

Let the Sunshine In: the legacy of Logan Boulet

[00:00:00] **Brittany:** Welcome to Living Transplant.

[00:00:02] **Courtney:** The podcast that takes you behind the scenes of the transplant program at Toronto General Hospital,

[00:00:07] **Brittany:** and brings you open and honest conversations about the transplant experience.

[00:00:11] **Courtney:** My name is Courtney and I'm the communication specialist for the Centre for Living Organ Donation.

[00:00:16] **Brittany:** And my name is Brittany. I'm a bedside nurse in the Ajmera Transplant Centre.

[00:00:20] **Courtney:** Full disclosure: we are not physicians.

[00:00:22] **Brittany:** No. And we are not here to give you medical advice.

[00:00:26] **Courtney:** Think of us like your guides through the world of transplant, as we know it,

[00:00:29] **Brittany:** Whether transplant is your past present or future your passion, or your curiosity ,

[00:00:34] **Courtney:** Living Transplant will show you the world of transplant like you've never seen it before. Welcome back to living transplant. Today, we're joined by Toby and Bernadine Boulet. They are the parents of Logan Boulet whose decision to be an organ donor inspired thousands of Canadians after his death on April 6 2018. What followed was a drastic increase in organ donor registration, which came to be known as the Logan Boulet Effect.

[00:01:01] So thanks so much to both of you for joining us today. It's really nice to see you both again.

[00:01:05] **Bernie:** Thank you for having us.

[00:01:06] **Toby:** Thanks for having us. We're excited to be here today.

[00:01:09] **Courtney:** So typically we start our interviews by asking our guests what is your connection to transplant, but we kind of covered that already.

[00:01:14] Your connection to transplant is Logan. So maybe we can start by just asking. When did you hear that Logan wanted to become an organ donor?

[00:01:23] **Toby:** Well in the June 27th of 2017, Logan's trainer, Ric Suggitt passed away from a cerebral hemorrhage. And that was very sad for us. And so in August – we would always sit on our back deck, have a hot tub on the back deck, whatever.

[00:01:39] And he announced to me like literally in conversation that “I'm going to be an organ donor. Like Ric, if I can.” And I said, “that's nice. You'll be 85 when you pass and nobody will want your organs.” And he looked at me, brushed me off cause I was brushing him and him off. And he said, “no, I'm going to register on my birthday.”

[00:01:59] So that's the first time we that I heard it. I never told Bernie. I wasn't being a very good dad at that time. I was just like, okay, that's nice. I don't want to talk about it. So let's just move on. And we moved on, but he told me then, so the summer of 2017.

[00:02:12] **Brittany:** Courtney knows a little bit more about your story and more about Logan. So I'm interested to know what kind of person was Logan and what was he passionate about?

[00:02:24] **Bernie:** So Logan, he loved fun and he loved to tease people and he was always like tussling hair or bugging me and would do things like that.

[00:02:36] He was a leader, but he was a quiet leader. So, he would always think of wanting to lead people, but not to be that front person who had to be like in the limelight. He always liked to kind of be in the back, but make sure everybody was included. He'd take the time to visit with people and to talk to people and to include someone who might be like on the peripheral and bring them into the group.

[00:02:58] He was artistic and always questioned things. He was always inquiring about stuff. Um, He liked to build LEGO was one of his favorite things and even before he passed was wanting a set of LEGO for Christmas. He loved art. He was obviously athletic and he always strive to do better.

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[00:03:21] In 2017. Our daughter Mariko and Logan went to France and they went through art museums. He loved food. He was starting to cook and to experiment with different recipes and how to cook things.

[00:03:34] He loved to try different food when he went places and tried to immerse himself in cultures. And that was something we always did as a family was traveled lots and he had certainly. Brought that to himself. He was just the person who others like to be around. He had a, a smile that would light up a room and would make people smile back.

[00:03:55] **Toby:** When they went to Paris. My sister was there with her because her daughter lived there and they went to museums and my brother-in-law and Mariko, Logan's sister would just - I would've been there, done that.

[00:04:05] We've seen it for, it took us half hour. We're ready to go through, where Logan and Claire would sit and discuss breaststrokes and colors and tonalities of the painting. And he always wanted to be more than just a hockey player. And he was just more than a hockey player.

[00:04:16]

[00:04:16] **Bernie:** What, what position did Logan play?

[00:04:17] **Toby:** Logan was a defenseman in hockey and a flanker lock and rugby, which is very similar in both positions, attack, search, take the person out, create opportunities for the stars, both those positions are that and both sports

[00:04:33] he loved. He was the guy that would create opportunities for other people.

[00:04:37] One of the quotes that Ric Suggitt would give the boys was that it doesn't matter how well you did in a game.

[00:04:42] It's how well you make your teammates look. So Logan was all about that.

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[00:04:46] **Courtney:** He sounds like he was such a thoughtful person too. So the decision about organ donation for him doesn't sound like it'd be something he would just say out of nowhere, it's obviously something he considered

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[00:04:56] When you guys were at the hospital, how did the conversation of organ donation come up?

