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## Stories of Courage

Edward Drake II, age 23  
Columbus, OH



“Why me?” Edward Drake, II of Columbus, Ohio asked himself when he was suddenly and unexpectedly diagnosed with renal failure at age 20. “Why me?” he wondered again, when he began what would be a long bout of tiresome dialysis treatment just the next day. “Why me?” he questioned, pondering how this could happen to someone as young, healthy, fit and responsible as he was.

Then, finally, another question—“Why *not* me?” Why *shouldn't* it happen to him—a seemingly healthy aspiring football player just starting his college life at Eastern Michigan University? It was this subliminal response to his own nagging question that prompted him to use his negative experience in a positive way—to spread the word that while it is true certain people are at an increased risk, kidney disease can happen to anyone, at any time, and that’s why it’s so important people avoid his mistakes and get checked early.

“People think, ‘It can’t happen to me. It won’t happen to me,’” Edward says of his fervent desire to educate the public about this growing health problem. “But it can. I’m living proof, and that’s why early detection and monitoring your health are so important.”

Edward was lucky enough to receive a kidney transplant from a deceased donor in October of 2008, and continues to spread the word about organ donation and early detection through his own charity, the YNOTT Foundation ([ynottyou.com](http://ynottyou.com)), and as a spokesperson for the National Kidney Foundation Serving Ohio. He frequently visits kidney disease and dialysis patients of all ages, especially young ones like him, mentoring and comforting them with his own story and positive outcome.

“Ask your doctor, ‘Can you please check my blood pressure and kidney health?’” Edward urges. “I won’t stop until I touch as many people as I can with this message.”

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