

# TransplantWorld

2019 | Issue 1

Journal of the



World Transplant Games Federation

Powered by the gift of life

# CAREGIVERS

Selfless supporters helping  
build bridges to a new life

*PLUS!*

- ★ *NewcastleGateshead – here we come* ★
- ★ *Winter Games set for Banff, Canada* ★
- ★ *The WTGF helping others* ★



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# Greatest Gifts of All

Organ donation is undoubtedly one of the most selfless acts we engage in. But behind the scenes there are many other people, often unheralded, who help bring transplantation to life. Our Guest Editorial Writer, **Shelley Spector**, the Director of Social Work Services, at the Living Bank, Houston, Texas, USA pays tribute to the caregivers – the supporters who sit by the bedside but are there helping to build a bridge to a new life.



I have had the privilege to work as a clinical social worker for 22 years, beginning my career in the neonatal intensive care unit. I found my true calling when I was given the opportunity to work in transplant. Over the years, as a transplant social worker, I have witnessed countless acts of human kindness, compassion, sacrifice and perseverance.

One role that has been especially rewarding is my work as a facilitator for a Caregivers of Transplant Patients support group. The act of caregiving is a gift of sacrifice, freely given, to help their loved one remain healthy enough for a transplant and navigate through the web of medical appointments and tests while, at the same time, managing the challenges of organ failure. A caregiver's undying commitment never ceases to amaze me. They give up so much; many of them have moved from their homes, left their jobs, suffered great financial strain and endured the rollercoaster of emotions that is guaranteed along the path to transplant. A caregiver is

essential to the preparation for, and the subsequent recovery from, an organ transplant. Without a caregiver there would be no transplant.

Caregivers are the people behind the scenes. They are husbands, wives, children, siblings, friends and neighbours. They are the people who attend the long, sometimes grueling evaluation process with patients. They are the ones sleeping on the hard chairs in waiting rooms all night to be close to the ICU where their loved ones fight for their lives. They are the voice and advocate for the transplant patient.

Clearly, the most extraordinary gift of transplant is the act of organ donation itself, whether from a deceased or living organ donor. Deceased organ donation may involve great sorrow for the loss of one life while being a source of immense gratitude for giving life to another. In contrast, the very nature of living organ donation is a gift that can bring great and unexpected rewards to the both the donor and recipient alike. All organ

donors are a gift, a gift of life to someone who would surely die without receiving an organ transplant.

Through the years I have had the chance to work in many areas of transplant allowing me to experience some of the most profound expressions of humanity. Transplant is a place where people come together to save lives, to help one another, to learn from one another and make a difference. Watching the renewal of life spring back into the eyes of a transplant patient, seeing the sheer joy on the faces of their family members; observing the gratification of hospital staff and surgeons as they witness the fruition of their work, another successful transplant; these are the greatest gifts of all.

**Shelley Spector, LCSW, CCTSW**  
Director of Social Work Services  
The Living Bank  
Houston, USA

**“A caregiver is essential to the preparation for, and the subsequent recovery from, an organ transplant. Without a caregiver there would be no transplant.”**



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

# Celebrate the triumphs over troubled waters



WTGF President Chris Thomas examines the values of the Transplant Games and their potential for greater good

**H**ow appropriate that for these World Transplant Games we converge on a city with seven distinctive bridges over the River Tyne?

Bridges are often seen as a metaphor for life. A 'bridge too far', 'bridge over troubled waters' and 'men build too many walls and not enough bridges'.

The last quote, attributed to English physicist and astronomer Sir Isaac Newton who lived between 1642 and 1726, is as applicable today as it was 300 years or so ago.

No doubt transplant recipients can relate to the first two quotes. I am sure there were many times in their lives when indeed they thought a second chance at life was indeed a 'bridge too far'.

Yet in August almost 1,500 transplant recipients, supported by another 900 or so supporters and loved ones, will converge on Newcastle/Gateshead to celebrate their triumph over troubled waters.

This metaphor started me thinking. It is a recurring theme about the value of transplantation. In this current world environment where more and more the tendency is to withdraw into what we know, to feel safer with those whom we regularly associate, it is inspiring that so many people from so many different backgrounds come together under the

flag of the World Transplant Games Federation.

Transplantation really is the unifying symbol of all that is good with this world. In a world where too often we end up questioning our faith in our fellow mankind, it seems incongruous that while all those associated with transplantation can dedicate their lives to saving others, there are others prepared to use force to take life away from others.

## Hearts and minds

If only we could spread the will of the World Transplant Games and everything it stands for into the hearts and minds of those harbouring these ill wills?

What values would we share with them? If we could bottle up the Games and serve it as an elixir what ingredients would we include? In no particular order:

1. A sense of belonging. I sense recipients attending the Games walk away knowing they are not alone in their journey and despite all their challenges, someone out there has done it tougher.
2. That reality check seems to build resilience for our people to tackle whatever comes their way.
3. A fair sense of competition. While the

Games serve to promote the gift of life, the competitive streak still flows in the veins of many if not all competitors.

4. But at every Games I also see acts of kindness emerging during competition. Someone stopping to help another. People giving others a sporting chance.

5. Enjoyment. At every Games it is obvious people are enjoying themselves and the friendship of others from all across the world. The chance meeting at their first Games developing into a bond that spans distance and time. Goodness, marriages have even resulted!

6. And of course a sense of gratitude. Gratitude towards donors, both living and deceased, to the carers and loved ones and to the doctors and nurses who plied their skills to make it possible.

