

The mission of the Georgia Transplant Foundation is to help meet the needs of organ transplant candidates, recipients, and their families by providing information and education regarding organ transplantation, granting financial assistance and being an advocate for sustaining and enriching lives everyday.

# The Georgia Transplant Newsletter

A Publication for Transplant Candidates, Recipients and Families in Georgia

Summer 2003

## Sold-out Spring Training Raises \$400,000 for Georgia Transplant Foundation

For the third straight year, the 755 Club at Turner Field was home of Tom Glavine's Spring Training, an annual event benefiting the Georgia Transplant Foundation.

The January 30 event would not have been a success without the support of more than 100 sponsors including Brayson Homes, Greenwood Homes, Benchmark Developers and The Piedmont Nephrology Group.

For 11 years, Tom and Chris Glavine have graciously supported GTF by hosting Spring Training. The event celebrates the second chance at life made available by transplantation while raising awareness and funds to support Georgia residents impacted by transplantation. Attendees enjoyed a live and silent auction and the opportunity to mingle with sports celebrities. This year, more than 800 guests challenged superstars including John Smoltz, Kevin Milwood, Chipper Jones, Andruw Jones and Gary Sheffield to games of pool, ping-pong and black jack to benefit the organization. The Falcon Cheerleaders were even on hand to cheer on the crowd!

We're also pleased to know that Glavine will continue to support GTF even in a Mets uniform. As

GTF founder Tommy Smith stated, "Tom is a baseball pitcher in a uniform to most, but to GTF he is much more. He is genuinely dedicated to supporting his community by helping assist organ transplant recipients in the state of Georgia through the event he helped create, Spring Training." For information and sponsorship opportunities for Spring Training 2004, please visit our website at [www.gatransplant.org](http://www.gatransplant.org).

### in this Issue

page 1: Sold-out Spring Training Raises \$400,000 for Georgia Transplant Foundation

page 2: Volunteer Focus & Events  
7th Annual Wellnes Conference  
Share your Life Weekend  
Heart Recipient Nyrobi Brown at Braves Game  
Calendar of Events  
Need Help With Your Taxes?

page 3: GTF News  
The Executive Director's Report  
A Letter from the Board President

page 4: JobLink  
The Golden Ticket  
Welcome JobLink Advisory Council  
Five Steps to a Successful Interview

page 5: Financial Service  
Support Groups Provide Education, Friendship

page 6: Living by Learning  
Skin Cancer in Transplant Recipients

### What is GTF?

The Georgia Transplant Foundation is a nonprofit organization providing financial and educational support for solid organ transplant candidates, recipients and their families throughout the state of Georgia.



Top: Tom Glavine and Eddie Wagaman share a laugh with GTF founder Tommy Smith.



Bottom: Tom Glavine with Mr. and Mrs. Chris Beaty, owners of Greenwood Homes, a \$25,000 Spring Training sponsor.

## Calendar

### August 28

GTF Fundraising Class,  
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

### September 5 – 7

Nephrology Update,  
Savannah

### September 19

NFL Player's Association Golf  
Tournament, Chateau Elan

### November 7 & 8

Wellness Conference, Cobb  
Galleria Center

### November 7

GTF Fundraising Class,  
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

For more information on these events, please call 770.457.3796.

## Need Help with Your Taxes?

GTF and the Georgia Society of CPAs (GSCPA) have partnered to provide individual tax consultation to transplant candidates and recipients at no charge. This agreement was facilitated through the Young CPA committee of GSCPA that acts as the driving force for community service projects for all members. GTF and the GSPCA will work to match qualified candidates and recipients in need of tax consultation with CPAs in their geographic area. If you're interested, please contact GTF at 1.866. GA TX 411.

## Mentors

### Be a mentor.

The Mentor Project provides one-to-one support for people new to transplantation by those successfully living with a transplant. All mentors are screened by the transplant center and complete a full day of training.

### Request a mentor.

Adult, pediatric and living donor mentors are available to patients and transplant centers throughout Georgia. Our goal is to give hope by providing support and a connection to transplant resources.

