

"...it's comforting to know that real heroes still exist amongst us..."

Hope's Name is Danny

By Stephen Rusiniak

"To the sick, where there's life there's hope, and today, hope's name is Danny"



There was never any doubt that if he were ever confronted with an opportunity to save a life, he would, and so when Detective Danny DuBois learned that he was a potential match for a patient in desperate need of a lifesaving bone marrow transplant, he knew just what he needed to do.

Unfortunately, before he could actually have the opportunity to help another with their pain and suffering, Danny would first have to deal with his own.

This story begins a few years earlier when Nicole, a young girl in Danny's hometown of Wayne NJ was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Residents, friends and family members organized a drive to find a suitable donor capable of providing the lifesaving bone marrow that could lead to the eventual eradication of her disease. Over one thousand people responded to the call in the hopes of becoming that donor—including Danny and as well, several of his fellow officers from the police department.

Although a matching donor for Nicole was never identified, she went on to endure subsequent treatments and today remains cancer-free.

A few years later and as a result of his decision to be tested as a possible donor for Nicole, Danny was identified as an unheard-of "perfect match" for someone else; someone suffering from another life-threatening illness.

Without hesitation, he agreed to become a donor, but before he could do so, Danny had to submit to various evaluations and procedures—all of which would clear the way for him to receive the repeated doses of the drug that would prepare his blood cells for their eventual collection.

Unfortunately, this drug came with a somber warning: its side effects could potentially make him sick—maybe more so than he'd ever experienced before but despite this information, he wasn't dissuaded. After a litany of tests, and pokes and prods, Danny got down to the business of becoming a real-life superhero.

As his body began receiving the five-day course of injections that would ultimately prepare his own blood cells for their eventual collection, Danny's health quickly deteriorated. He began

experiencing the flu-like symptoms that he'd been forewarned could occur, and by the fifth day, his symptoms had become severe. Despite the rapid collapse of his condition, he endured his part of what had now become a well-orchestrated team effort.

There was a second man who was equally invested in this story, and he too was suffering, but for an entirely different reason: unlike Danny, he was dying. As the efforts to prevent his demise intensified, his chances for survival now rested in the hands—and especially, in the blood, of a complete stranger. While Danny was doing his part, the soon-to-be recipient was receiving high doses of chemotherapy thus rendering his body defenseless against any and all infection—a necessary step before he could receive Danny's lifesaving cells.

We don't know the identity of this patient whose body was now fully engaged in an all or nothing battle against so many demon cells, but we do know something of the man who came forth from the crowd intent on saving his life.

You see, it had always been Danny's choice. He could have simply said 'enough is enough' and just walked away, at any time, from the hospital, and the drug that was now at the heart of his physical distress, his suffering, but he wouldn't; he couldn't because if he had, the needy recipient might have survived a little while longer, but by this time it had truly become a matter of *do or die*, and Danny wasn't about to let anyone die.

In the everyday world of law enforcement, police officers routinely rush towards circumstances from which others are running away. Danny exemplifies this spirit. And yet, many still feel the need to ask him why he went through all that he had for someone he didn't even know; for someone he hadn't ever met.

Sometimes he'll say that the recipient might have been somebody's husband or son; father or best friend—someone much like Danny himself. And other times, he simply reflects on his own good fortune—a loving wife and great kids; good friends and a job he likes—all the while referring to himself as the lucky one.

But of all the answers that he has ever offered as to why he suffered for the sake of another, perhaps one stands out above the rest and simply speaks volumes of the man himself: He did it because he could.

In a world where too often those we once admired have since fallen, it's comforting to know that real heroes—superheroes, still do exist amongst us. To the sick, where there's life, there's hope, and today, hope's name is Danny.

