

BREAKING BARRIERS FOR CYSTIC FIBROSIS

TODAY'S DEDICATION

DAY 15: FRIDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2023



Jackie

My name is Jackie, I'm 31 years old and two years ago I was gifted two beautiful new lungs. Cystic Fibrosis had ravaged my original lungs, scarred, and damaged from infection after infection. They served me well but could no longer. Leaving me on the waitlist for a life-saving double lung transplant.

November 2020 my call came. While I celebrated, another family grieved their loved one, making the selfless decision to donate their organs and save several others. I will forever be grateful for this second chance at life, for this extra time on earth.

Life pre-transplant was a struggle. I was on supplemental oxygen 24/7 and overnight ventilation for the 18 months prior. I couldn't work, I couldn't make my bed without feeling out of breath, I couldn't even stand in the shower. I felt lost, alone, and scared of death as I felt it creep closer and closer every single day. Living felt like a chore. I was recently married to my husband, but instead of family planning, we were talking about the possible what ifs of me not surviving. It was a terrifying time in our lives.

While my transplant has allowed me to breathe easy, a transplant isn't a cure, it comes with risks and it's like trading one set of medical issues for another. Today I take more medication than I did before, I continue to have regular checkups, I have a restricted diet, tremors from medications, I'm at a higher risk of skin cancer, I will never carry a child as its far too risky, and my mental health has suffered immensely knowing that someone had to die so I could survive. If I could have kept my original lungs I would have opted to.

Over my lifetime Cystic Fibrosis has taken so much away from me. The ability to breathe, the chance of carrying a child, and many, many friends. Let's not let it take any more away from us.