All of this shines in the faces and smiles of those at the World Transplant Games. I feel privileged to be associated with such an inspiring event. I look forward to seeing your smiles in Newcastle/Gateshead.

**Chris Thomas**  
President

**“It is inspiring that so many people from so many different backgrounds come together under the flag of the World Transplant Games Federation.”**

# The Mountains are calling!



**Dave Smith** of the Canadian Transplant Association invites you to be a part of the 11th World Transplant Winter Games 23rd -28th February 2020.



PHOTO: PAUL ZIZKA

It is our great pleasure on behalf of the Canadian Transplant Association to welcome the world to come and play in the beauty of the majestic Canadian Rockies. After a scenic 90 min bus ride from the International Airport in Calgary, Alberta you will arrive in one of the most popular ski resort towns in western Canada, Banff, AB.

As a tourist destination, Banff offers many amazing restaurants, accommodations and outdoor activities throughout the winter and summer months. Whether you spend your days skiing the slopes of Mt. Norquay, Sunshine or Lake Louise, or take a gondola ride to the top of Sulphur Mountain or spend a day visiting the boutique shops in town, a favourite way to finish the day is a good soak in the natural hot springs. Discovered in 1883, Banff Hot Springs offers a great place to relax and recuperate in water heated naturally from a geothermal flow coming from 3 km inside the earth's crust.

The Alpine events will be taking place at Mt. Norquay, which is best known for



PHOTO: PAUL ZIZKA

supporting alpine ski racing in Canada. The ski hill hosts many local events as well as major international ski races. It is home to the Banff Alpine Racers and current members of the Canadian Alpine Ski Team. Mt Norquay hosts beautiful views of the town of Banff, and a wide variety of downhill runs that will challenge the best skiers and welcome the beginners.

The Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park will be host for our cross-country skiing and biathlon events. This site was developed to host the Nordic ski events of the 1988 Olympic Winter Games. While offering over 65 kms of groomed and natural trails, it is one of the few operational Olympic Nordic Skiing venues in the world. This centre is a dream destination for those who are looking for spectacular views and endless kilometres of trails.

The sport of curling is a favourite pastime for many Canadians, whether

participating in local events or watching the international events on the television.

Curling for the Winter Games will be taking place at The Fenlands Banff Recreation Centre, located just a short walk from main street Banff.

We are truly excited with the opportunity to host the first World Transplant Winter Games in Canada. We will promote and celebrate the gift of life and honour our donors and donor families through the spirit of competition and camaraderie. Banff will be a place to meet new faces and reunite with fellow transplant recipients from past Games. We look forward to seeing you here, experiencing the beautiful people and places in the Canadian Rockies.

## David Smith

Past President, Canadian Transplant Association  
World Transplant Winter Games 2020 Local Organising Committee

## 11th World Transplant Winter Games FACTFILE



**When:** 23-28 February 2020

**Where:** Banff, Canada

**Venues:** Mount Norquay, Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park and The Fenlands Banff Recreation Centre

**Hosts:** Canadian Transplant Association



WORLD TRANSPLANT GAMES

# NewcastleGateshead 2019

Everything you need to know about the World Transplant Games 2019

PHOTO: GRAEME PEACOCK

## LIFE SAVER to LIFE CHANGER *Symposium and Sports Science Event*

To coincide with the World Transplant Games in NewcastleGateshead in August, Newcastle University is hosting a Transplant Symposium and Sports Science Event on 17 August. The symposium is themed around celebrating the impact of organ donation and transplantation and will be attended by over 170 clinicians, academics, sports scientists, physiotherapists and transplant athletes from around the world.

The symposium examines the contribution of Newcastle Hospitals and Newcastle University to the field of transplantation medicine and the use of exercise and health promotion as part of a healthy lifestyle following organ transplantation. Speakers include internationally renowned surgeons John Dark and Derek Manas of the UK's very first Institute of Transplantation at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. The keynote address will be from globally recognised cardiologist and London

Marathon Medical Director, Sanjay Sharma from St George's Hospital London.

Professor Andrew Fisher, Dean of Clinical Medicine at Newcastle University said: "As well as attracting experts on transplantation from around the world, the conference will help us achieve our aims of increasing awareness of the importance of organ donation and how the UK law is changing in April 2020 as well as encouraging transplant recipients to regain their fitness after transplant surgery."

World Transplant Games Federation President, Chris Thomas said it was important to increase medical knowledge of the value of physical activity and sport in the transplant population. "Patients sometimes have a fear of what they can do with their new transplant. And sometimes this is reinforced by health care professionals who adopt a traditional safety-first approach. However, we now know that with good preparation

and support along the way, transplant recipients can achieve anything."

Alongside the symposium will be a public engagement event at Newcastle University Campus where members of the public can take part in a huge range of activities, designed to test and measure their strength and fitness. Participants will get the opportunity to meet experts in sports and exercise science and learn how fitness is measured and optimised while also celebrating the impact that organ donation has on the life of transplant recipients.

Professor Fisher added: "The public engagement event will encourage conversations around the topic of organ donation especially with families and loved ones."

*Registration for the Symposium is now closed but the free Sports Science Event is open to all. [www.worldtransplantgames.org/symposium/](http://www.worldtransplantgames.org/symposium/)*

## Social Programme

The Opening of the Games will see the athletes' parade through Newcastle City Centre accompanied by musicians and street theatre performers. Festivities continue in Sports Central with official team photographs, food and drink and entertainment which will celebrate transplantation and sport.