### Contact:

Theresa Huffman  
770.729.8003  
thuffmanlk@aol.com

## 7th Annual Wellness Conference

Mark your calendars! GTF is gearing up for another informative conference for candidates, recipients and family members impacted by transplantation. This year's event will be held at the Cobb Galleria Centre, Saturday, November 8. The conference features medical updates from physicians representing the five transplant centers in Georgia covering topics including Endocrine, Insurance and Medicare, Psychological and Emotional Health, Dermatology and Medications. Pre-transplant candidates are invited to attend a dinner Friday, November 7, for an informative session on resources available in Georgia from organizations including LifeLink, Team Georgia, The National Kidney Foundation, The Medications Access Program (MAP) and the Mason House.

For more information, please visit [www.gatransplant.org](http://www.gatransplant.org) or call 1.866.GA TX 411.

Dr. James Wynn, transplant surgeon at the Medical College of Georgia, joins kidney recipients at 2002 Wellness Conference.



## Share Your Life Weekend

Georgia's religious organizations will unite November 14-16 to celebrate the annual Share Your Life Weekend to increase awareness about the critical need for organ, tissue and eye donation. Share Your Life Weekend, sponsored by the Georgia Coalition on Donation, involves the development and distribution of informational packets and religious education lessons to key religious denomination leaders across the state. Special program elements also are included for African-American congregations and Jewish synagogues.

There are several ways that religious organizations and clergy can take part in Share Your Life Weekend. Ideas include sermons, bulletin announcements, speakers, donor card distribution, marquee signage and adult and youth education materials. To order free materials for your organization or to arrange a speaker, please call (404) 880-4600.

## Heart Recipient, Nyrobi Brown, Throws First Pitch at Braves Game

Nyrobi Brown, a Savannah resident, is successfully living with a new heart he received at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta two years ago. On June 26th he had the opportunity to throw the first pitch for the Atlanta Braves and successfully made it into the glove of Andruw Jones. Jones bid \$8,000 for the pitch at GTF's Spring Training and donated it back for GTF's use. Brown's family received temporary housing assistance from GTF during his transplant.



Atlanta Braves centerfielder, Andruw Jones, and heart recipient, Nyrobi Brown, head out to throw the first pitch at Turner Field.

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**The Executive Director's Report**

The vision of GTF founder Tommy Smith is to establish an organization to alleviate the hardships associated with organ transplantation. I'm pleased to report that GTF continues to support this vision and currently serves more than 1,500 transplant candidates, recipients and family members annually through financial assistance programs, the Mentor Project, JobLink and the annual Wellness Conference.

As GTF enters its second decade of service to the transplant community, the board of directors and staff are committed to enhancing existing programs and creating new programs to enrich the lives of transplant candidates and recipients.

During the next year, GTF will focus on creating greater awareness throughout the state allowing us to serve more of the transplant population and increase funding sources. Our inaugural Marketing Communications Committee is charged with assisting GTF in executing this goal through the implementation of statewide communications objectives.

I am also pleased to announce that additional corporations have joined the JobLink Advisory Council. This will allow more transplant candidates, recipients and family members to seek meaningful employment with benefits or continue their education.

It is an exciting time at GTF as we look forward to successfully carrying on the vision of Tommy Smith.

Sincerely,



David Bakelman



**A Letter from the Board President**

For 11 years, the Georgia Transplant Foundation (GTF) has provided assistance to transplant recipients and families throughout the state of Georgia – through financial aid, provision of education and information, and personal support. Our efforts have been led primarily by a dedicated group of volunteers and, recently, an ever-growing team of talented staff.

David Bakelman, GTF's Executive Director, came on board last fall and has already made a significant impact on the organization. David came to us with more than 10 years of experience in management and development of nonprofits and is responsible for managing all operations of GTF.

As our organization grows in size, we also strive to grow in service to the transplant community. We are focused on increasing the number of people served statewide, strengthening our current programs and raising awareness about GTF and transplant needs within the business community. Currently, GTF is mapping out its efforts for the next three years in order to more effectively assist those impacted by transplantation.

In this newsletter you'll see a number of pictures from our record-setting 11th annual Spring Training fundraising event. Thanks to all of the GTF sponsors and athletes who gave their time and talent to make it a success. A special thank you to Tom and Chris Glavine for their continued support. The \$400,000 raised will have a positive, meaningful impact on the transplant community.