[00:05:01] Like who, who brought it up to you?

[00:05:03] **Bernie:** When we were told Logan was at Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon. We drove from Nipawin where people had gathered, those who, their loved one hadn't been, hadn't been found, hadn't been placed.

[00:05:16] And so we drove from there, to Saskatoon and we had to go around the long way because the road was blocked because of the crash. So when we got there, they had sectioned off the cafeteria for the families of the Broncos. And so the people were there, but people, we didn't really know, we knew a few families, but not all the families.

[00:05:35] And so we didn't really know the people that were there. And then finally they called us and, they said Logan was in ICU, so we got to go down. But, when we got to the doors of ICU, they stopped us. And the nurse who was in was in charge of Logan's case he came out and met us at the door and they took us to a room. And then they told us Logan's prognosis at that time. and all his injuries. And I guess what we heard was he has a spinal injury and we were thinking like, okay, he can survive this there's Paralympians. There's people who survive this. And then they told us about the brain injury and that he was not going to be able to overcome that.

[00:06:13] And he was not going to be able to survive that. And I remember asking like, "can we had a second opinion" and they're like, "Oh, well we have like the best doctors here that we possibly can get." And, and so then I just suggested, like, "can we do organ donation? Is that a possibility?" And I guess more my thinking was um, Logan's going into a place he's no longer going to need is organs.

[00:06:42] He's young, he's healthy, he's strong. Someone could use his organs who really needed them because their life was being very hampered by disease or something that, that their organs weren't functioning properly. And so I just offered. So there was people who worked in head trauma, there were neurosurgeons, there's a resident, there's a nurse, there's a social worker.

[00:07:07] They just kind of all stopped and like looked. Because obviously that wasn't how it normally happens, that people don't usually offer. So that's - it never actually got brought up to us. We offered. And at that time I didn't actually know about Toby's conversation with Logan that summer before.

[00:07:29] So. Which when I did find out, there was no hesitation. Once we were kind of given the diagnosis that Logan was not going to be able to overcome his injuries.

[00:07:43] **Toby:** Yeah. Bernie just looked over her shoulder at me after she offered up Logan's organs. And as Bernie said in the room, they just looked at us like "you didn't just offer your son's organs" and -

[00:07:57] And I said, "well, Logan told me, but I hadn't told Bernie," so okay. That made it better for them, but we went from there. And then after that we went, we eventually got to go to Logan's bedside and Logan's billet family. They came in from Humboldt and you couldn't come certain ways because they had to pick up McLaren.

[00:08:18] And anyway, it's a long process to get from Humboldt to Saskatoon. When you have to go through all these back roads because of the crashes had shut down many avenues of getting there. And so they arrived and they're at their bedside and the transplant lady came back. She had a bunch of paperwork to do, and I said, I would do it "Bernie,

[00:08:35] You go be with Logan." And so I was standing there and McLaren who at that time was 13 years of age was just standing there listening. And I said that Logan had told me that he was going to sign up to be an organ donor on his 21st birthday. And, but I didn't know that.

[00:08:53] And then all of a sudden McLaren and nobody knew this only McLaren knew apparently, "Oh, well, that's what he did." And we're like, "what do you mean?" He said, "well, we're sitting out in front of the house. We'd ran some errands with Logan's car. We're sitting out in front of the house, like the week of his birthday."

[00:09:05] His birthday is March 2nd. And remember McLaren's 13. Logan is 20 and it's like "Hey, what are you doing? Your birthday, big fellow." That's what he's asking him. Right? Logan said "I'm not doing anything. I'm going to sign up to be an organ donor on my birthday." McLaren's like "what?

[00:09:21] That's kind of creepy." And he goes, "no, if you can save lives, then you should."

[00:09:26] And we also, I mean, as Bernie explained earlier, we, we raised Logan to be, he's a giver.

[00:09:33] Services are the rent you paid to live your life. You need to serve. And you need to give as much as you can. And so Logan -

[00:09:43] I would imagine, put it all together

[00:09:45] **Bernie:** And that's why. Well, and our daughter Mariko, she's like ever since she's had a driver's license, she's always been a registered organ donor on her driver's license here in Alberta. And so Logan also saw that and it was another thing. Yeah. Well, that's, it's the right thing to do, like to be able to do that.

[00:10:03] , **Courtney:** I mean, I haven't been working in transplant that long, but I've never heard of someone offering their loved ones.

[00:10:09] organs like that. Like, that's really, truly incredible that you did that Bernadine without even knowing what, what Logan's intentions were. Toby, I guess that kind of jogged your memory about that conversation, but was there a moment when, what did you think when Bernadine first said that was that?

[00:10:29] **Toby:** It just, I wasn't thinking about organ donation until she said it.