©2009 by Stephen Rusiniak. Revised 2020 Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved

For information on becoming a donor, please visit: BeTheMatch.org

backstory & original published releases, next 3 pages...

the backstory:

Danny kept what he was doing a secret. He used his own time, his days off, a few vacation days in order to save some stranger's life. Yeah, that's a hero, but what I didn't mention was that as he was doing so his actions remained a secret, known only to his family and a few close friends.

Did I mention that he's a hero?

When what he'd done had become known within the police department, Danny's supervisor (and before my retirement, fellow detective, Charlie Ahearn), asked if I would write something about "*the hero*."

How could I not?

I was honored to do so. Writing good things about good people is always a pleasure. And writing about the altruistic acts of someone of Danny's caliber, well, even better!

While composing this piece it had occurred to me that far too many bad things were happening in the world; far too many of our so-called *heroes* had fallen; far too few good deeds done are made known. As I was contemplating all of this, I happened to stumble upon the words of the ancient Roman statesman, lawyer and, philosopher, Cicero: "*To the sick, where there is life, there is hope*." Suddenly, and in conjunction with what I was trying to write, I found what was to become my closing final lines, a title and most importantly, a fitting tribute to this unsung hero:

"In a world where too often those we once admired have fallen, it's comforting to know that real heroes still exist amongst us. To the sick, where there's life, there's hope, and today, hope's name is Danny."

I can only hope that I did this hero justice.

This piece appeared in *NJ COPS* magazine as "**Wayne detective gives gift of life**" and in our local newspaper as "**Hero cop Daniel DuBois responds to off duty call**."

update:

In March 2020 and after 29 years, Danny submitted his retirement papers, completing his career as a supervising patrol sergeant; his dedicated service to his community, his wise counsel, talents and friendship—all shared, especially with the township youth, will therefore, be missed.

He will, however, always be a hero.

Wayne detective gives gift of life



Wayne Det. DuBois and Nicole Gioia, the young woman for whom he originally volunteered to become a donor, during a recent bone marrow donor drive.

PHOTOS BY DENIS NILAND

■ BY STEPHEN RUSINIAK

Wayne Police Det. Daniel DuBois immediately acted when confronted with the opportunity to save a life. DuBois was a bone marrow donor and agreed to do whatever was necessary. And so, for several days he voluntarily accepted the repeated doses of drugs and participated in several lengthy procedures, again and again—all of which would eventually produce sickening side effects within his body.

All the while, DuBois remained a gentleman; his personal suffering known but to a few close friends and family; his reasons for continuing to expose himself to this program remaining a private matter. To his friends, however, one reason for his actions clearly surpassed mere speculation: he said he would donate if asked, and together with his other attributes, DuBois was an honest man. Besides, he possessed infinite quantities of compassion.

There was a second man, and he too was suffering, and dying. Efforts to prevent his demise intensified daily; his life hanging precariously in the balance; the totality of his chances for survival now resting solely in the hands—and in the blood, of a stranger. DuBois had made a conscious decision to sacrifice his own personal comfort and convenience so that another might one day experience the opportunity of growing old.

We don't know the identity of this man whose body was fully engaged in an all or nothing battle against so many demon cells.

DuBois initially offered to become a donor in 2001, when Wayne resident Nicole Gioia, then just an elementary school student, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. A drive was organized to find her a suitable bone marrow donor, and a thousand people responded, as did many members of the Wayne Police Department

—including DuBois. Although a donor was never located for her, Nicole endured years of treatments, and today the Wayne Valley High School senior remains cancer free. DuBois would later learn that as a result of his joining the registry on Nicole's behalf, he would be identified as a potential match for someone else afflicted with a life threatening illness.

Without hesitation he chose to do all he could for this unknown person.

There are millions of potential donors in the registry and still the odds of finding a viable donor/recipient match is somewhere between few and very far between. DuBois was a perfect match for the unidentified man. After a litany of tests and pokes and prods, DuBois got down to the business of becoming a hero. As his body began accepting the injections that would bring forth the life sustaining blood stem cells waiting to be extracted from his system, he began experiencing flu-like symptoms, magnified many times over. Despite the rapid collapse of his own physical well-being, DuBois continued to endure his side of what had become a well-orchestrated effort. While procedures were being executed on him in preparation for the harvesting of his blood cells, the recipient was being administered doses of chemotherapy, thus clearing the way for his failing body to receive the lifesaving gift.