Tyne Takeover is the theme of the Cultural Evening – presenting participants with a flavour of the North East with music, art, themed pop ups and taster sessions and the opportunity to explore the Centre for Life with its acclaimed Space exhibition and planetarium.

The Gala celebration will be animated with street performers and music, allowing participants to socialise over food before taking their seats for the award ceremony. The evening then shifts to party time with dancing, family activities, live music and a performance from renowned cover band, the Bootleg Beatles.

## Excursions and tours

Games organisers have pulled a programme of tours and excursions together which will help participants to make the most of their visit to the beautiful North East of England. The escorted tours by coach take in the best of the region's history, fascinating culture and natural beauty. Options include: Alnwick Castle and Garden; Farne Islands, Seahouses and the Northumberland Coast; Durham Cathedral, City of Durham and Beamish Museum; Hadrian's Wall and Corbridge.

There is also a Tyne River Cruise available and afternoon tea with a visit to Newcastle Castle.

[www.worldtransplantgames.org/tours-and-excursions/](http://www.worldtransplantgames.org/tours-and-excursions/)

## A taste of NewcastleGateshead

Participants at the Games are encouraged to explore NewcastleGateshead and trying out local food and drink is a must. Geordie treats to try include...

**Pease Pudding:** A yellow savoury dish made of split peas and often served with ham in a local stottie cake (bread) or in a saveloy dip – a sausage smeared with mustard in a bread roll with pease pudding and stuffing.

**Fish and chips:** Close to the sea there are lots of 'chippies'. Try cod and steaming hot chips with mushy peas.

**Pan Haggerty:** Sliced potatoes with onions, cheese and cabbage, perfect topped with a fried egg or bacon.

**Lindisfarne Oysters:** Delicious just opened with a squeeze of lemon.

**Craft ale:** NewcastleGateshead has a vibrant craft ale scene – Wylam Brewery, the Bridge Tavern, Crown Posada and City Tavern are some of the favourites for cask, keg and bottled brews.



## WTG2019 in numbers

**2,237** participants from 60 countries will compete in 15 sports across 13 venues.

**Athletes:** 722 kidney, 304 liver, 152 heart, 101 bone marrow, 67 double lung, 16 pancreas/kidney, 15 lung, 5 heart and lung, 4 Pancreas, 2 intestine.

**86** living donors/donor families.

**84** The oldest participant is 84 years old (male) from France, competing in cycling 30k, road race, 50m breaststroke, 400m track and 1500m track.

**6** The youngest participant is aged 6 (female) from Argentina competing in ball throw, long jump and 50m sprint.

**510** The biggest team is GB&NI with 510 competitors followed by USA with 214..

**1,594** The most popular sports are track and field with 1594 entries.

**58** The Local Organising Committee of the NewcastleGateshead Games selected archery and football from the optional sports – football has long foundations in NewcastleGateshead and archery is growing in popularity - 38 participants signed up to do archery and 58 football.

**3** Participants will stay at accommodation across the city including 3 University residences, 9 standard hotels, 2 four-star hotels and a range of self-catering apartments.

**Over 800** volunteers will be on hand to provide the famous Geordie welcome.

**WTG2019 Local Organising Committee**





## COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

# World Transplant Games Federation 'Country Development Program'

The concept behind the WTGF's Country Development Programme started many years ago. Our goal has always been to help establish or develop transplant sports programmes in countries around the world in order to spread a culture of sport and physical activity post-transplant and support a platform for the promotion of organ donation internationally.

It is inspiring to read the stories here of some of those who are benefitting from the programme this year. Every participant at this year's Games has a story to tell and we are delighted to play a small part in ensuring that the stories from some of the ten competitors from six countries who we are supporting will be heard. We hope that their experiences in NewcastleGateshead will be a catalyst that will not only inspire other transplant recipients in their respective countries to be more active more often, it will also inspire a national conversation about organ donation.

**Colin White**

WTGF Treasurer  
Ireland



**Team Manager (two-times heart recipient) Reena Raju**



**Amar Nath (kidney recipient) will be representing India in badminton, track & field events and road race**





**Inspiring transplant couple: Roopa Arora (liver donor) and PK Rattan (liver recipient) will compete in track & field events, race walk and cycling in 40-49 age category!**



**Karhun Nanda (heart recipient) will debut this year competing in golf, road race and table tennis**

# Namaste – Greetings from INDIA!

**H**ello everyone, I am Reena Raju, Team Manager for the most diverse and spectacular country - India! Thanks to my donors, doctors, and family, I have survived two heart transplants becoming the first person in my country to have had a successful repeat heart transplant for CAV. Being a sportsperson since childhood, I have lived my life pretty much like a sport. I had the privilege to play a tough sport like field hockey at the state and national level in my country. That's what a sport like hockey (or for that matter any sport) teaches us - never give up, keep going!

I believe the best way to honor one's donor is to live life to the fullest and give back to the world. Life post my first heart transplant (2009) has been amazing. I started with small activities that my body was ready for and went on to participate in sporting events to promote organ donation.

My first memory of the WTG takes me back to Málaga. Amidst a cheering crowd and hundreds of transplant athletes from across the world, I marched in proudly carrying the Indian flag. It was such an honour to represent my country. Since my fellow team members could not get their visas on time, I had to represent my country alone at the Opening Ceremony. At that very moment, standing amongst enthusiastic transplant athletes, hearing them applaud a solo woman from India carrying the flag, motivated me to come with a larger Indian team to Newcastle. Two fellow athletes from India won medals in badminton! What a great moment for the country!

