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**OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT FOR WOMAN WHO AWOKE WITH UNEXPLAINED PARALYSIS
"I Am Deeply Thankful and Humbled"**

NATICK, Mass.— Three years ago, Kara Toomey woke up and could not feel her body. The resulting diagnosis, an ultra-rare autoimmune disorder, changed her life. This holiday season, she is expressing her deep gratitude to her Wayland/Natick communities as they come together to donate to her fundraising campaign and give her new hope for the future.

Kara was 39 years old when she awoke with unexplained "overnight paralysis." Doctors diagnosed her with [autonomic ganglionopathy](#) or AAG, an extremely rare disorder with no known cause in which the body's immune system attacks the nervous system. Just one hundred Americans are diagnosed with AAG each year.

"The immediate onset of this disease took away things I had previously taken for granted," Kara explained. Overnight, she lost her ability to move freely, drive, work, and socialize—not to mention her sense of independence, confidence, and self-esteem.

There is no official treatment for AAG. Kara's hope is to manage the symptoms and the associated mobility effects so that she can finally return to an independent, self-reliant life. In November, she started a campaign with the national nonprofit Help Hope Live to fundraise for a critical need: modifications to her car so that she can drive again. Donate at <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/18017/>

So far, Kara has raised \$2600 towards her \$50,000 goal. She is overwhelmed by the community's positive response to her fundraising campaign.

"I am deeply thankful, humbled, and know how blessed I am to have all of you in my corner," said Kara. "It means more than you could ever know. 'Thank you' doesn't cover it." In early December, Kara reported that she is now able to pursue lessons with an adaptive driving instructor—the first step to her return to independence—thanks to the fundraiser's success.

"There's a way to go yet...but when I really look at the donations, and the engagement with my community, complete strangers, and childhood friends that I haven't heard from in years, I'm immediately lifted from my self-doubt." With help from the community, Kara looks forward to a fulfilling future while managing her AAG, including driving, working again, making music, and "living a meaningful life that hopefully inspires others to do good."

You can donate in honor of Kara Toomey at <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/18017/>

Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law, and all funds raised will be managed by the nonprofit to cover only verified expenses, including the cost of an accessible van. 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



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catastrophic injury or illness. Since 1983, campaigns organized by Help Hope Live have raised over \$145 million to pay patient expenses. ##