[00:10:32] I was trying to absorb everything they told her, told us, as I think everyone is. Yeah. And so I just a little sidebar. I was at Safeway the other day and there's a friend of Bernie's that she went to school with since grade 12, since she was just 12 years old. And he's moved back to Lethbridge, he's working at Safeway and I said "Hey, are you doing good?"

[00:10:51] And we're just talking. And then he just. Reached out and said, well, you can't reach out now, but you know, reached out figuratively and told me that, you know, how are things going and all that. And then he said, "that was awesome, what you guys did about offering Logan's organs." I said, "well Bernie did that."

[00:11:08] And he goes, "I know that," he says, "because I was asked about a week or so after the crash, by someone where he worked at and he said, well, I've known Bernie since she was

[00:11:20] 12 years old. And that's

[00:11:24] the Bernadine Higo that he knew that she wouldn't, she wouldn't wait for someone to ask. She would do the right thing and offer, she always has." He said he was not surprised at all.

[00:11:40] So yeah, it just adds to the moment and the grief and the being in that little room and then hearing stories afterwards. It's the stories. We live our lives by stories, Bernie and I and our family. And it's the stories that we hear after and how they're communicated. And we've always tried to make sure our story is as best, as good as it can be and clean.

[00:12:03] And that just reinforced to me that the girl I married, that I love is a good person. Yeah.

[00:12:15] **Brittany:** I think it's also amazing that you were able to let Bernie have the time with Logan at the bedside while you filled out all the forms. I think that's also pretty, pretty beautiful of you to be able to give that time to Bernie.

[00:12:29] **Bernie:** I think that that's something that families, it's kind of a gift that you get to spend that extra time with your loved one. People might not really think about that.

[00:12:42] But if your loved one is not going to be able to survive injuries that they've had because of a vehicle crash or a ski crash, whatever it happens to be. You get a little bit of extra time with your loved one that you wouldn't get normally. I really can't imagine sitting there waiting for your person to, to like shutting off machines and having to sit there.

[00:13:10] We got to be with Logan. He was warm. His heart was beating. I got to put my head on his chest. He was breathing with the machine, but we got to spend that time with him. We got to walk down the hall and have them take him into that OR and say goodbye. So I think that it was a gift to his to be able to, to spend that time with them.

[00:13:38] I think we just got a gift because we got to spend 27 hours extra with him that we wouldn't have got to spend otherwise. So that was, yeah, I think that that was a gift that people probably don't even see. I mean it's secondary, but yeah.

[00:14:02] **Brittany:** Were there your other family members, were they able to join as well?

[00:14:07] **Toby:** our, our daughter Mariko, Bernie's cousin drove her from, she was an Edmonton taking her Masters in Occupational Therapy. So Bernie contacted her cousin Kelly and he, picked her up and they drove her, which was about a six and a half hours.

[00:14:20] Right. And then Bernie's mom and dad came with Bernie's brother. I told my family not to come.

[00:14:28] My mom and dad at the time were 87 and 90 years old, and that they needed to stay home and that my sister in Red Deer, would communicate directly with them. I just said like, we don't need all these people coming because Logan's passing. And by the time you get there, he will have passed. Then we had our time, you'd spend time with Logan and you'd do things. And the nurses were amazing. They would come in and they'd wash him and they'd always ask to say, "Oh, we're just going to move you over Logan, a little bit here. We're going to put this on. This might pinch a little bit," or "we're going to do this." And they're talking to Logan as if he was alive and he was alive, but it's, I don't know how to explain it, but it, what they did was amazing for what we were working with.

[00:15:13] And not everybody knows this, but Logan was, he had - other than a small cut and some blood on his nose, but I cleaned them all up. I wiped all the blood off his nose, his ears. He had nothing. He cut his toe, had a bruise on his shoulder and a small cut here. And other than that, everything was perfect condition.

[00:15:30] Like he just like, he was asleep.

[00:15:36] **Bernie:** Yeah, and really the Broncos had taken over ICU.

[00:15:40] There was a couple other patients in the hospital. But the, the whole ICU unit was so compassionate and so accommodating to everybody. And as we got close to the time for when it was, when Logan was going to be taken to surgery the nurse that was Logan's nurse at the time gave us all those bracelets, you know, that you have like, that have your medication on it or ID or whatever.

[00:16:08] And she gave us a whole bunch and we were able to phone people or text people and send out messages like, "what would you like to say to Logan at the end?" Because, family was there, but not necessarily like friends or extended family. And so we got to fill his arms and his legs with these little bands and write messages to him.

[00:16:31] So we got a Sharpie and we wrote, Mariko our daughter, and I wrote messages. So people would text us a message and we'd write it on the the band and put it on his arms. So we had these bands all up his arms and on his legs.

[00:16:53] And it was just something that it was. It was your final message that Logan got to take with him. And so we pass that on to other ICU nurses that we know, and they've used that just to help a family, because at that point, when your person is going to leave you, it's a bit comforting. And then when Logan came

[00:17:17] back from RUH to Lethbridge. And at his viewing, like he was all dressed in a suit, but I felt on his arm and he still had the bands. And so he still has them on and just that whole thought of those messages are with them. And that people said all just different things that were important that they wanted to say to him and that they're there on his arms.