The WTG is a life-changing experience for organ recipients and donors. As we compete with true sportsman spirit, it reminds us of our personal journeys of survival, gratitude, and hope for achieving whatever we set our minds to. It is this very vibe that I want more transplant recipients from my country to experience. Engaging with double / triple organ recipients during WTG, made me feel that I'm not the only one. We are a strong community and have so much to offer to the world!

## Introducing Team India - WTG 2019

India is experiencing an increased interest towards World Transplant Games, since 2017. This time, I will not be alone at the Opening Ceremony. The world will see a strong 14

member Indian Team. It's a big achievement for us given past participation numbers.

Our team consists of 11 organ recipients and three living organ donors. India is already known for winning medals in badminton. However, this time Indian athletes will participate in other sports as well and for the first time, we will be participating in team sports.

I would like to personally thank all our sponsors on behalf of the Light a Life Reena Raju Foundation including Rambus Chip Technologies, Manish Packaging Private Limited, Vestian Global Workplace Services and other well-wishers.

**WTGF sponsored £795 through the Country Development Program. We have split this amount to sponsor two promising Athletes: Kishore Suryawanshi - a kidney recipient from Mumbai will debut in the 2019 Games. He won a gold medal at the Indian National Transplant Games (2018). Also Amar Nath, an avid sportsman who underwent a kidney transplant and is a previous World Games medallist.**

I would also like to thank team Light A Life for working hard behind the scenes in organising for Team India.

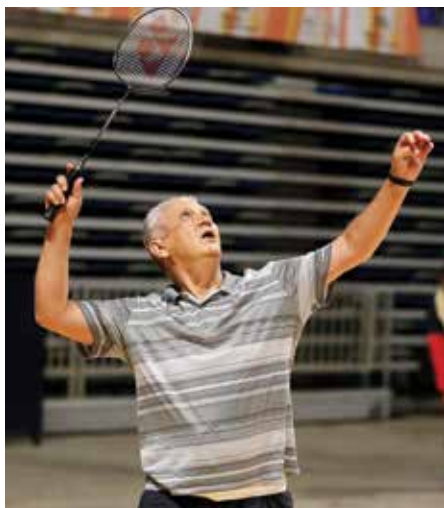
We feel the excitement, preparation, and commitment of athletes who are all set to represent India. WTG is a great platform for us to increase awareness on organ donation and transplant sports. We are keen to leverage this platform to encourage fitness and wellness among recipients / organ donors in our country. While we have a long way to go, we are very happy to have made extraordinary progress. We have full confidence that future organizers for India will take it to the next level. Hoping future WTG events will see India among one of the top participating countries!

Team India looks forward to an amazing experience at Newcastle. We are excited to meet fellow organ recipients, donors, organizing members and volunteers at the Games!

See you all soon!

**Reena Raju**  
India

## COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



**Yuri (liver recipient) sponsored under the WTGF Country Development Program**



**Oksana (lung recipient) sponsored under the WTGF Country Development Program**



**Ekaterina at TACKERS 2019**

# The 2019 Team from RUSSIA



**A**lthough we do not have a transplant sports association in Russia there are, and always have been, recipients and dialysis patients who are engaged in physical culture and sports leading an active lifestyle.

The Russian public organisation NEPHRO-LEAGUE, which has brought together patients on dialysis and kidney recipients for many years, is paying attention to physical activity and sports activities for recipients and dialysis patients. There is a project "Sport for Life", aimed at the development of sport and a sports section has been created on the website: <http://nephroliga.ru/sport/>. Football and volleyball matches, bowling, darts, board games, workout and other competitions are organised in the regions and ski runs have been held in several cities.

Until recently, a team of Russian athletes, recipients of donor hearts, had only taken part in a Games once before - in 1990, winning an honorary sports cup. After a 27-year break, Russia returned by entering an athlete and observing the World Transplant Games in Málaga in 2017.

The Russians successfully performed at the national Games in Poland (2017, 2018) and Kazakhstan (2017). In June this year the Russian delegation will again go to the competitions in the capital of Kazakhstan.

At the 10th European Games in Cagliari (2018), Russia was represented by two athletes who won five medals between them.

In February 2018, NEPHRO-LEAGUE became a member of the European Transplant & Dialysis Sports Federation and the World Transplant Games Federation.

A team of five people will take part in the World Transplant Games in NewcastleGateshead. **WTGF has sponsored two athletes through the Country Development Program, Yuri Saveliev and Oksana Petrova.**

### Team Russia:

- **Yury Saveliev**, from Moscow, is a 64 year old liver recipient participating in transplant sport competitions. After his transplant, Yuri decided to carry out rehabilitation with sports engaging in swimming and table tennis followed by badminton, tennis and cycling. Two months after surgery, he returned to work as a heat and power engineer.
- **Oksana Petrova**, also from Moscow, is a 34 year old lung recipient who will be competing and is also the team manager. Oksana is a volunteer in a public organisation whose goal is to help people with chronic lung diseases. In 2018 she produced a documentary film "Beyond the Peaks" about people who have had a lung transplant.
- **Ekaterina Tkacheva**, from St Petersburg, is a sporty 14-year old kidney recipient who took part in the TACKERS children's camp this year.
- **Eleonora Tkacheva**, a kidney donor for her daughter Ekaterina: "And now I am ready to support her in an effort to maintain an active lifestyle. I am ready to actively participate in the development of sports for people after transplantation. At the World Games I plan to take part in a 5km donor race."
- **Alexey Nakostenko**, from Moscow, is a 58 years old liver recipient - his dream is to return to running marathons.

