

JANE

RECIPIENT OF: BONE ALLOGRAFT

COLORADO WOMAN RETURNS TO OUTDOOR PASSIONS FOLLOWING BONE GRAFT TRANSPLANT

At 77 years old, Jane describes herself as “*happily active*.” A Colorado resident, she finds pleasure in camping, snowshoeing and walking in the mountains and the desert with her husband. However, a fall from a ladder and subsequent broken leg threatened her active lifestyle.

The fall resulted in a broken tibia, or shin bone. Doctors recommended that she have surgery to repair the bone, as it was not likely to heal well enough on its own. The surgery involved implanting a steel plate against her bone for structural support. Additionally, after finding osteoporosis in the bone during surgery, the doctor chose to also transplant bone grafts from a deceased human donor into Jane’s injured bone to allow it to strengthen over time.

An unfamiliar concept to Jane, she questioned her doctor about the bone tissue transplant.

“I asked the doctor if compatibility studies had been done,” Jane said. “He explained that contrary to organ transplants, it was not necessary.”

The surgery was successful and next Jane began the slow healing process, which involved a walker, physical therapy and new medication to treat her osteoporosis. She could not put weight on the leg for eight weeks while it healed. However, she knew the process could have taken even longer had she not received the bone graft

transplant, and she could have encountered other complications.

To Jane’s delight, following her transplant and healing period she has experienced a full recovery and is back to enjoying myriad outdoor activities in Colorado. When she was approached to write a thank-you letter to the family of the donor that provided her bone graft, she jumped at the opportunity.

“It brought tears to my eyes. It was so sweet and poignant to be able to express my appreciation for what their loved one had done and how it improved my life,” said Jane.

“My husband has had a corneal transplant, which was very successful. There was no opportunity at that time to express our thanks, which is why the letter I wrote meant so much to me.”

Jane continues that if she could, she would tell her donor: *“my heartfelt thanks. I would feel privileged to donate tissue myself, especially considering the fine example I have benefitted from.”*