We appreciate your interest and involvement and look forward to continuing our mission of service.

Sincerely,



Ken Murphy,  
Senior Vice President and  
General Counsel  
Acuity Brands, Inc.

## The Golden Ticket

Wendell Gant received his kidney transplant in 2001 and has been unemployed and receiving SSDI since 1998. Upon receiving his “ticket” from the Social Security Administration under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program, he contacted JobLink. Ticket to Work is a nationwide initiative designed to bring major positive change to the lives of individuals with disabilities by providing the training and support needed to go to work. JobLink, a Georgia Transplant Foundation return to work program offering job readiness training and placement services for candidates, recipients and dependents, became a certified employment network in the Ticket to Work program in 2002.

Many transplant recipients are unable to return to the same career they enjoyed before receiving a transplant due to the increased health risks. JobLink’s career counselor provided Gant with an Individual Written Plan (IWP) outlining his goals and strategy to transition into a customer service representative position. This opportunity allows Gant to utilize skills learned in previous employment experiences without jeopardizing his health. JobLink also provided financial assistance to receive the necessary training to become more marketable. Upon completion of the training, JobLink will help prepare him for interviewing through its Job Club

program, a quarterly class offered at GTF. In addition, job development and retention services will be available to enhance his employment success and ensure a smooth transition back into the workforce.

Gant will attend the Perimeter College Center for Continuing & Corporate Education this summer to update his computer skills – a major step to returning to a productive lifestyle with meaningful employment.

Joining the Ticket to Work program as an Employment Network is part of GTF’s continuous effort to offer superior services to transplant candidates, recipients and their families. Please contact JobLink at 770-457-9602 for information on this program or any of its services.

## Welcome JobLink Advisory Council

A new support system for GTF’s ever-growing JobLink has been formed in an effort to build corporate support for the program and broaden possibilities for employment for JobLink clients. The council meets quarterly and consists of business leaders, human resource professionals and university business school associates. Thanks to these leaders for their support of GTF.

Standing (L-R): Raymond Harris, Jeff Thomas, David Bakelman, Linda Smith, Scott Blackard, Linda Edwards, Joe Stott, Calandra Johnson, Dr. Jennie Perryman, Council Chair

Seated (L-R): Vivian Tomlinson, Yolanda Salas



JobLink is a return to work program offering job readiness training and placement services for transplant candidates, recipients and dependents.

### JobLink Services

- Career Testing & Development
- Employment Skills Training
- Social Security Issues Assistance
- Resource for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Resume Development
- Interview Techniques
- Vocational Evaluations & Profiles
- Job Placement & Follow-up
- American with Disabilities Act Education

### 5 Steps to a Successful Interview:

1. **Do your research!** Learn everything you can about the company or organization before your interview. The better prepared you are before the interview the more confident you will be in the interview.
2. **Dress the part!** Make sure you are appropriately dressed for your interview. Always be starched and clean.
3. **Be prepared!** Bring an extra copy of your resume and a notebook to write down pertinent information. Be ready to answer standard interview questions and tout your accomplishments.
4. **Interview the interviewer!** It is always a good idea to have questions prepared ahead of time to ask the interviewer about the company and position you’re interviewing for. This is when your research comes in handy.
5. **Always, always, always follow-up with a thank-you note or letter!** This is the professional finishing touch to a successful interview. Send a letter or note of thanks to the person who interviewed you. This shows that you are not only qualified but also considerate.



## Financial Assistance

Through education and direct assistance, GTF's Financial Assistance programs help bridge the gap between overwhelming financial responsibility and a workable solution for those impacted by an organ transplant.



### Financial Assistance Services

**Housing:** Helps with temporary housing costs specifically related to transplant care.

**Dental:** Provides grants to both pre- and post-transplant recipients/candidates to assist in accessing appropriate dental care directly related to transplant needs.

**Insurance Premium Assistance:** Provides temporary financial assistance to non-Medicare covered candidates/recipients for the cost of individual insurance premiums.

**Living Donor Assistance:** Provides assistance to living donors for financial hardships created by their donation.

**Temporary Medication Assistance:** Available assistance on a limited basis according to the circumstance and time needed to implement a permanent plan for medications.

