

Amazing Co-Workers + Amazing Benefits = A Lifesaving Match



January 23, 2023

In 2018, Carrie Riggs started getting sicker and sicker. Now in 2023, because of her Lumen co-worker Kristine Fogarty’s amazing gift, she’s getting better and better.

After multiple procedures to treat Carrie’s cirrhosis of the liver, her prognosis was worsening. Finally, her gastroenterologist recommended adding her to the liver transplant list. After “every test you can think of,” she was deemed healthy enough to withstand the procedure, and in February 2022, she was cleared for the list.



Flashback: Lumen teammates, a fateful conversation

Flashback to 12 years ago, Carrie met Kristine Fogarty when they worked on the same team at [Lumen Technologies](#) in Salt Lake City. “We weren’t social friends, but we sat together at lunch. We were work friends,” said Kristine. After moving to different teams at Lumen, the two kept in touch now and again.

Then in early 2022, Kristine said they had a fateful conversation. “I said how have you been. I haven’t talked to you in a while. And Carrie responded, ‘I’m not doing too well. I just got approved for the liver transplant list.’”

Carrie explained that living donors could donate to help those in need. But she was “just waiting” because no one in her family could help. “I just felt in my heart right at that moment that I needed to try,” said Kristine. So, she asked how to apply to be a living donor. “And then the journey started,” said Kristine.

Carrie asked her to take a weekend to “think it over, to really process what you’re saying.” And Kristine replied, “Carrie, if it’s going to save your life, I’m going to do it.”

It’s a Match!

In April, Kristine got word from the Intermountain Healthcare donor team that she was a match. “Through the whole thing, from when I found out Carrie needed a liver transplant to when Carrie found out I was a match, there wasn’t a moment that I thought I shouldn’t do it,” said Kristine. “There were a lot of fearful moments,” she said. “But I always knew I needed to.”

After the donor team let Carrie know Kristine had matched, Carrie kept thinking, “That’s too much to ask of somebody.” And when Kristine called Carrie afterward, Carrie felt “a range of emotions, from joy to fear.” Carrie said, “Can I really ask somebody to do this?” And Kristine’s reply was always, “Yes, I’m going to do it.” Carrie kept thinking about how dangerous the operation is – “for both of us.”



Kristine talked to her family about her decision. “My daughter said, ‘whatever you want to do, I’ll support you.’” Her mother was terrified for her. “But I said to her, if I needed a liver transplant, wouldn’t you want someone to help me?” After that, her mom was onboard.

Surgery Day

Carrie had to arrive at the [Intermountain Medical Center](#) in Murray, Utah, the day before the big day to have a special procedure to get rid of antibodies, which she says was “not a fun time.” On Oct. 5, Kristine was wheeled into the operating room first, so the doctors could start with her. Shortly afterward, Carrie went into an adjoining operating room.

After each woke up from the surgery (nine hours later, in Carrie’s case), each of the women’s first thought was for their friend. Carrie said, “I asked how Kristine was doing, and they told me she was doing well.” When Kristine asked about Carrie, she was told she was still in surgery.

But shortly after Carrie left surgery for the ICU, Kristine was able to walk over to Carrie’s room. “I wanted to see my friend. I wanted to make sure she was ok.”



After Carrie and Kristine left the ICU, the two regularly walked down the halls during the six days that they were transplant unit neighbors. “We got to have breakfast together,” said Kristine. “Boy, everybody on that floor knew Kristine,” said Carrie. “She was the cheerleader, the little ball of energy, the little angel.”

Help from Lumen

Kristine credits Lumen for support that made the surgery possible, too. “I always knew I’d be taken care of. I never worried about my job,” said Kristine. “With the friendships we built at this company, we are like family.”

Both Kristine’s supervisor Renee Hammond and Carrie’s supervisor Chris Havekost were both big supporters of the two friends’ plans. “Everyone has been so kind and supportive. I knew that when I got better, I’d be back to work, and that I had the support.” Kristine returned to work Dec. 28, and “everyone is like, ok, what do you need.”



Carrie's recovery is ongoing while she stays with her sister Julie Layne who is also a Lumen employee. "Each day I get a little bit better," she said. Carrie has joined a liver transplant list support group, and her heart goes out to the people on the list who are still waiting. Reflecting on all the acquaintances and family she knows who have succumbed to liver disease Carrie says, "I am the luckiest girl in the world," she said. Carrie returns to work on Feb. 13.

Kristine also considers herself lucky. "I am part of a miracle. I see it as a big blessing. I have felt full. My cup has been full since the day I came out of surgery. And I owe that to Carrie."

On January 9, Kristine and Carrie appeared on ABC 4 "Good Things Utah" to share their story with Intermountain Healthcare Abdominal Transplant Program Medical Director and liver transplant surgeon Dr. Jean Botha. You can watch this inspiring interview [here](https://news.lumen.com/amazing-co-workers-plus-amazing-benefits-equals-a-lifesaving-Match).

<https://news.lumen.com/amazing-co-workers-plus-amazing-benefits-equals-a-lifesaving-Match>