

Kidney swap: gift of life, times three

June 18, 2012 12:30 PM Sarah Balyeat
sarah.balyeat@hcahealthcare.com

Kimberly “Peezie” Allred and her sister-in-law, Shasta Leininger, led a parade of family members at the Tulane Transplant Institute Clinic recently on their way to a celebration of life. Allred, Leininger and four other individuals participated in a paired-donor kidney exchange at Tulane Medical Center on May 15, and now they were meeting one another for the first time.



At Tulane Medical Center, three patients receive life-saving transplants in a paired-donor kidney exchange involving three families. (Photo by Sally Asher)

A paired-donor exchange occurs when patients needing a kidney transplant “swap” willing donors to make compatible organ matches. In this exchange, three people received life-saving transplants from three individuals they had never met.

This was Allred's second kidney transplant. In 1995 she suffered an allergic reaction to an antibiotic that led to kidney failure. “My first transplant was on Nov. 9, 1995, and my mother donated one of her kidneys,” Allred said. “It lasted me almost 17 years.”

Three years ago Allred's transplanted kidney started a slow functional decline. A mother of two young children, she knew that another transplant was her only hope of seeing her children grow up. More than a dozen of Allred's friends and family

members offered to donate a kidney, but none matched.

When this happens, said [Dr. Anil Paramesh](#), Tulane transplant surgeon, “that's when we can use a paired-donor exchange to match willing donors with transplant recipients.”

Allred received a perfectly matched kidney from Amma Peterson, the wife of Morris Peterson. Peterson, a retired veteran of the Navy who had been waiting three years for a transplant, received a kidney from Sommer Anderson. Anderson is the sister of Vanessa Jackson, a mother of two who has been on dialysis for the past two years. Jackson received a kidney from Shasta Leininger, the sister-in-law of Peezie Allred.

On May 31, the donors and recipients came together with family and friends at [Tulane Medical Center](#) to meet and celebrate the gift of life they all now shared.

Sarah Balyeat is communications coordinator at Tulane Medical Center.