[00:17:44] That was just a really nice way to say what you wanted to say to Logan and that he could take it with him.

[00:17:53] **Brittany:** That's absolutely beautiful. I might use that because during COVID right now, it's not even really possible for people to come and visit. Yeah. Right now it's like, it's just not.

[00:18:07] That might be great way to share some messages from some loved ones.

[00:18:11] How was this Green Shirt day? Logan Boulet Effect? How did they start?

[00:18:17] **Toby:** Well, they're two separate things.

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[00:18:19] **Bernie:** So I guess the Logan Effect kind of almost started right away, it was initially called the Logan Effect. And actually on Logan's monument at the cemetery, it actually says the Logan Effect and then it kind of evolved. And then there was like the Logan Effect, the Logan Boulet Effect. And then as time passed, it just really has become the Logan Boulet Effect.

[00:18:38] By the way, a little thing is in the States, it's called the Logan Effect. So, but here in Canada, we call it the Logan Boulet Effect, which I don't, I don't know why that is, but it is.

And I guess like when it just sort of happened like over social media, we just kind of looked at it and like, like, what is this?

[00:18:58] Like, we thought of it more as just, it was our son that had passed. It was like our child that had passed, not realizing the impact that it had on other people. Like in the transplant community, the people waiting for transplants, their families other people, donor families, the Logan Effect, or the Logan Boulet Effect just kind of evolved.

[00:19:23] And it was something that other people could, latch onto, it gave them a little bit of comfort to know what effect that organ donation had, not only on recipients, but on donors as well. And it just kind of evolved. I don't, I'm not sure where it actually started, but it just kind of blew up.

[00:19:47] When they promote Broncos had the home opener, the Logan Boulet Effect, hashtag Logan Boulet Effect was actually trending. And it was like top of the list almost too, because TSN had done a really cool little video for Logan. The impact of that phrase has been way more than we would have ever thought

[00:20:11] **Toby:** That the night on April 7th, we'd been getting all kinds of contact from people all over.

[00:20:16] Like our phones are blowing up and we were trying to be with Logan. So we'd take breaks. I'll take a half hour, Bernie takes half an hour, and just rotate. So you could have another break for a little bit, just to answer these continual messaging from people. And so I just told Logan's godfather just put something on, just literally put something on Facebook, just get it out there:

[00:20:36] "this is what's happening." So people just leave us alone. And that was about seven o'clock on April 7th at night. And then it went bang from there. And by the weekend when Logan's funeral was, the Logan Boulet Effect had come out also. So they're both there. And then as Bernie said, it's a lot of people, they want to talk about the Logan Boulet Effect, which is fine by us. They are much more moved to that, than they are to Green Shirt Day.

[00:21:03] So about three weeks after the crash, we, okay. I don't what happens at most funerals, but my understanding most people visit for a week or so they cover, we probably had three months of visitors every day come to our house. It just never seemed to end. And that's not a bad thing. We had our front door open.

[00:21:20] We left the door open, and the sunshine came in through our screen door. That's just the way it was. People just kept coming and coming and coming. And so about three weeks after the crash,

[00:21:34] Logan's godfather said, "they're going to come." I said, "Who's going to come. He said "they." "Who's they?" "I don't know who they are, but they're going to come." And what they are is media and organ transplant charities and groups, and people want us to speak and all kinds of things, which is fine. And then we had to decide Bernie and I, are we going to be advocates or not?

[00:21:53] So we made the decision that we're going to be. And then we're called by a gentleman named David Peckham from Vancouver. And he said, this is the biggest movement in the history of Canada. A hundred thousand people signed up the first month, 50 000 in the second month, 150,000 people have signed up.

[00:22:07] He said, I've been doing this for 30 years with BC transplant on my own as a marketing person, this has never happened." That's nice. And we didn't know who this guy was. And so fine. Send us your contact information. We'll have some questions for you. So we, Bernie has got a cousin who's a lawyer and a few other people.

[00:22:25] So he asked some questions to people we trust and they give us their answers, honestly. And then we agreed that, okay, we're in. So nobody owns Green Shirt Day. Green Shirt Day is not there to make money. Green Shirt Day is all about raising organ donor awareness and registration awareness in Canada.

[00:22:42] That's what it does. Simple as that, I also liked the Logan Boulet Effect just as much, if not, maybe more.

[00:22:48] **Courtney:** I mean the decision to become advocates and become kind of the face of, organ donor families in Canada, based on this conversation and just talking about Logan and how he was raised , it seems a little out of character for you guys to be so

[00:23:03] out there. Was that a big shift from being school teachers to touring across Canada? What was that transition like? And did it, did it help with coping with the changes that were going on in, in everyday life since Logan's passing?