Many thanks to the World Transplant Games Federation for your support to our new team.

**Halina Gorecka**  
**Oksana Petrova**  
Russia



# Introducing a New Flag for NewcastleGateshead 2019: ANDORRA

**M**y name is M<sup>a</sup>Jesús Martínez and I am 33 years old from Andorra.

In 2001, aged 16, I was diagnosed with an IgA nephropathy. The disease evolved over the next ten years and in 2011, I was fortunate to be offered a new kidney.

My donor was my Godmother Olga Pérez, who very altruistically and with all her love gave me her kidney. The transplant took place in the Hospital Clinic of Barcelona, Spain.

Currently seven years transplanted and now with an iron health. I was always a very athletic girl. I started doing rhythmic gymnastics, then after adolescence, I switched to athletics for around ten years. My specialty was the pole vault and I held the record in my country in this discipline. After the transplant operation I did not want to jump again due to the high risk of trauma and so after a while I changed to road cycling. I've been in this sport for four years now and it makes me feel in top shape. I cycle three to four times a week, combining it with the gym, depending on my workload and the time of year.

I also practice other sports such as climbing, mountain skiing and hiking. I always take part in my sports with great prudence but with all the freedom to do what I want in order to feel good and happy.

In addition to my love of sport, three years ago I worked, together with other transplantees and living donors affected by the issue, to form the Associació de Trasplantats i Donants d'Andorra (ATIDA) in order to help people in the same or similar situations and to promote organ donation in Andorra since at the moment it is not possible. We have advanced a lot, the transplant law has already been approved in my country, but there is still much work to be done since the regulations are missing and will someday be carried out.

***In August 2019 I will be taking part in WTG2019 in the UK. My grateful thanks to the World Transplant Games Federation for supporting my registration fee through the Country Development Program, giving me this opportunity to continue to promote transplant sport in my country, especially to the transplanted people, through mass media and social networks.***

**M<sup>a</sup>Jesús Martínez**  
Andorra

Facebook: Mari Martinez  
Instagram: marimrtnez85  
Twitter: marimrtnez85



**MªJesús with her donor Godmother Olga Pérez (left)**



**MªJesús with partner Miguel Angel who will be her supporter in NewcastleGateshead**



**Associació de  
Trasplantats  
i Donants d'Andorra**

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# Fit for Life! Passport Program



The 2019 World Transplant Games in NewcastleGateshead, United Kingdom will see the 2nd promotion of our Fit for Life! Passport Program.  
Report by **Kim Renyard**



If you attended the 2017 World Transplant Games in Málaga, Spain you should have received your passport and a stamp recording your attendance. Please do not forget to bring along your passport to the 2019 Games and get your new stamp for these Games.

If you did not attend the 2017 Games, you will be issued with a Fit for Life! Passport at the 2019 Games via your Team Manager.

Remember to collect your 2019 World Transplant Games attendance stamp at the Fit for Life! booths located in the registration area of the Games.

**Don't forget to bring your passport and get your new attendance stamp!**

**Kim Renyard**  
WTGF Executive Manager

## About the Fit for Life! Passport Program

Launched at the 2017 World Transplant Games, the individualised passport was designed to replicate a real-life passport. The passports record each person's personal details and record attendance and medals won at World Transplant Games.

*Passports were issued for both Athletes and Supporters*

## MEMBER COUNTRY NEWS

### SPAIN

## Trondheim, Norway to Santiago, Spain

Cycling more than 5,200 km to promote organ donation and a healthy lifestyle – and to thank all organ donors

**J**avi Aguirre, a 53 year old kidney recipient from the Basque Country, Spain has taken part in the previous World, European and Spanish Transplant Games. He received his new kidney in November 2015.

Javi decided, along with his wife Esther García, to cycle along the Eurovelo 3 Network to thank donors and donor families for their gifts of life and encourage "more recipients to be more active, more often" – the WTGF mantra.

He follows the example of other long-distance cycling tours especially André Lassooij, WTGF Trustee and double lung recipient, who cycled from Amsterdam to Málaga, Spain via Brussels, Paris



**Javi and Esther – 5,266 km, Santiago!**

and London in 2016. In fact, Javi Aguirre accompanied André from the South of France to San Sebastian in Spain.

Leaving Trondheim, Norway, on 26th April 2019, this amazing couple arrived in Santiago, Spain, on 17th June. Javi's blog of this incredible journey with his transplanted kidney can be read at [www.5000bai.com](http://www.5000bai.com), also see Facebook; Instagram and Twitter

**Vicente Granados-Cabezas**  
WTGF Trustee  
Spain

## TACKERS 2019

# "An event I simply cannot miss!"

Cynthia Guillermin on Transplant Adventure Camp for Kids **TACKERS 2019**

**A**t the age of one, I was diagnosed with kidney disease. I was on dialysis by the age of five. I was not allowed to go swimming. Our family lived in Florida at the time and being banned from the pool for a five-year-old was very hard.

My parents were tested for compatibility. Once she received the all clear, my mother donated a kidney to me and soon as I was allowed to swim, I was in the water and, to my delight, I was able to take part in my first Transplant Games in Orlando in 2000. Our family is originally from France, so I went on to compete for the French team in the World Transplant Games in Kobe, Japan in 2001 and Nancy, France in 2003.

