

Raymond McKune's STORY OF HOPE

Raymond McKune considers himself a "pretty simple guy." He loves watching horror movies and professional wrestling. He cherishes time spent with friends and family. The Manhattan resident absolutely loves and adores his job at a NYC nonprofit developing enrichment programs for pre-school children.

You would never know that the 28-year-old has faced a constant array of incomprehensible medical challenges since a fateful annual physical appointment at age 14. Nothing seemed amiss with him health-wise prior to the doctor's appointment other than his frequent after-school naps, seemingly typical behavior for a growing, teenage boy. However, some abnormal blood results would abruptly alter the life he once knew.

"One day, I was living normally," recalled Raymond, "and the next day I was on dialysis." He would later be diagnosed with kidney failure in January 2012.

He received his first kidney transplant the following July. A series of health complications and transplant rejections would lead to a second transplant in May 2017. In March 2020, he caught COVID-19. Placed on life support, Raymond battled courageously to recover, but it cost him his second transplant.

Undaunted, he received his third kidney in 2022 "hoping this time would be different." Unfortunately, it was not the case, requiring surgeons to remove it in 2023. Now, he awaits a donor match for the fourth time in 14 years.

Raymond stays admirably positive given the formidable challenges he continues to face in his young life. "Even through all of this, I've continued to push forward, adapting to each new challenge and finding strength in the process," said Raymond.

Given the gift of life from his three deceased donors "literally means everything to me. It gives me the chance to live and do things that I'm passionate about."

Raymond hopes his story inspires others to register as organ, eye, and tissue donors and bring hope to the nearly 8,000 patients in New York State waiting for lifesaving transplants. Register today at donatelifenys.org/register.