

## TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONSHIP OPPORTUNITY MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH TISSUE DONATION

The notorious and acute “pop” of the anterior cruciate ligament often signals a long and arduous road to recovery. Diana’s connection to AlloSource’s healing mission impacts her daily. Not only is she an operating processing technician at the company, but she is also the recipient of a donor graft.

In October of 2019, Diana was testing for her 5th-degree black belt. During a self-defense routine with her son, she heard and felt a “pop” in her knee as she pivoted. There wasn’t much pain in the moment, so she chalked it up as a possible sprain.



Diana testing for 5th-degree black belt shortly after tearing her ACL.

“You know, there are days when I think to myself, ‘that was kind of stupid,’” Diana said, looking back on her decision to push

through. As she continued her black belt trials, she experienced several painful slips in the joint. In the end, she earned her 5th-degree black belt but would not be able to practice for some time because that “pop” was later diagnosed as an ACL tear and would require surgery.

Leading up to her procedure, the doctor offered Diana two options: an autograft, sourced from her own patellar tendon, or an allograft, using tissue recovered from a donor. The surgeon recommended the donor graft due to fewer incision sites, which ultimately led to Diana opting for the allograft. The year following the procedure was filled with countless hours of physical therapy and a nine-month hiatus from martial arts.



Diana posing after earning her 5th-degree black belt with a torn ACL in October 2019



October 2021, Diana (blue gloves) competing with her new donor ACL.

Diana's dedication and perseverance is finally paying off though, as she can now walk, run, and even continue practicing taekwondo without fear of further injury. "I know words don't replace the loss, but I want the family to know that her gift gave me the ability to do my job again, as well return to the sport I love and to be able to compete at a high level again."

Diana has been practicing taekwondo for 26 years now and is going to be competing in Houston, Texas on Saturday, March 19

to qualify for the 2022 International Taekwondo Federation World Championships in the Netherlands. If she qualifies, she will be representing the U.S. at the competition this summer. "When I first tore my ACL, I never believed that I would get back to where I'm at, and her selflessness gave me that opportunity! So, thank you from the bottom of my heart!"



Diana on the first-place podium after her October 2021 tournament.