

LOIS CAPLAN | CHILDREN'S ORGAN TRANSPLANT ASSOCIATION SAVES LIVES

# Seven-month-old Zachary Solomon truly needs your help



Zachary Solomon, an adorable, beautiful seven-month-old baby boy, was born on Aug. 7, 2006 to proud parents Paige and Gary Solomon. The big problem was that he arrived three months early and weighed 2 pounds and 5.5 ounces. At five weeks, he developed a disease which causes the small bowel to die, and at the ensuing emergency surgeries the surgeons had to remove all but 6 centimeters of his small bowel. For your information, full term infants have approximately 150 centimeters of small bowel, so the only solution for Zachary's long-term survival is a small bowel transplant.

In November the Solomons made a trip to Pittsburgh Children's Hospital for an evaluation to see if Zachary was a suitable candidate for a transplant. After several surgeries he was listed as a Status One candidate on the United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS) for a small bowel, liver and pancreas. The surgery is

relatively new and is only performed at four centers in the country. So now the wait begins both for the organs and for little Zachary to grow and gain some weight.

The complications include getting Zachary to Pittsburgh within hours when suitable organs are found and finding lodging in a strange city. The cost of this life saving procedure is astronomical amounting to tens of thousands of dollars. Here is where the Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) figures in this bleak picture. Organized in 1986 in Bloomington, Ind. when one child needed a liver transplant to survive, the community rallied around this child's family and raised more than \$100,000 in two months time. Sadly that little boy died before a liver became available, but their efforts were not in vain as COTA, which helps with fundraising efforts, oversees and holds money for the family

of the child in need of the transplant, launched its 1,000th patient fundraising campaign in 2006. COTA is now a national charity that provides fundraising assistance for children needing life-saving transplants and promotes organ, marrow and tissue donation. The organization's priority is to assure that no child or young adult is denied a transplant or excluded from a transplant waiting list due to lack of funds. All funds raised are used for transplant-related expenses.

Here is how you can help save Zachary's life. You may donate at any Bank of America branch c/o COTA for Zachary S. Or mail your gift of life to the Children's Organ Transplant Association, 2501 COTA Drive, Bloomington, IN, 47407. Checks or money orders should be made payable to COTA with "In honor of Zachary Solomon" written on the memo line. Also secure credit card donations are accepted online from the

Donations tab or at [www.cota.org](http://www.cota.org).

Locally two fundraising events are planned to help add to Zachary's COTA fund. On Saturday, April 14 from 3 to 9 p.m. at 16488 Walnut Rail Road in Chesterfield there will be a sale and auction of the entire contents of a Hallmark store. The story here is that the merchandise was donated by the store owners, parents of Benjamin Will Cooper who was born Mar. 1, 2005 and lived for only ten days. The sale, in memory of Benjamin and at the Cooper's, is for the benefit of Zachary. A friend of Paige and Gary's and one of a large support group, Michelle Hamilton, is putting together a team to walk the St. Louis Half Marathon on April 15. Check out the details on the marathon website, [wwstlouis-marathon.com/events/halfmarathon.htm](http://wwstlouis-marathon.com/events/halfmarathon.htm). If you are interested in walking or running the half marathon for Zachary, call Michelle at 314-432-3000, ext. 212.