



spotlight on health

Mother Donates Kidney To Son Who Has Most Common Life-Threatening Genetic Disease

(NAPSA)—There are more people with polycystic kidney disease (PKD) than the combined numbers of those with cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy, hemophilia, Down's syndrome and sickle cell anemia.

PKD affects 600,000 children and adults in the U.S. and 12.5 million people worldwide and is the world's most common life-threatening genetic disease.

The disease causes cysts to develop on the kidneys, enlarging the kidneys and hindering their ability to function. The cysts also compress blood vessels, which may raise the person's blood pressure. The vast majority of people with PKD develop kidney failure—it's the fourth leading cause of kidney failure in the U.S.—and there is currently no cure.

With this prognosis, the physical, psychological and financial effects of this disease on individuals—and their families—can be devastating. Since parents have a one-in-two chance of passing PKD on to each of their children, the disease can perpetually affect more than one family member.

One family who has had firsthand experience with the devastation wrought by PKD is the Keating family of suburban Chicago.

Diane Keating's son, Austin, had the infant form and a particularly lethal form of PKD known as autosomal recessive polycystic kidney disease (ARPKD), but it was not her first experience with this disease.

"Our first child, Ryan, died of ARPKD shortly after birth," said Keating, who did not know that she and her husband were genetically predisposed to have children with this disease.

Austin, her third child, was diagnosed with ARPKD in her



To look at five-year-old Austin Keating, you would never know he was born with a life-threatening genetic disease.

32nd week of pregnancy. To save his life, she later donated one of her kidneys to her son. Today at age 5, Austin is a healthy child, but it has not been an easy victory for the Keatings.

"Austin has shown us how to meet the battles and fight this disease," said Diane Keating.

Research currently being done offers hope to the Keating family and other families affected by PKD. The recent discovery of the genes that cause PKD and ARPKD may help develop new treatments and an eventual cure.

Research into potential cures for PKD is funded by the PKD Foundation, an international not-for-profit organization based in Kansas City, Mo. It is the only organization worldwide devoted to programs of PKD research, patient education, public awareness and advocacy for PKD families.

Since 1984, the foundation has funded \$10 million dollars of research. More information can be found at www.pkdcure.org or by calling 800-PKD-CURE (753-2873).