

A TALE OF TWO TRANSPLANTS

Heart retransplant patient **Richard Taurok** is now 42 years old. He received his first new heart at the age of 10, and had a second heart transplant when he was 38 years old

You received a heart transplantation when you were a child. What was the reason you needed a new heart?

My first heart transplant was on 12th of April in 1985. I was the first European child ever to receive a heart transplant. It was at the Allgemeines Krankenhaus in Vienna. At that time, I was only 10 years old. I had an illness where my heart walls were too thick and the chambers did not have enough volume. Also, one of the valves did not work properly.

Do you remember how the transplantation impacted your life?

My life changed a lot! Before the transplantation I did not take any medicine at all. However, after the transplantation, I had to take medicine four times a day. Moreover, I started at a new school as I had to re-learn everything I had learned before. That took about six months.

How did you feel when you heard you required a new heart?

I was very happy to hear that there was an option for me to get my life back. Before I got ill I was an active young boy and I had realised myself that my health was going downhill.

So your health improved after your first transplantation?

Yes indeed. In fact, 15 - 20 years later, I collected some medals during the European Summer Games for heart and lung transplantation recipients!

But later your health declined once more?

In 2009, the first coronary vessel narrowed. This went on until 2013 when I needed another transplantation.

Can you remember the moment you woke up from the re-transplantation? What did you feel?

The only thing I felt was the bruise from the needle in my shoulder.

How is your health these days?

Apart from the side effects of the drugs, I am doing well.

How is your working life?

When I was 15 years old, I started an education as a chemist. I worked in a laboratory for 25 years. Unfortunately the laboratory had to close down. After my retransplant, I was assigned to another team, where I now work in the field of hydrography.

What are your plans for the future?

Well, I am alive and I just try to make sure I keep my life nice and calm. Besides, I became a father in 2010! 🏠