

JUSTIN

RECIPIENT OF: ALLOGRAFT SKIN



17-YEAR-OLD FINDS NEW POSSIBILITIES THANKS TO TISSUE DONORS

When Justin crashed his car into an embankment, he was a new driver and just 16-years-old.

Following the accident, the car caught on fire. Thorpe was severely burned on over 40 percent of his body. He did not wake up for two months, as he was placed in a medically induced coma in the hospital while his serious burns were treated.

What Justin discovered after he awoke was that the generous gift of life from numerous human tissue donors had helped to save his own life.

While in the coma, Justin was treated at the University of Colorado Medical Center by Dr. Gordon Lindberg and Dr. Joshua Goldberg. The doctors used allograft skin (a gift from deceased human donors) to cover his wounds and promote healing.

Although skin substitutes or animal skin can also be used in the treatment of burns, human allograft skin is considered the gold standard.

“Human allograft skin works the best because it adheres better, it stimulates new blood vessel growth and is not as prone to infection,” said Dr. Lindberg, MD, PhD, director of the hospital’s Burn Unit.

“Once Justin had recovered from his injuries, we replaced the allograft with his own skin. However, the initial life-saving treatment with allograft wouldn’t be

possible without the generosity of tissue donors.”

Although the 7,000 square centimeters of allograft tissue used to treat and cover Thorpe’s burns only stayed on his body for two weeks, it provided critical protection in the early stages of his treatment.

“In the U.S. someone is burned every 29 minutes. Stories like Justin’s are a lesson for everyone: tissue donation can have the same life-saving impacts as organ donation,” said Thomas A. Cycyota, President and CEO of AlloSource, one of the nation’s largest providers of allograft skin used by burn centers to treat severely burned patients.

It is easy to help save or improve the lives of others by registering to become an organ and tissue donor by simply visiting Donate Life America: www.donatelife.net.

Nine months after his accident, Thorpe is back to being a teenager: playing video games and biking. Although scars remind him of the crash, he is also reminded of the second chance he was given by the generous donors he never met.