In the everyday world of law enforcement, it's standard operating procedure and a matter of routine for police officers to rush into circumstances from which others might be running away. DuBois exemplifies this spirit.

For information on becoming a donor, go to www.communitybloodservices.com or contact www.NicoleGioia.org.

Community



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHEN RUSINIAK

Wayne Police Detective Daniel DuBois, shown with his family, became a bone marrow donor, undergoing several days of tests and procedures – all of which produce sickening side effects. DuBois sacrificed his personal comfort and convenience so another might one day experience the opportunity of growing old.

Hero cop Daniel DuBois responds to off duty call

BY STEPHEN RUSINIAK

Wayne Police Detective Daniel DuBois immediately acted when confronted with the opportunity to save a life. His actions, however, produced flu-like symptoms that felt much worse than anything he had ever felt before. DuBois had become a bone marrow donor and agreed to do whatever was necessary to succeed.

For this he underwent several days of tests and procedures – all of which would eventually produce sickening side effects within his body. All the while, DuBois remained a gentleman. His personal suffering remained a private matter known only to his closest friends and family. His reasons for donating were his own, but to his friends, one reason surpassed mere speculation: he said he would become a donor if asked, and DuBois is an honest man.

There was another man and he was dying. His best chances for survival were resting in the hands – and in the blood, of a stranger. DuBois had decided to sacrifice his personal comfort and convenience so another might one day experience the opportunity of growing old. The identity of the man whose body was involved in a life and death struggle remains confidential, but much was known of the person who stepped forth from the crowd intent on saving a life.

In 2001, Wayne resident Nicole Gioia, then just an elementary school student, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma. A drive was organized to find her a suitable bone marrow donor, and a thousand people responded, as did many members of the Wayne Police Department – including DuBois.

Although a donor was never located for Nicole, she endured years of treatments, and today, the Wayne Valley High School senior remains cancer free. DuBois would later learn that as a result of his joining the registry on Nicole's behalf, he would be identified as a potential match for someone else afflicted with a life threatening illness. Without hesitation he knew what he had to do.

Although there are millions of

potential donors in the registry, the odds of finding a viable donor/recipient match is somewhere between few and very far between.

DuBois, it turned out, was a perfect match. After a litany of tests and pokes and prods, he got down to the business of becoming a hero. As his body began accepting the various injections that would bring forth the life sustaining blood stem cells waiting to be extracted from his system, he began experiencing flu-like symptoms, magnified many times over. Despite the rapid collapse of his physical well-being, DuBois continued to endure his part of a well-orchestrated effort. While these procedures were being conducted on him, the soon to be recipient was being administered doses of chemotherapy, thus clearing the way for his body to receive the life-saving gift. DuBois still could have ended his involvement and simply walked away, and the recipient might have survived a little while longer, but by this time it truly had become a matter of do...or die.

In the everyday world of law enforcement, police officers to rush into circumstances from which others might be running away, and DuBois exemplifies this spirit. And still, it's not uncommon for some to ask why he chose to interrupt his daily routine and suffer for the sake of someone he didn't know. Sometimes he'll say that the man receiving his donation may very well be somebody's husband or son; a father or best friend – much like DuBois himself. Of all his answers, perhaps the best was the most simplistic: he did it because he could.

In a world where far too often so many of those we admire have fallen, it's comforting to know real heroes still exist among us. To the sick, while there is life there is hope, and today hope's name is Danny.

For information on becoming a donor, contact www.community-bloodservices.com or www.NicoleGioia.org

Stephen Rusiniak is a resident of Wayne. He was a detective in Wayne until his retirement two years ago.