

Fundraising efforts are underway to assist Melanie Hasselman and her husband, Greg, who will be tested in late August at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN., for his suitability as a candidate for heart-liver transplants. Melanie is a 22 year-old Communications Specialist I with Shawnee County Emergency Communications (SCECC) in Topeka, and Greg is 24 years old. They have an eight-month-old daughter, Addyson Gail.

Greg was born with a severe congenital heart defect known as tricuspid valve atresia. His tricuspid valve, located between the right atrium and the right ventricle, never developed, so his right ventricle is not able to pump blood into his lungs properly. Greg had a life-saving procedure performed when he was four-years-old, a modified fontan procedure. This procedure was developed to allow proper blood flow through his heart and other organs. The procedure was done with hopes of extending his life from childhood to age 25-30. Doctors have since found several long term adverse side effects. As a result, the procedure has been modified so that children today having the surgery will have a much longer success rate.

Melanie and Greg learned this past March that Greg's condition had caused significant damage to his liver, which doctors determined had been failing for quite some time. His liver is rejecting blood flow, and the blood is flowing around it to other sites, causing some veins to bleed into his esophagus and his stomach. The improper blood flow has also damaged his spleen. Greg requires a medical procedure every three to four weeks to control this condition.

If Greg is a candidate for heart/liver transplants, they must be done simultaneously and the organs must be from the same donor. Melanie and Greg have been told that this procedure has never been done on a congenital heart patient with a modified fontan anywhere in the United States. It has been attempted it in the United Kingdom, unfortunately with a low success rate. However, they have no alternative but to attempt it.

The Hasselmans' health insurance may only cover one organ transplant and not the two that Greg needs. If insurance does cover both transplants, Melanie and Greg will still need at least \$100,000.00 as their contribution to the surgery, and they already have incurred staggering medical bills.

In an effort to help allay some of Melanie's and Greg's medical expenses, a fund for donations has been created under their names at the Topeka Police Credit Union, 320 S. Kansas Ave., Topeka, Ks. 66603.

911 Cares has also created a website for donations directly to the site or through Pay Pal. Click on Greg's picture, under the [shop by] category, and it will take you directly to the donation page.

<http://shop.911cares.com/>

Other scheduled fundraising efforts in Topeka include August 4<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the Red Robin Restaurant, 6230 S.W. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., and two fundraisers at Glory Days Pizza locations. Glory Days General Manager, Jason Lehnherr, who is also a TPD Reserve, will have a fundraiser on Wednesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 4 p.m.-9 p.m. at the Glory Days Pizza at 3310 S.E. 29<sup>th</sup> and on Monday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 4 p.m.-9 p.m., at the Fleming Place Glory Days, 1033 S. W. Gage Blvd.

Plans for fundraisers at other Topeka restaurants are also in progress. A retired Topeka Police Officer who is now an auctioneer has also offered to donate his services for a benefit auction.

Local media have recently featured Melanie and Greg on their news casts, and more media interviews are planned. In addition, employees of the SCECC who attended the APCO Spring Regional Conference in Topeka asked for donations and raised almost \$800.00 from conference attendees for the Hasselmans. Kansas APCO Board member donations brought the total to more than \$800.00.

An SCECC supervisor, Michelle Barnes, is coordinating fundraising efforts. She can be contacted at [michelle.barnes@sncu.us](mailto:michelle.barnes@sncu.us), or at the SCECC phone number is 785-368-9300. Any donations or other assistance for the Hasselmans will be greatly appreciated.