[00:23:18] **Bernie:** Well, we had, we had a couple of choices we could have chosen to just take our story and to hold our story in for ourselves. And to not do anything with it, we could have shut the blinds, shut the door and just said, no, this is, this is our personal grief. This is our story. But we realized,

[00:23:40] because we are involved in community, sthis certainly gave us the opportunity to be involved in something and to be part of something.

[00:24:01] So we chose, I guess our choice was that we would become advocates for it. Not because we wanted to be out there or that we want the publicity, or we want to be on the stage, but it's just because it's the right thing to do. It's, we're hoping that that never happens to us, but we could be in a situation where.

[00:24:22] One of us in our immediate family or in our extended family could be someone that needs to have some kind of a transplant at some time in our lives. And we want that opportunity that if that happens for them to be able to have that transplant or for us to be at that transplant. So that's sort of what we just decided to do that we would.

[00:24:41] Become advocates for it because there is that need for it. There are hundreds of people that pass away each year waiting for a transplant. And we've learned so much for sure. And the, in almost three years since then. So doing that, making that difference, would Logan have like the decision we made?

[00:25:00] We're a little bit more out on the stage then he probably would have liked, but like just making that difference, like what can we do? How can we be inspirational to other people? How can we can make Logan be inspirational? It also helps, I guess, on our grief journey too because we get to share stories about Logan and to talk about Logan and people are genuinely interested to hear about Logan which

[00:25:27] is so nice because often when people pass away, other people are not wanting to like bring up their name or they're worried about how you might react. And, and this gives us an opportunity to talk about Logan and to celebrate Logan and who he is still.

[00:25:44] **Brittany:** Toby you were asked, you were saying that the night of April 7th, people were messaging you guys and asking a lot of questions.

[00:25:52] And then you just posted on Facebook. What had happened, were people asking about organ donation or were they more asking about the situation, how it all happened? Like what were people curious about?

[00:26:05] **Toby:** I had told some friends that Logan was going to be an organ donor that we'd decided to donate Logan's organs. I had told some friends, but most people are just people, as Bernie said, we're, we're well known in Lethbridge.

[00:26:18] I coached many sports and was a high school teacher. Bernie's an elementary school teacher. We know lots of people, I've been in lots of provincial associations, a university thing, same as Bernie. So people knew us. And then the scope of the tragedy. The massive scope of this tragedy isn't unheard of in Canada, it's happened a few other times, but it was big and it is big and it continues to be that.

[00:26:39] And so people wanted to connect, do something. And then media, you can only imagine because I have a Twitter page and so it's not very hard for media and people to get ahold of you.

[00:26:54] And it's just like at the time "I don't want your message go away." So I just asked Neil to post it. I said, Neopost something, anything is what I said. And then I said, texted something to, and Neil, along with the principal of our school, they've created something and they posted that. And that's the post. And then, at about seven o'clock on April 7th, Logan passed officially about 11:45 in the morning and April 7th.

[00:27:18] **Courtney:** Yeah. I mean, just talking about the scope of the tragedy, Brittany and I were just meeting quickly before this. And Brittany was saying that like she thinks most people, definitely in healthcare, most Canadians though, probably, remember where they were when they heard the news.

[00:27:33] **Brittany:** Yeah, it was just so impactful.

[00:27:35] I don't think there's a person that lives in Canada that. Didn't hear what happened on that news that day. And doesn't remember where they were. I remember hearing everything about it and just my roommate and I were just so distraught.

[00:27:48] **Courtney:** I mean, obviously nothing can replace Logan, but in terms of, of grief and trying to just cope with those feelings does it help knowing that Logan has saved so many people and changed so many lives? Is that helpful?

[00:28:03] **Toby:** The gold medal is if Logan could come back, but we know that's not going to happen. So this is a silver medal. We'll take the silver. I want Logan to come back, but it's not going to happen. It isn't happening at all.

[00:28:12] Trust me. I know. We all know. And so, for me – Bernie and I are on different paths, she can answer her own questions, but, well, we started doing our speaking and people come up to you to get this charitable for kidney or liver or something like that. Right. They'd want to tell you how wonderful this is – “ I got a kidney transplant or a liver transplant.”

[00:28:38] And I'm like, “I don't care because my son passed and I don't really want to talk. I spoken, I've done my bit. I don't want to hear that how happy you are.” But now as time goes on and the edges are softening a bit, it's never going to go away, but as the edges of Logan's death is softening, I understand

[00:28:55] and I am genuinely happy for people because people. Haven't changed how they approach us. I don't think they have. But I have changed how I approach people. Now I'm much more receptive, much happier for them, much more supportive. I'm a better advocate now than I was two years ago. I think I'm a quite a bit better advocate.

[00:29:13] I'm more educated about the topics I can speak clearer about it. And I can be more supportive to a family that's grieving or they're needing a kidney.

[00:29:23] **Bernie:** Yeah. I think I think that it makes a difference. Like we learned a lot.

[00:29:28] I mean, just the whole organ transplant community, we have a better understanding of what that's like and how it differs across our nation. Like, we really had no idea how different it was like from Alberta to BC, to Ontario, to Quebec, and, and now the Maritimes and Nova Scotia, it's also very different.

