

Transplant chain story title

VIDEO	AUDIO
Jason	Amy Infanger is a 44-year-old math teacher and high school tennis coach in Osakis, Minnesota. She and husband Bill have two sons in college.
Jason	She also comes from a larger extended family. One that has been greatly affected by a rare, genetic kidney disease.
Amy Infanger Osakis, Minnesota	"My mom has eight siblings in her family. And of the eight, six of them have needed a transplant or two. And so I knew that it was very likely I was going to end up with the same condition."
Jason	She was diagnosed with the disease a few years ago.
Mikel Prieto, M.D. Transplantation Surgery Mayo Clinic	"The patients develop cysts in their kidneys and sometimes other organs. And, eventually — typically in their 40s or 50s — they develop end-stage kidney disease, that means their kidneys no longer work."
Jason	Amy would need a transplant.
Bill Infanger Amy's Husband	"We found out in our initial screening at Mayo that Amy was highly sensitized. And it was just going to going to be really hard ..."
Amy	"... to find a match."
Bill	"And I had been screened to see if I could be a donor for Amy. They said, 'No, you can't.' But then they introduced us to the paired donor program."
Jason	Meanwhile, across the country in Arizona, Eric Cunningham was hoping to help a friend of a friend by donating his kidney.
Eric Cunningham Queen Creek, Arizona	"I was unable to be a direct donor for her. But I really felt the need to continue on since I had already been approved to donate and was healthy

	enough to donate."
Jason	Eric joined the National Kidney Registry, offering his kidney for paired donation with a stranger.
Eric	"And I was told that 'Hey, we've got a match.' And it was mentioned that there was the possibility of being the first part in a large chain."
Jason	A kidney transplant chain set into motion by Eric involving 16 people from coast to coast, including the Infangers, and the top transplant centers across the country, including Mayo Clinic in Arizona, Florida and Minnesota.
Amy	"Getting a living donor was huge."
Jason	As part of the chain, Amy received a kidney from someone in Boston. Bill was the last link when he donated his kidney to a person in New York.
Dr. Prieto	"I think it is a game changer. And I think it is the way we are going to be doing transplants in the future."
Dr. Prieto	"We were able to find the needle in the haystack — the kidney that was a match for her."
Jason	A match that maybe saved Amy's life.
Amy	"By this person doing this for me, maybe I never have to have another one."
Dr. Prieto	"She will have a very good quality of life."
Dr. Prieto	"Her life expectancy should be essentially normal like everybody else. I expect her to grow to a very old age."
Bill	"This person that you care about so much, their health is fading. And to have that behind us and to have that not be a part of our life anymore — hopefully if this continues to go well — is such a relief. And it's the best thing we could ever see."
Amy	"Yeah."

Eric	"To know that was kind of the beginning domino to start this whole thing, it's a really cool thing to think of the lives that are impacted and changed."
Eric	"I've got two good kidneys. Why not? Why not share one."
Jason	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.