Lukas, Deceased Donor & Nikki, Donor Mom

The Gift of Life, Time

Lukas was a funny, whip-smart boy who loved history, books and music. He was quick with a joke and loved to dazzle friends and family with his knowledge of historical facts.

In college, he majored in Mechanical Engineering, which was the perfect next step for a young man who had always enjoyed taking things apart to see what made them tick…literally. He became fascinated with timepieces and even took a job repairing luxury watches.

Everyone knew he would, in time, change the world.

A History of Compassion

In his teens, Lukas visited with residents at the nursing home where his mother worked. A few residents with dementia had reverted to speaking German, so Lukas used his fluent language skills to help keep family members connected.

This kind of compassion for others wasn't a surprise to anyone who knew Lukas. He had been only 8 years old when he announced to his family that he wanted to sign up to be an organ donor.

And, he did. Not long after he turned 15 ½, Lukas applied for his temporary driver's license and checked the box to join his state's organ, eye and tissue donor registry.

Matters of Time

A few weeks before Christmas, at the age of 18 and one thousand days after he made the decision to be a donor, Lukas died in a fatal accident.

For eight transplant recipients, his decision to register became the gift of life – and of time – that holiday season.

The man who received Lukas' liver said his transplant allowed him to "make it to Christmas Eve" and beyond, something he once thought impossible. His 81-year-old mother and his wife, six children and sixteen grandchildren are all grateful for the extra time they have all been given with their loved one.

Lukas' Other Gift

The other gift Lukas gave that Christmas was to his family.

"We are proud of Lukas and his legacy he left behind. I never want anyone to see his story and focus on the storm. I want them to see the beautiful rainbow he left after that storm for so many to admire and love," his mother, Nikki, said.

By sharing his donation decision with them, Lukas gave his family the peace that comes with knowing, without a doubt, that their son chose to make his final moments on earth truly heroic.