[00:29:49] And even the whole process of organ transplantation. The fact that kidney and livers can be live transplants. And I think Toby is very right about at first it was like, people would come up to us and talk to us from the transplant community. And they would just, “Oh, you know, just thank you for advocating for this.”

[00:30:08] And you're like, “yeah...” But now we just see it differently and we see the value of an organ transplant and how it has changed people's lives There's people who've lived with transplants for years, decades, and it's allowed them to get married and have children and to have grandchildren and to witness all kinds of things that we know that Logan will never get to have.

[00:30:33] And we won't get to see that in Logan's life. But to know that it has made a difference that maybe those people received their transplant, because someone became an organ donor because of Logan stories. So, yeah. That's helpful. That's huge.

[00:30:47] **Toby:** Yes. A lot of people have become organ donors because of the story.

[00:30:52] I keep track of this. There's been seven different families that have contacted us that their loved ones signed up to be an organ donor because of Logan and I've since passed. So when you talk about the ripple effect Ric Suggit who inspired Logan, and the way the ripples create waves, low waves, and then the tsunami wall. There's seven families that were grieving as hard as we are today - and I'm sure they are – who, their family members sign up to be registered organ donors because of Logan, literally because of the Logan Boulet Effect.

[00:31:25] And they've gone on. So if it saves six lives or seven lives, you can multiply that by seven. So to me, that's incredibly inspiring. You know what, wearing green shirts on Green Shirt Day, or sending us messages cards, we still get comments, direct messages and Twitter, but it used to be almost every day for almost a year. As like every day you could count back, people would contact Bernie and I and say, “this is what we're doing.”

[00:31:53] And we try really, really hard to make sure that we share everything we can. We just, we try to share the wealth as much as possible. As much as possible. It's not about Bernie and I, it's not about a daughter Mariko and it's not about Logan. It's about people who need an organ and for people to do the right thing, serve, serve as best you can and get involved.

[00:32:15] That's what we're about.

[00:32:16] **Brittany:** And have the conversations with their loved ones, because it seems as though that conversation was the pinpoint for how it all started because, I think I've mentioned this in another episode, I don't think people really, truly understand the importance of having that conversation, is just as important,

[00:32:33] if not more important than signing your donor card is talking to your loved ones about your wishes for when and if that day does come, they need to make an informed decision about what you wanted.

[00:32:47] **Bernie:** I think that that's really, really huge, like for people to have that conversation. So we really want them to be inspired and to register and to have that conversation.

[00:32:57] And even if you're just having a conversation and not registering, but that conversation, it makes it a little bit easier to make that decision at a time when

[00:33:06] you're panicked, you're stressed. And you don't want to have to think about that, but if you know that that person who is passing has made that wish and made you has told you that, then it just kind of makes that time just a little bit easier, I think, to get through. Also, if you have the conversation statistics talk about the fact that for every conversation you have, it just kind of ripples. And so more people will register or think about registering because they've heard of it. By having that conversation and having that conversation more often, that it doesn't seem to be so taboo or not as topic you don't want to talk about.

[00:33:44] Because. Yes, liver or kidney transplant doesn't mean you're going to pass away, but other lung transplants, heart transplants, that means that person is passing away and you don't, and people don't want to have that conversation.

[00:33:57] **Courtney:** I think it's funny with Nova Scotia and the controversial opt out.

[00:34:02] organ donation legislation - presumed consent, sorry. You know, I think it's interesting that at the very least, whether you agree with it or disagree with it, it's really brought that conversation to top of mind for a lot of Canadians. And I think it's definitely a conversation, worth having.

[00:34:20] Whether or not that becomes a Canada wide thing, it's definitely inspired people, well, forced a lot of people to have that conversation.

[00:34:28] **Toby:** I'm just going to jump back to, you said inspirations. And then we were talking to a conversation that gentleman from Prince Edward Island is an author and he wrote that his family is going to have a banter about Green Shirt Day, a banter about the Logan Boulet Effect.

[00:34:43] And so I took that and Bernie was talking about the conversation, and I kept thinking So I coined the phrase, "the kitchen table talk." Simple as that. And so from the kitchen table talk and I, that's why I got up and walked over there and grabbed this.... [a woman,]

[00:35:02] she painted this and we have the original and it's all over internet that she painted the kitchen table talk. It's actually having that conversation at the kitchen table and we get a lot of messages now. People are having the kitchen table talk. You need to have that talk.

[00:35:17] **Brittany:** I was gonna say although like, obviously the conversation with your family is pivotal and extremely important, I would even say that the frequency of the conversation is just as important because I've had this conversation with my parents maybe six years ago, because

[00:35:35] during my transplant orientation, they told us all this, and that was the first time I had ever heard about donating your organs and signing your organ card and having the conversation. So I went home that day, told my parents, and they probably don't remember that.

