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## **OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT FOR WOMAN WHO NEEDS DOUBLE LUNG TRANSPLANT**

### **Fundraising Will Bring New Life Within Reach for Holly Szmuto**

**VALPARAISO, Ind.**—45-year-old Holly Anne Szmuto is waiting for a miracle: a double-lung transplant that will give her the chance for a healthy future. Her only hurdle is the overwhelming out-of-pocket cost of the transplant. She is partnering with the national nonprofit Help Hope Live to accept donations and support from her community.

At 45 years old, Holly is living with the rare and life-threatening disease pulmonary arterial hypertension (PH). The diagnosis causes high blood pressure in the lungs along with symptoms such as shortness of breath, fatigue, and an irregular heartbeat. There is no cure, but a double lung transplant could significantly improve her future. Until the transplant takes place, Holly must use a portable ventilator to breathe.

"It's a poor quality of life," explained Holly. "Being on a portable ventilator is hard: tanks are heavy and require a device to wheel them around. I am also on Remodulin, an infusion that runs 24/7. That comes with a backup bag with medication and pump refills. You have to account for everything that can happen, anywhere you go—there is no dropping by the store for supplies."

Despite her day-to-day health struggles, Holly has made a steadfast commitment to provide hope and support to others facing PH: she runs the Northwest Indiana PH PHriends support group. "When I overcome the anger and denial, I wanted to help others," Holly said. "It's nice to know there are other people near you going through what you are."

Holly was born and raised in Valparaiso. "I have lots of community support," she said. "Siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, sisters who live out of state, and so many friends are willing to help. The community has been great to me."

According to Milliman, a double lung transplant costs \$1.3 million before insurance. Holly soon realized insurance wouldn't cover all of her expenses, including one to three months of relocation for herself and



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her mother, who is her primary caregiver, when she gets “the call” that a set of lungs is available. “Lodging costs more than I make in a month,” explained Holly.

To bring the gift of life within reach, Holly is partnering with the medical fundraising nonprofit Help Hope Live. Donations can be made at <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/18341/>

Multiple local businesses have stepped forward to help with Holly’s campaign, including Gelsosomo’s Pizza, Three Monkeys Pub, Zao Island, Stracks Grocery, The Craft House, Team Chevrolet, and Rustic Edges Boutique.

Right now, Holly is partnering with Bren-Mark Window and Gutter Services to raffle off \$600 worth of services, including a window cleaning, gutter cleaning, and Gutter Guard support. The drawing is on March 5, 2021. Enter here: <https://events.helphopelive.org/event/5329/signup/>

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 \$150 million to pay patient expenses.

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