



78

liver transplants
were performed
in the MTN service
area last year

Carol Baker & Michelle Wessling

(organ recipients)

Organs received: Livers

Their Story: Carol and Michelle are cousins who share a unique bond, one that most family members rarely experience: they both received lifesaving liver transplants thanks to the generosity of organ donors.

Carol, a mother of five, was diagnosed with Primary Liver Cancer nearly 20 years ago and after extensive treatment, learned she was a candidate for a liver transplant. At 100 pounds with only two weeks to live, Carol was the tenth kidney transplant at University of Kansas Medical Center on November 1st, 1990. Because of the kindness of a stranger, she is alive and well and cancer-free. She is grateful to the physicians who treated her, and to the donor who had the generosity to donate life.

Michelle was shocked when after donating blood, the local blood bank called to deliver bad news: the results of her blood work showed abnormal liver function. For years, doctors were uncertain what was wrong but eventually diagnosed Michelle with Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis, an autoimmune disease. After years of treatment, she was informed in 1998 that she would need a liver transplant to survive.

"I was initially told that I'd wait twelve months for a liver, but instead had to wait four long years," said Michelle. "My hope is that others will hear my story and become an organ donor, so others don't have to wait. If the last thing you do on this earth is change the world for the better and actually save someone's life, what a way to go out!"