[00:35:47] So I'm going to need to have this conversation again with my family, I am feeling very inspired. I'm going to have to go home like this weekend and be like, "listen, I know I've told you this before, but I'm going to need to tell you again. I want to donate my organs." Well, actually it's recorded. So they can't argue now.

[00:36:04] **Courtney:** Just remind her that you host this podcast and I'm sure that that'll do it. What can our listeners do to get people involved in this Green Shirt Day and all the Green Shirt Days to come?

[00:36:18] **Bernie:** it's hard this year because we don't really know where we're going to be at with COVID. So last year we had things planned and then COVID hit and things shut down.

[00:36:26] So we had to really just become a social media campaign. But this year there are things that are still open. So if you, if people work in a store or a business or even a school if they can just get the word out, get people to wear green, to wear green shirts, to talk about having that conversation. You may not be able to get something big organized, but even just having a green shirt or if you do have Green Shirt Day shirts, wear them.

[00:36:54] People might ask you a question about it and then that's starts that conversation to be able to have that and make people think about, "Oh yeah. Okay. Like I hadn't thought about that" or to go home and have the conversation, like Brittany's talking about having a conversation with her family.

[00:37:09] So having people do that is really important. I would just suggest for people to be able to post pictures of them in green shirts, on social media, on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Tik Tok, do a little dance. And then just hashtag Logan Boulet Effect, Green Shirt Day, register, be inspired be an organ donor, those kinds of things, just so that it just spreads.

[00:37:34] If they have kids to have that conversation with kids, you know, they'll innocently ask questions and sometimes that child being the catalyst of that conversation makes it just a little bit easier. If it was coming from the child to talk about it, it may not be as intimidating or as stigmatized as if, you know, an adult tries to have that conversation with their child. So yeah, like if people could do that too, that would be so important to just have that, you know, be inspired and register and have that conversation with your family.

[00:38:08] No matter whether it's your parents for Brittany or your, your children.

[00:38:14] **Courtney:** Yeah, absolutely. That's such a great point. Our transplant program does a high school initiative outreach where they bring families of organ donors and living organ donors to talk at high schools. I had one living donor that I interviewed who, when she told her,

[00:38:30] I think like 15-year-old daughter that she was going to donate her liver anonymously, her daughter was like, "yeah, that's what I plan to do when I turned 18 as well." And she was like, "Oh, I didn't even know you knew you could do that." Which is kinda cool. So I think that really is - we didn't get to this question, but maybe this is we can talk about it now - but I really do think that is the future of organ donation.

[00:38:50] Like you said, Bernie kind of just taking the taboo out of it, taking the stigma out of it, having that conversation. It doesn't have to be morbid or scary. Like it really is something that it's just something for you to talk about with your family. Everyone should know what you would want and what you would want for them.

[00:39:06] **Bernie:** Yeah. I think that that is like, is really huge. Just actually have that conversation and just talk about it. And, and like Brittany said to bring it up more than once, so I, yeah, it becomes like kitchen table talk where you do talk about it often.

[00:39:28] And so that it, it just makes that decision easier or that when you are 18 in that you can be go on a list to be a kidney transplant or a donor, or to be a liver donor. I think those are all things that are really important to that. People. Don't even realize that they can do that. Or I know that Canadian Blood Services, is doing a big push on right now for STEM cell registration.

[00:39:50] And so all those kinds of things that you can do uh, Logan and Mariko our kids for their grade 12 biology , here in Alberta, the teacher that they had, they loved him and his wife actually passed away and she became an organ donor. And so that story was also another inspiration for them to hear, because he was able to share that in the bio class.

[00:40:12] So just having those stories and hearing those, I also think takes that stigma out of it.

[00:40:19] **Courtney:** Absolutely. I think storytelling is really really important. And I feel so lucky that I get to hear people's stories and share them because it inspires a lot of incredible conversations that turn into literally life-saving action.

[00:40:32] **Brittany:** I also just want to thank you guys for everything that you guys do. It's pretty amazing. I'm sure you guys have heard it a million times, but being able to take this story that you guys have and turn it into something so impactful for literally the entire country is pretty incredible.

[00:40:48] It's very amazing. I am on the other side of it as well. I am always working with transplant patients and see people come out of surgery. See people struggle to get a surgery. I see it all the time. So to be able to see it on the other side of people, being able to advocate for these things is pretty inspiring.

[00:41:07] So thank you for doing that.

[00:41:09] **Bernie:** Thank you.

[00:41:10] **Toby:** Thank you for the opportunity to talk and just to share Logan story, we think is very important. We're storytellers, Bernie and I, and that's how I taught for 30 years in school.

[00:41:19] Bernie probably teaches the curriculum. I just told stories for 30 years and it worked just fine. Kids love me. It's important to share stories and people like stories. At Christmas time, our daughter Mariko came up with the idea that we'd do stories for Logan every year before you open your gift.