It was in Kobe where I met Liz Schick, the founder of TACKERS and now the WTGF Honorary Secretary. She invited me to take part in the first TACKERS Camp in Anzère, Switzerland in 2002. It was the most wonderful experience of my life. I met other transplant children from all around the world. I was hooked. At TACKERS where we were all just 'normal'. I subsequently attended several camps and am still in contact with many of the kids, only now we are adults!

Liz contacted me five years ago to ask if I would be interested to come to TACKERS as a volunteer. I have volunteered every year since. The TACKERS week is literally the best week of my life. It is wonderful to be able to return the favour and be part of this fabulous event. We can really see the how the kids grow and gain confidence in one short week.

This year the 16 strong volunteer team included four ex-campers. I was working alongside Virag from Hungary, Denis from Israel and Ethan from the UK. Our youngest camper was only six, Eloise from Switzerland. She was born in the US and her story was pretty similar to mine.

I will be volunteering at the World Transplant Games in NewcastleGateshead. Eloise will be coming too. I know there will be quite a few ex-TACKERS campers as TACKERS actively promotes the World Transplant Games. If you have been to a TACKERS camp in the past, please let us know by e-mail on [info@tackers.org](mailto:info@tackers.org) if you will be in Newcastle. We would love to get a group photo of us all.

**Cynthia Guillermin, 27,**  
**kidney recipient**

France

[www.tackers.org](http://www.tackers.org)

**Cynthia with TACKERS camper Floor, a kidney recipient from Belgium aged eight, who travelled as an unaccompanied minor to Anzère**



**Zoltan (left), liver recipient from Hungary and Zétény who received his new heart when he was a baby – both aged 14-years**



**Volunteer Ethan presenting a medal to first time skier Maeve, a 16-year old liver recipient from Ireland**





*Ilia Granovsky, 13-year old recipient from Israel enjoying the night sledding!*



**TRANSPLANT  
ADVENTURE CAMPS  
FOR KIDS**



*Kids and volunteers leaving the TACKERS fancy dress party*



*Six-year old Eloise from Switzerland and nine-year old Phillip from the Netherlands – both kidney recipients*



*Liz Schick with Jasmyrn, kidney recipient from her donor mum, a 13-year old Australian who travelled all the way to TACKERS as an unaccompanied minor!*



## FIT FOR LIFE

# Introducing our new Fit for Life! Ambassador

**fit  
for life!**

**Nico Zonneveld**  
Kidney Recipient  
Age: 73  
Netherlands



*Kidney donor, Marijke Zonneveld – Nico's bridge to "Fit for Life!"*

Soon after Nico sold his real estate agency and was ready to relax and enjoy life, he developed a problem with his health. Having always been a very sporty person, the fatigue he experienced from his kidney disease was unbearable. When Nico started dialysis, his strength deteriorated even further until his only chance of survival was a kidney transplant. The waiting list was 4½ years. Nico was fortunate enough to receive a kidney donated from his wife and his road back to regaining his health was a lot quicker than he had imagined.

Nico went from not being able to cycle 6km before his transplant, to two years post his transplant travelling to France to take on Mont Ventoux (the big mountain in the Tour de France) with his

bicycle. When he reached the top of the mountain, he fell into his wife's arms and they both cried in celebration of this great achievement and second chance in life.

Nico decided to help others who needed transplants and to create more awareness for organ donation. Had he not been fortunate enough to receive his kidney from his wife, the 4½ year waiting list may have been too long for him to survive. He joined the Patient Association for Kidney Patients and Transplanted People and in 2001 he competed for the first time in the World Transplant Games in Kobe, Japan.

He has since competed in many World Games and won several medals in athletics and golf.

From 2005 till 2013 Nico was a Councillor for the World Transplant Games Federation in the position of Treasurer and is currently part of the Sports and Transplantation Foundation, Netherlands, where he actively promotes the importance of exercise and sport post-transplantation and continues to create awareness for organ donation.

Nico was given the gift of life by his donor, his wife. He took that gift and celebrates each day by taking good care of his body and remaining fit and active by participating in various sports. In 2019 he was elected as sportsman of the year for the 2017 / 2018 period in his local village which has 30,000 inhabitants.

Nico encourages other dialysis and transplantees to keep moving and to strive towards an active lifestyle which includes exercise and sport.

Nico often expresses his gratitude for the gift of life he was given. "For me my hero will always be my wife, Marijke, who gave me this precious gift, the gift of life."

**“For me my hero will always be my wife, Marijke, who gave me this precious gift, the gift of life.”**



SPAIN

# Celebrating life by the Guadalquivir River



## Spanish National Transplant Games

Sanlúcar de Barrameda was once one of the most important ports of Europe and the World. This year marked the 500th anniversary of the Magallanes-Elcano Expedition, the first circumnavigation around the Earth. The 18th of August, 1519 was the day that the Trinidad Flagship departed from the port of Sanlúcar to change history.

Once again, history was in the making last 27th of April, when the IX Spanish National Transplant Games were inaugurated. Again the Spanish Transplant community gathered to celebrate life and second chances, this year 150 people made the trip to south coast, with an important representation of Gaditanos, (the dialect for local people) and of Andalusian athletes in general.

This year was the first time for an open



road race for the local community. With the great support received from the local authorities it was possible to organize this open race. 265 persons participated on a really nice route around some of the most historical and beautiful sites of the city.

The open race gave the opportunity to establish the 'Solidary Inscription', all of the resources will be given to a non-profit organisation that will be selected with the city hall collaboration. This is a huge step forward for Deporte y Trasplante España in our health and donation awareness activities.

