



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Florida Kidney Patient Receives National Advocacy Award for His Local and National Contributions to the Dialysis Community

Dialysis Patient Citizens Hero Award Given to Port St. Lucie Patient in Recognition of His Strong Leadership in the Kidney Community

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 12, 2009) – Dialysis Patient Citizens (DPC) – a nationwide, non-profit patient advocacy organization comprised of more than 23,000 dialysis and pre-dialysis patients and family members working to advance the quality of life of dialysis patients – presented 47-year-old Port St. Lucie dialysis patient Joe Ogonowski with its March 2009 DPC Hero Award today in recognition of his ongoing education and support of kidney patients in his hometown, across Florida, and nationwide.

“Joe is an inspiration to DPC’s members and a great example of how when patients choose to get involved with advocacy, they can accomplish anything,” said Chad Lennox, Executive Director of DPC. “Joe has educated patients directly in their dialysis facilities, he has written a booklet about what to expect and how to maintain a full life while on dialysis, and he has even created a blog in which he gives updates about his own care while providing an opportunity for other patients to share their own experiences.”

Born with Alports Syndrome, a genetic disorder which causes gradual scarring of the kidneys that can eventually lead to kidney failure, Ogonowski was only expected to live to be 30 years old. Not only has he beaten the odds by 17 years and counting, Ogonowski has become a powerful advocate for dialysis patients by educating others in his community and beyond about kidney disease, the dangers associated with the condition, and the importance of making healthy life decisions.

“I feel strongly that as a long-time dialysis patient, it is my responsibility to help others in the dialysis community to cope with the same struggles that I have been through,” said Ogonowski. “Sometimes people with kidney disease need to talk to someone besides their doctors, people who have gone through the same thing they are experiencing – and I’m proud to be able to help my fellow patients by serving in this role.”

In addition to his dialysis patient advocacy work, Ogonowski is an avid hockey player and coaches children of all ages through clinics. Ogonowski and his wife of 20 years, Dawn, also have three children – Gina, 17; Joseph, 15; and Jazmine, 11.

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More About the DPC Hero Award

The DPC Hero award is open to caregivers, nephrologists, family members, patients, and other members of the kidney community who have empowered themselves or others in the kidney community. It is given to reflect the spirit of the thousands of people whose efforts make a difference in the lives of others, whose stories often go untold.

Nominations for the DPC Hero award can be sent to dpc@dialysispatients.org or by contacting 1-866-877-4242.