[00:41:33] So she passes around a card and there's all these little cards and whoever my family or Bernie's family, they take a card. And if they want, they write a little story on their memory of Logan and then Mariko gathers them all in and then she reads them and then we opened gifts. And so,

[00:41:48] not everybody does it, but it has some, I found for example, pre COVID of course, you might have 15 people sharing new stories that you've never heard. Because you're not

there when Logan does everything. You're not, you think as a parent you are, but you're not. So we get new stories every year or new memories that we've never heard of.

[00:42:07] And then we can investigate, ask questions about the memory and it keeps Logan's name there. That's not a bad thing to say Logan's name and it shares memories. And that's something I guess I'd like to share with your viewers that there's lots of ways to bring the name back in. And we also like to be known as an angel, an angel family, angel donor family.

[00:42:26] We were told that at the very beginning that you're not a deceased donor family, you're an angel family. And so we use that word angel family all the time.

[00:42:33] **Brittany:** I like that. I like that we should, we should change. I agree. Change the language of that.

[00:42:38] **Courtney:** I like that. I like that a lot better.

[00:42:40] I know lots of people come up to you who have received transplants, but is there anything you would like to tell people who are kind of going through their first year without their loved one?

[00:42:50] Just any advice you would offer in terms of coping grief, healing?

[00:42:56] **Toby:** Mine is keep the front door open, keep the blinds open, let the sun come in and let people come visit you and let them talk because they want to tell you something. They may not know what to say, but they want to talk. And then at the same time, just keep saying your loved one's name, so that they know, whoever comes to visit, they know that it's okay to say

[00:43:20] their name. Because people get this idea that, well, you can't upset someone. Well, you're not going to upset me more than when I, then when Logan passed, you can't get me more upset. Right? But people are so worried about upsetting you. And so it's okay to cry in public. It's okay to cry at Safeway. It's okay to have the windows open and the sun coming in and it's okay to talk about your loved one.

[00:43:42] That's what I say. And it's okay to go to counseling. Bernie?

[00:43:47] **Bernie:** Yeah. I think what I would tell people too, is that you, you, you're not wanting to move on, you're just moving forward in your life that you keep the things that are really important to you. And always talk about you loved one.

[00:44:05] And if people are really uncomfortable about you talking about their loved one, then maybe they're not the people you necessarily want to be around. People understand that if you're talking and all of a sudden you start crying that there's a reason why that's happening and that they're okay with it.

[00:44:21] And you'll watch and they'll shed a couple tears or they'll wipe away the tears that that's okay. I don't want to say to people, it gets easier because obviously here we are,

and it's not necessarily easier. As we've said, the edges become a little bit softer and you can enjoy things that you didn't know if you'd enjoy again.

[00:44:44] But every time those memories pop up or someone has a story record it, keep those stories with you. Because those are the memories that you want to have. You want to have the stories that you may not have been there for. The stories of how Logan or your loved one have impacted someone just by saying hi or stopping to walk with them as they walk to get the mail and just to chat, those are, those are the kinds of things to cherish things that you kind of might've just brushed aside before, but cherish, all those things, write them down.

[00:45:16] I have a thing in my phone that I write down all these little stories that people share with me. And know that it's okay to cry and it's okay to be overwhelmed by things. As Toby said the sun will come up tomorrow and, you just kind of have to just take that step. So you're not moving on,

[00:45:35] you're just moving forward.

[00:45:38] **Toby:** Every time, the Broncos lost, and Logan played there for three years and they lost their share of games. They weren't the championship team. They are really good in the last year, but they were at zero basically when they started, they would lose. And I would text Logan no matter if they won or lost, the next morning.

[00:45:54] And I'd say, "Hey, did the sun come up?" And sometimes Logan would say, "Nope, cloudy." That's it. And then later, "Is the sun up yet?" "Yeah. It's peaking through the clouds," or also if they, you know, won, it didn't matter, I'd text him and "yep sun's up, bright and sunny." And so there's a little joke that we had is that no matter what, the sun's going to come up.

[00:46:15] The sun's still coming up the next day. And so after Logan, passed I started saying that, and I had people in stores saying, "sun's up today, Toby?"

[00:46:27] "Yup." Just let the sunshine in, let the sunshine in. People want to help. Let them help you. People want to care, let them care for you. Let them do what they want to do. Don't say no, because there's a reason someone wants to talk to you, let them talk to you because they have something they want to share and it might just be, they want to be beside you.

[00:46:48] They want to be there.

[00:46:49] **Courtney:** Thank you both so much for, for sharing yours and Logan's story. It was so great to talk to you again. I really hope we can meet in person someday soon day when this is all over

[00:47:00] **Bernie:** Thank you girls.

[00:47:04] **Courtney:** Thanks for listening to this episode of Living Transplant. If you have questions or suggestions for future episodes, email us at livingorgandonation@uhn.ca

[00:47:15] **Brit:** Don't forget to subscribe, rate, and review living transplant on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you listen to podcasts

[00:47:21] **Courtney:** and follow us @givelifeUHN on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

[00:47:25] **Brit:** See you next time.