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IN HEARTWARMING VIDEO, FIREFIGHTERS WELCOME HOME ONE OF THEIR OWN

Eric Storms Comes Home After Life-Changing Kidney Transplant

CHAMBERLAIN, S.D.—Eric Storms and his family received an overwhelming surprise as Eric returned home from a life-changing kidney transplant. As a [heartwarming YouTube video captured](#), the Chamberlain/Oacoma Volunteer Fire Department pulled out all the stops for one of their own, leaving the Storms family speechless and grateful.

Eric has been living with Type I Diabetes since he was 14. Within the past few years, his kidney function dropped unexpectedly, leaving Eric with a dire need for a kidney transplant. Eric and wife Destinye have three boys ages two, seven, and eleven.

As soon as Eric began the transplant process, his community overwhelmed him with support. “Eric’s transplant center was overwhelmed with people wanting to find out if they could help or become a kidney donor,” explained Destinye. “We were even asked how we got the word out to so many people.”

By December 2020, Eric and his family were waiting and hoping for his miracle to arrive. “Any day now, he can get a call and potentially get a transplant,” wrote Destinye. “It is really hard to say how soon this call will come.” On December 15, the call came through. Eric had fifteen minutes to decide whether he wanted to move forward with an available kidney from a deceased organ donor.

Eric said yes—and the transplant was a success.

His family was not able to witness his recovery in person due to pandemic concerns. “We Facetimed the boys and they were so happy to be able to see Dad!” said Destinye. “I was trying not to be a crazy wife calling every twenty minutes to make sure he is okay. The pandemic and the strict COVID restrictions made this even harder. We wished that we could be by his side.”

On December 26, Eric was discharged—"a late but great Christmas present!" Due to the high COVID-19 risk for transplant recipients, Eric and Destiney had to remain away from home and separated from their sons. On January 12, Eric was finally cleared to return home.

With their sons buzzing with excitement at their father's return, the Storms family made the journey home, ushered in by a dazzling display by Eric's fellow volunteer firefighters. "This was such a surprise to come home to," said Destiney. "We are so thankful...and so happy to be home."

Eric's recovery continues to progress smoothly. "I'd say that Eric is more himself every day," said Destiney. He is making plans to return to his favorite hobby: bass fishing. He is the SD BASS nation youth fishing director. If all goes well, he plans to participate in the regional BASS tournament in Lacrosse, Wisconsin later this year. He also hopes to create more opportunities for kids to learn to fish now that he has received the incredible gift of life.

The Storms family partnered with the national medical fundraising nonprofit Help Hope Live to help cover transplant-related out-of-pocket expenses, including the pricey anti-rejection medication that Eric will have to take for the rest of his life. Donations can be made to a verified and tax-deductible fundraising campaign at <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/17013/>

"Words cannot express how grateful we are," said Destiney. "We are so fortunate to have so much support during this time. We are thankful for every prayer, for the phone calls and texts, for all the kind words, monetary donations, and sharing Eric's story. Times like these would be a lot more difficult without such kind and generous people in our lives."

Make a donation in honor of Eric Storms at <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/17013/> Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law, and all funds raised will be managed by the nonprofit to cover verified medical and related expenses. Help Hope Live verifies medical and financial need for every patient.

Help Hope Live is a national nonprofit that specializes in engaging communities in secure, tax-deductible fundraising campaigns for people who need a transplant or are affected by a catastrophic injury or illness. Since 1983, campaigns organized by Help Hope Live have raised over \$145 million to pay patient expenses. ###