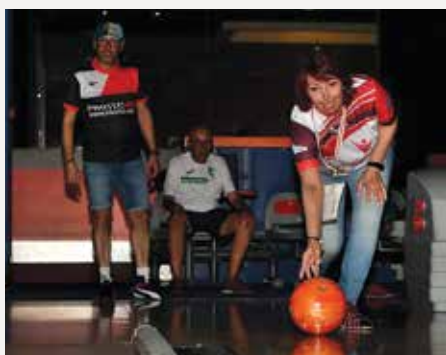
The competitions took place during four busy days. Every year Deporte y Trasplante España works to bring our national Games to WTGF standards and sports competitions. 5k road race, 10k sprint and 30k road bike race (the same distances established for WTG NewcastleGateshead), tennis, table tennis, badminton, athletics, swimming,

paddle, petanque, darts, golf and for the first time, bowling, were the different sports on offer on this year's calendar.

The involvement and implication of the local community was one of the biggest successes of this Games – the local authorities, city hall technicians and local NGO, Donando Vidas.

As every year, the end of the Games was not a 'goodbye', It was a 'see you in 2020', when we'll make history with the 10th National Games, celebrating another year of life, only possible thanks to the donation of the gift of life.

**Gerardo Reyna**  
Spain



**Ten pin bowling for the first time at the Spanish National Games**



## MEMBER COUNTRY NEWS

## FRANCE

## "La Course du Coeur"



4 days, 4 nights, 750km

The 33rd edition of the Course du Coeur, the Heart Race, organised by Trans-Forme, the French Transplant Sports Federation, hit the roof! On 27th March 2019 38 teams started off from the Trocadero Fountains, in front of the Eiffel Tower, running to Notre-Dame Cathedral - 26 of the teams ran the whole race to Bourg Saint-Maurice - Les Arcs. One of these teams was composed of 14 amazing transplanted runners.

Among the 26 teams we can count on some international companies such as HP, Total, Renault SCC, SAP, Accenture-Oracle, Bouygues, Novartis, Hitachi, Hill-Rom, Dassault, Celgene, Natixis, Sandoz, SAS, VmWare and also three transplant units or transplant doctors' teams.

The Parton of the Heart Race - Professor Pascal Leprince was in attendance at the start together with worldwide celebrities such as Philippe Candeloro (French former competitive figure skater, two-time Olympic bronze medallist and two-time world medallist), Brice Dulin and Jean-Marc Doussain (French rugby union



Young children supporting the runners

players), Stephane Diagana (French former track and field sprinter, world champion) and many others. Besides these athletes, Anne Courreges (CEO, Agence de la Biomedecine) and Bérengère Dautun-Cabrol (French actress, resident of the Comédie-Française in 1964 and widow of the worldwide known Professor Christian CABROL, for performing the first heart transplant in Europe) were also at the start to see the runners off.

All along the road, 151 volunteers (of which 15 motorcyclists of the National Republican Guard) took care of the 370 runners. Alongside, six volunteers visited cities passed through by the runners to raise awareness for organ and tissue donation among 8,200 children, 121 schools and 363 classes. A team of two clowns and another team of

three comedians of Comedia Del Arte performed in front of the children in order to communicate the subject of transplantation in an engaging manner.

After four days, four nights and approximately 750km of running, all the runners arrived on the 31st March at Bourg Saint Maurice, Les Arcs under a beautiful sunny sky. On the 1st April, runners and volunteers could enjoy a beautiful day of skiing before going back to their lives.

Before the race, companies are encouraged to communicate about organ and tissue donation, allowing this 33rd edition of the Heart Race to raise awareness to 433,487 employees in France and other countries.

Eloise Pillias  
France



Trans-Forme President Olivier Coustere leading the "Marche de Jocelyne" in memory of Jocelyne, organ donor, with the children of La Timone Hospital at the French National Games

## 27th French National Transplant & Dialysis Games

This popular annual event took place from 29TH May – 2nd June 2019 in Dole, France with enthusiastic participation. The French Games began with a well-attended organ donation and transplantation conference and concluded on 2nd June with a torch relay.



# Houston USA: A mega sports event!

Melanie Hauser on the World Transplant Games' return to the United States

**Three Super Bowls. Two Final Fours and another on the way. The 2024 College Football Playoff. Dozens of CONCACAF Gold Cup Games and international soccer matches. USA BMX Nationals and BMX World Championships. The 2020 U.S. Women's Open.**

There is no question that Houston knows how to put on mega sports events. It's a city with a track record of successful events at every level and in an array of sports; a city that has become a go-to place for champions and championships.

In two years, Houston will welcome the world's transplant and donor athletes back to the United States for the first time in 41 years for what is expected to be a

record-setting 2021 World Transplant Games.

The Harris County-Houston Sports Authority(HCHSA) hosted a hugely successful 2014 Transplant Games of America which set records as well as more than doubling the number of people in Texas' donor registry through a donor-outreach initiative. That event drew more than 800 athletes from the state of Texas alone.

## Even more succesful

HCHSA CEO Janis Burke said there is no reason the 2021 WTG can't be even more successful. She and two other members of the HCHSA staff will be at the 2019 NewcastleGateshead Games to observe

**“Rather than spread the competition around America's fourth-largest city, the HCHSA is creating a centralized hub at the University of Houston where teams will be able to practice, compete and socialise.”**



University of Houston

## World Transplant Games 2021 FACTFILE



**When:** May 2021

**Where:** Houston, USA

**Venue:** University of Houston

and meet with officials. In addition, Houston hopes to unveil a dynamic logo for the 2021 event.

