exactly one year after Tate arrived home, Melanie had her own miracle: a new kidney, thanks to her big brother Randy.

"I am so grateful for all the prayers and support we received, and for my family and the special people at Baylor All Saints," Melanie says. *By Janan Talafer*



●● DID YOU KNOW?

Baylor All Saints Medical Center began its transplant program in 2002 and now offers transplantation for kidneys, liver and pancreas. The hospital also performs live donor transplants, a procedure not uniformly done at all medical centers because of the higher technical challenge. "Offering this procedure speaks to the high level of capability of the transplant team, the medical staff, and the maturation of our program," says the transplant program's director, Marlon Levy, M.D., who is on the medical staff at Baylor All Saints. During a live donor transplant, the donor's kidney is removed during laparoscopic surgery and then placed into the recipient. A kidney from a living donor, rather than one from a nonliving donor, enhances the outcome for the recipient.

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