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NEW GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO KEEP TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS 'FIT FOR LIFE!'

A new worldwide campaign to demonstrate what transplant recipients can achieve with their second chance at life gets underway in Chicago, USA, this weekend.

And Ronald Grainger, a 66-year-old kidney recipient from Dublin, Ireland, is one of 13 new faces who will be showcased as part of the new Fit for Life! initiative.

The initiative, proudly supported by Astellas Pharma, will be launched when the New Zealand All Blacks take on Ireland at Soldier Field in Chicago on Saturday, November 5.

The World Transplant Games Federation announced in August the creation of 'Fit for Life!', a global initiative, to help transplant recipients re-engage in physical activity and organized sports.

The initiative has the dual role of helping inspire all transplant recipients to lead active lives post-transplant and to demonstrate to the global public the importance of organ and tissue donation to the people whose lives have been saved.

Transplant recipients from around the world were invited to write an essay on how they were being 'fit for life!'. More than 200 submissions were received and judged by an independent panel chaired by renowned renal physician, Professor Jeremy Chapman AC, from Australia.

There were 12 successful applicants. They have since been joined by Kate Phillips who is featured in a new television commercial promoting the cause. The ambassadors will be unveiled to a huge stadium and television audience on Saturday. The event is part of an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the most amount of sign-ups for organ donation. Legendary All Black Jonah Lomu was a kidney transplant recipient, and both former All Black wing Joeli Vidiri and former Ireland lock Richard Costello have received kidney transplants.

WTGF President, Mr Chris Thomas, said all our ambassadors have a special role to prove to other recipients the potential of their new lives.

"Often people who have received a transplant fear damaging their new organ, they are frightened to participate in sport. The lives and sporting activities of our new ambassadors showcase not only what's possible but also demonstrate there are really no boundaries for transplant recipients," Mr Thomas concluded.

The WTGF believes a healthy lifestyle is important for everyone, but it's especially important after an organ transplant as poor lifestyle habits can increase the risk of organ rejection.¹ Additionally, studies have shown that those who are obese may have more health problems after a transplant than someone who weighs less.² For example, the long term success of a kidney transplant depends on several factors including proper diet, exercise, and weight loss, if needed.

The Fit for Life! Ambassadors will become role models in their own communities visiting transplant clinics and sport development days to help recipients take the first steps to an active life. The Ambassadors will also help inspire the public to discuss organ and tissue donation with their families and to sign on to local organ donation registers where applicable.

The appointments will be for a period of two years. The WTGF will work closely with its member country organisations to grow Fit for Life! as an initiative complementing the work of the WTGF with the staging of the World Summer and Winter Transplant Games.

The next Summer World Transplant Games will be held in Malaga, Spain, in June 2017 where all new ambassadors will be introduced to the games' participants.

Please visit wtgf.org to learn more about Fit for Life! and the Fit for Life! Ambassadors program.

Editors Please Note: A photograph of Ronald in Chicago can be emailed if required.

About the World Transplant Games Federation

The World Transplant Games Federation unites transplant recipients from across the world to promote the success of organ and tissue donation and life-saving transplantation. With more than 70 member countries, the WTGF stages the world's largest awareness event for transplantation, the Summer World Games, to inspire the public to consider organ and tissue donation. The WTGF also inspires recipients to rehabilitate following their transplant and keep fit and healthy in their ongoing journey.

Contacts:

World Transplant Games Federation

Kim Renyard, Executive Manager

+27-84-505-5049

kim.renyard@wtgf.org

1 Managing Your Health After an Organ Transplant. (2014, July 16). Retrieved July 28, 2016, from <http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/organ-transplant-after-the-transplant?page=3>

2 Lentine KL, et, all (2012). Obesity and kidney transplant candidates: how big is too big for transplantation? Am J Nephrol. 2012;36(6):575-86. doi: 10.1159/000345476.

AMBASSADOR PROFILES

Name	Quotation	Picture
Chantal Bausch Age 23 Heart Recipient Bremen, Germany	'After a one year stay in hospital my first priority was muscle growth. My start after the transplantation was bumpy but increased steadily. I would be glad to share my story with people all over the world to convince them that organ donation is a good thing, it is the gift of life!'	
Matthew Field Age 29 Kidney Recipient Manawatu, New Zealand	'It is important not to underestimate the implications of being confident enough to be involved in sports and physical activity during and after a serious illness. This makes programs like Fit for Life and the Transplant Games all the more special as they get people involved no matter their level of skill, experience, fitness, or social status.'	
Cristian Ezequiel Garrido Age 25 Lungs Recipient Cordoba, Argentina	'I have found in sports a tool for self-care, and way of spreading awareness on organ donation and Cystic Fibrosis and leading by example.'	
Ronald Grainger Age 66 Kidney Recipient Dublin, Ireland	'The gift of life as a result of receiving an organ transplant is something to be treasured. As with any precious gift, it should be cared for, protected and even proudly displayed. Keeping fit is one way of doing that, enabling yourself and others to see what a successfully transplanted organ can do to restore a wonderful quality of life. As I have proven, you are never too old. Fitness and health go hand in hand.'	
Emma Hilton Age 26 Heart Recipient Middlesex, United Kingdom	'The Fit for Life program is key and, even though problems can arise following transplantation, with the right attitude and determination obstacles can be overcome.'	
Claude Laflamme Age 53 Kidney Recipient Ontario, Canada	'Being blessed to be an organ transplant recipient is a powerful incentive to have a healthy life style that includes physical activity, healthy nutrition, sharing the joy of healthy living and empowering others to do the same.'	

Suretha Maartens Age 29 Kidney Recipient Mpumalanga, South Africa	'I pray, laugh, train my mind, train my body and life each and every day as any other person, but within myself I know I am living harder, stronger and happier because I know I have received a second change, and I decided to make it AWESOME!'	
Ashleigh Mounger Age 28 Liver Recipient South Carolina, USA	'It's so important to educate and encourage yourself to push past what you think your limits are, as well as encouraging others to do the same. Our heroes said "yes" to organ and tissue donation, so that we can live, so let's honor those gifts and wear our scars with pride and get FIT by staying active and eating healthy.'	
Kate Phillips Age 31 Heart and Double Lung Recipient Brisbane, Australia	<p>"I still am discovering things that I can do now that I couldn't do before. Whether it be the ability to sleep flat, sing through a song without taking a break or being able to walk and talk at the same time, my life has dramatically improved.</p> <p>"Since my transplant I have been able to become a triathlete – something that I had wanted to do for years. I train regularly with a triathlon club and participate in triathlon and running events.</p>	
Sonia Vargas Ropero Age 33 Kidney & Pancreas Recipient Bogota, Colombia	'I believe that we - the transplanted - are the best example of love and altruism of thousands of people who work in this process - donors, families, doctors, developers, administrators, nurses, among others.'	
Luis Francisco Sanz Diaz Age 28 Kidney Recipient Madrid, Spain	<p>'Recipients are experts of falling and rising stronger, it's part of our life and we have to embrace it.'</p> <p>"I'm a recipient without limits! True success is not crossing the finish line, it's the everyday fight on the way to accomplish our personal challenges.'</p>	
Montague Summers Age 27 Bone Marrow Recipient Cairns, Australia	'The true value lies beyond breaking records, but helping those beside me to realize what can be achieved if they believe too.'	
Hitosho Totsuka Age 47 Kidney Recipient Japan	'I am active in spreading the magnificence of organ transplantation through sports to many people, and continue to exercise reasonably using the kidney my mother graciously donated to me. I would be happy to contribute in any fashion no matter how small to the development of organ transplantation.'	