**Pediatric Specialty Assistance:** Helps in circumstances unique to pediatric candidates/recipients and their families.

**Access to Care:** Helps transplant candidates who need to fundraise to pay for the high costs of post-transplant medications and related expenses.

**Georgia Transplant 411:** Comprehensive information source for all transplant recipients/candidates (Call toll free 1.866. GA TX 411).

**Educational Scholarships:** Available to students presently enrolled in an accredited institution or beginning such a program.



Governor Perdue and the First Lady join living donors and recipients on the capital steps at the 2003 Donor Day ceremony.

## Support Groups Provide Education, Friendship

Cathy Mallinger has two life-threatening lung diseases and has been waiting for more than one year to receive a double lung transplant. This is an unimaginable situation for most people and uncommon in transplant situations. Fortunately for Cathy, and 20 others in the Douglasville area, there is a support group sponsored by the Georgia Transplant Foundation (GTF).

Those impacted by transplantation face many challenges that may leave them feeling overwhelmed, afraid and alone. It can be difficult to cope or talk to even the most supportive family members and friends. The Georgia Transplant Foundation began organizing regional support groups in the fall of 2002. Volunteers throughout the state facilitate groups allowing those in similar situations to share stories, words of encouragement and assistance.

Donna Schwedt and Michelle Freda lead the Douglasville support group that Cathy attends. The group welcomes pre-transplant candidates, post-transplant recipients and family members from all organ types. Monthly meetings often include speakers covering transplant topics of interest but, most importantly, meetings provide a time to share.

"The meetings and the people attending have been extremely helpful with their knowledge about the transplant experience," said Mallinger. "I have also made some very good friends."

The Douglasville group meets on the first Monday of the month at Shepherd of the Hills Methodist Church from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. To Join the Douglasville group call Donna 770-505-3503 or Michelle 770-577-0506.

Sandy McMATH, director of patient services for GTF, and Kyle Curry, 3-year old liver recipient, share a smile at the 2003 Donor Day ceremonies at the Georgia State Capital.



## Dr. James Wynn

Dr. James Wynn is the Professor of Surgery and the Surgical Director for the Transplant Program at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta. His clinical and research interests include renal and pancreatic transplantation and laproscopic surgery.



## Skin Cancer in Transplant Recipients

Transplantation can be a double-edged sword, with its tremendous benefits being accompanied by the risks of the transplant surgery and of the medications required to prevent rejection after surgery. One of the risks of long-term anti-rejection treatment is the development of skin cancer. While skin cancer may be only a nuisance for many people, it has the potential to be life-threatening in transplant patients. Thankfully, effective treatment and prevention are available.

**Background.** Skin cancers are the most common malignancies seen in transplant patients. It is much more common in areas with intense sun exposure, such as Georgia, with up to 70 percent of patients developing skin cancer during the 20 years following transplantation. Although the areas of the skin that are exposed to sun are at highest risk, skin cancer can develop in covered areas as well. Older patients are at higher risk because of the many years they have been in the sun, as are patients who have worked outdoors. Heart transplant recipients are at higher risk than kidney recipients because they tend to be older and to require higher doses of anti-rejection medicines.

**Treatment.** Skin cancers in transplant patients frequently occur in multiple locations. Typically, a patient will notice raised roughened areas on their face, arms or hands that do not go away by themselves. Some skin lesions, such as actinic keratoses or warts, may lead to the

development of skin cancer and should be removed. Once present, skin cancers should be completely removed by a dermatologist and submitted for laboratory examination to ensure that all of the skin cancer was removed. If the cancer has already spread to the lymph nodes, removal of the nodes may be necessary. Following treatment, patients should continue to see a dermatologist regularly to monitor for recurrence and for the development of new skin cancers.

**Prevention.** Avoiding sun exposure, especially between the hours of 10am and 4pm, and using sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater are important steps for all transplant recipients to take. In addition, consider wearing a broad-brimmed hat and sun-protective clothing if forced to be in the sun. A dermatologist may recommend taking medications by mouth or applying medications to skin to help prevent new cancers from developing.

## Enriching Lives Everyday



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