"With one of the premier transplant programs in the world and the hospitals here, we have everything we need to make our dream to host a record-setting international event," Janis said.

Rather than spread the competition around America's fourth-largest city, the HCHSA is creating a centralized hub at the University of Houston (UH) where teams will be able to practice, compete and socialise. UH, which is close to a vibrant downtown and the world-renowned Texas Medical Center, has just modernised and upgraded all of its athletic venues and provides the perfect place for both workouts and competition during the seven-day event.

## The city's energy

New York hosted a successful World Transplant Games in 1980, but four decades later the transplant and donor programs have expanded as has the drive for these athletes to compete nationally and internationally.

Organisers also plan to incorporate the energy of the city's incredible transplant programs at the Texas Medical Center with outreach programs to educate potential donors. Texas currently has more than 11.5 million donors registered and more than 113,600 donors awaiting transplants.

"We're thrilled to be the next US city to host this incredible event," Janis said. "We're hoping that with the support of our partners, we'll make this the most impactful Games ever. More importantly, we hope to give every participant the memory of a lifetime."

**Melanie Hauser**  
USA

# WTGF Code of Conduct for Athletes

The 2019 World Transplant Games sees the introduction of a new Code of Conduct signed and agreed by all athletes. We look forward to a fantastic week of competition, sportsmanship and celebration.

**A**s an athlete representing my Country and National Association and competing in the World Transplant Games, I pledge that my conduct will reflect the highest level of sportsmanship, respect and decorum and that I will also respect the rights, dignity and worth of my fellow competitors and officials without bias to race, religion or gender.

I pledge to:

- Ensure my fitness to participate in the WTGF by following a regular training program or activity prior to and during the WTGF;
- Know and play by the rules of my sports and to respect the judgment and the decisions of the officials;

● Compete with honesty, fairness, and with a spirit of justice at all times while showing respect towards officials, volunteers, my fellow competitors and spectators;

● At all times, be honest about possible illness or injury which may influence my health and ability to participate and to declare such situation to the officials. I understand that this may cause me to be withdrawn from some or all events to ensure my own safety and for the protection of my health;

● Refrain from self-medication to enhance my performance in any way or to suppress possible symptoms of illness.

I understand that to be a participant at

the WTGF, I am required to respect not only the written rules but also the unwritten rules of sport participation. In so doing I should attach more importance to the playing of the game than the winning of the game; to voluntarily renounce any advantage I may have gained without strict adherence to the rules.

I understand that if I compromise this pledge, I may be subject to disqualification from this and possibly other sports-related events. Such disqualification will follow the Disciplinary Process as set out in the Articles of Association and Bylaws of the WTGF.



## Announcement of WTGF Awards at the XXII World Transplant Games, NewcastleGateshead 2019

**A**s in previous years, the World Transplant Games Federation will present special awards at the NewcastleGateshead Games.

The WTGF Outstanding Athlete and Outstanding Junior Athlete awards are awarded to a man and a woman and a boy and a girl respectively who have been nominated by their team manager and selected by the Judiciary Committee using the following criteria:

- Performance (number of medals won)
- Quality (strength of competition)
- Diversity (achievements in multiple sports)
- Sportsmanship

The Outstanding Team Award recognises a team whose athletes have won the most medals relative to the team size. A minimum of 20 athletes is required for consideration for this Award. The Award

will be determined by granting points for each medal earned by athletes at the Games (three for gold, two for silver, one for bronze), and then by dividing the number of points earned by each team by the number of athletes on the team. Doubles, team and relay medals count as one medal.

In addition, the Maurice Slapak Award for the men's 5km road race team, the Peter Griffin Award for the men's freestyle swimming relay team and the Orien Young Award for the gold medal winners of the 4 x 100m men's relay on the track will be presented on the day at the individual events.

Good Luck to all athletes!

**André Lassooij**  
WTGF Sports Chair

**Gary Green**  
WTGF Sports Manager

### PREVIOUS WORLD TRANSPLANT GAMES FEDERATION AWARDS

#### OUTSTANDING TEAM AWARD

2013 ..... GB&NI  
2015 ..... Hungary  
2017 ..... GB&NI

#### OUTSTANDING ATHLETE AWARD - MEN

2009 ..... UK ..... John Barnes  
2011 ..... UK ..... George Newman  
2013 ..... GB&NI ..... Liam Barnett  
2015 ..... Hungary ..... Robert Gelencser  
2017 ..... GB&NI ..... Matthew Burrows

#### OUTSTANDING ATHLETE AWARD - WOMEN

2009 ..... Australia ..... Kate Clark  
2011 ..... USA ..... Tracy Copeland  
2013 ..... South Africa ..... Heilie Uys  
2015 ..... Germany ..... Simone Bauer  
2017 ..... South Africa ..... Lisa du Plessis

#### JUNIOR OUTSTANDING ATHLETE AWARD - BOYS

2011 ..... UK ..... Matthew Salkeld  
2013 ..... Canada ..... Kaidyn Blair  
2015 ..... GB&NI ..... Declan Bennett  
2017 ..... GB&NI ..... Rhys Bonnell

#### JUNIOR OUTSTANDING ATHLETE AWARD - GIRLS

2011 ..... UK ..... Kelly Young  
2013 ..... GB&NI ..... Nicole Mackenzie  
2015 ..... GB&NI ..... Ellen Russ  
2017 ..... South Africa ..... Kristen Henry