

From donation to Kilimanjaro: Living kidney donor defies limits

INTRO: April is National Donate Life Month, and April 1 is Living Donor Day. More than 7,000 living-organ donations were reported in the U.S. in 2025, and kidney donations are the most common type of living-organ transplant.

An Arizona woman who is a Mayo Clinic retiree, along with several other fellow kidney donors, is proving that donating a kidney doesn't limit a person. In fact, donors can accomplish amazing feats, like climbing Africa's highest mountain.

VIDEO	AUDIO
Bethany Krom Kidney Donor	"My name is Bethany Krom, and we're on the Peralta Trail in Arizona. My life has changed a lot. I am probably healthier now than I've ever been in my entire life — partly because of the climb that I'm doing, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro with kidney donor athletes and 15 kidney donors all climbing. We will summit on World Kidney Day to show the world that those of us with one kidney can do anything that those with two kidneys can."
Mikel Prieto, M.D. Transplantation Surgery Mayo Clinic	"This expedition to Mount Kilimanjaro is just an example of how donating a kidney does not need to limit you in any way."
Bethany	"Being able to donate to someone and change their lives is something that's really amazing and makes me feel good every day. And knowing what a difference it made on my life inspires me to help others to think about doing the same thing."
Dr. Prieto	"Thanks to paired exchange, as long as you have a donor — it doesn't matter what blood group, doesn't matter what age or anything — if they pass the test to be a donor, but they are not a good match for you, we can use that kidney for somebody else."
Bethany	"You can donate totally independent of when your person is and just name your person — actually, five people you can name — and whoever needs it first will get it."
Dr. Prieto	"Basically, what we need is a healthy person — somebody that is not putting themselves at risk for donating their kidney."

Bethany	"And I knew that the person I was donating for was a grandpa. And as it turns out, the person I donated to is a grandfather as well. So I'm a grandma who gave so to grandpas will be able to watch their grandchildren grow up. That, for me, is very special."
Dr. Prieto	"Donating a kidney is basically changing somebody's life. I'm going to help you. I'm going to change your life for the better."
Bethany	"So, for me, donation enhanced my life because I am more careful about how I take care of my body. And then I am exercising and eating good food. So I am healthier and doing all the things I did before and more, like climbing mountains."