

PRO BONO PROGRAM FULFILLS YOUNG WOMAN'S DREAM OF HAIR RESTORATION AFTER LIFELONG STRUGGLE WITH HAIR LOSS

International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery's Operation Restore program offers free hair transplants for patients in need

GENEVA, IL – November 9, 2018. Twenty-one-year-old Hanna C. of Hartford, Ky., has gotten really good at beating the odds. Born 15 weeks premature and given only a five percent chance to live, Hanna not only survived but thrived with the love and support of her aunt and uncle who raised her and whom Hanna knows only as mom and dad. But her difficult birth resulted in severe scarring and infection on her scalp, leading to lifelong scarring that robbed her of hair follicles on her scalp. The resulting hair loss would prove to be a thorn in Hanna's side throughout her young life.

"Hanna sensed early on that her hair loss made her different from other kids, but starting kindergarten was harder than we imagined—kids on the playground called her a monster because of how her head looked," said Hanna's mother, Sheri C. "It broke our hearts, so we decided to pull her out of kindergarten that year and enrolled her in a smaller pre-school. When kindergarten approached the next year, we were prepared with a plan to address her hair loss head on. We used a small doll and blackened its head to look like Hanna's bruises and explained to the kids how when Hanna's scabs flaked off after she was born, they took her hair follicles with them. Hanna then pulled off her custom-made wig and bravely showed the kids her little bald head. She asked them 'don't look at my head, look at my heart—I will be good to you, you be good to me.' For the most part, our plan worked."

Sheri knew hair restoration surgery might be an option for Hanna, and she consulted with William M. Parsley, MD, FISHRS, of Louisville, Ky., when Hanna was a toddler. A member of the International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery (ISHRS), Dr. Parsley explained that Hanna would need to mature and her hair would need to strengthen with age before they could explore hair restoration options.

"The hardest part of coping with the hair loss was waking up every morning trying to cover up the bald spot," said Hanna. "Before I went to school some mornings, I would get so upset that I would cry and get aggravated trying to cover up the spot when it wasn't working. I also had wigs that I tried wearing, but the wig would get so hot and sweaty on my head that I had to take it off by the end of the day."

When Hanna turned 17, they returned to Dr. Parsley who determined the best approach for Hanna's case. But when the family's insurance denied the surgery twice and the odds of raising the needed funds on their own seemed bleak, Dr. Parsley suggested they share Hanna's case with Operation Restore—the ISHRS's pro bono program designed to match prospective hair restoration patients suffering from hair loss as a result of an accident, trauma or disease with a physician willing to help those who lack the resources to obtain treatment on their own. Hanna's application was accepted, and she was matched with Dr. Parsley who performed three surgeries over three years to restore Hanna's hair.

"Deciding on the best approach for Hanna's case was difficult, as her scalp was inflexible and the scarring was in scattered patches," said Dr. Parsley. "I used a total of approximately 6,200 grafts over the course of three years, and Hanna's results have been surprisingly good considering the extent and depth of her scarring. She had no touch or thermal sensation in the scarred areas, and within a month after her first surgery Hanna was surprised to be able

to feel the wind blowing and temperature changes. It has been a very gratifying case for me personally, and Hanna and her family are so grateful and happy with her results."

Today, Hanna loves her hair and noticed that she kept getting more confidence in herself when her hair started to grow. She enjoys styling her hair now and can finally style it the way she wants to without constantly trying to cover up the bald areas. In September 2018, Hanna underwent an optional fourth surgery with Dr. Parsley to harvest 694 more follicular units in order to cover some more of the many scars from her scalp infection at birth.

"When my hair fully grew in, it made my life better by giving me more self-confidence and feeling more comfortable with my head. I wasn't constantly worrying about people staring at me and asking me questions," said Hanna.

Since its inception in 2004, Operation Restore has provided more than \$700,000 worth of free hair restoration surgery and expenses for 67 patients suffering from hair loss due to an injury or a medical condition.

While heredity is the most common cause of hair loss, cases of hair loss due to injury, trauma or disease are not uncommon and typically occur from such things as burns, dog bites, accidents or following radiation therapy to treat certain types of brain cancer. Hair loss that results from injury, trauma or certain medical conditions is usually permanent. However, hair restoration surgery is an option for most patients to restore this type of hair loss and typically requires several reconstructive surgeries.

How Operation Restore Can Help

Patients suffering from hair loss due to disease or trauma and cannot afford hair restoration surgery are encouraged to apply to the ISHRS's Operation Restore program. Applications are available through the ISHRS Web site—www.ishrs.org—and are reviewed by the Pro Bono Committee of the ISHRS. Selected patients are matched with an ISHRS physician volunteer and every effort is made to match patients with physicians in their geographic area. In cases where travel is necessary, the program covers these expenses for the patient.

Since in many cases selected Operation Restore patients are matched with a physician they have never met, the ISHRS included a mechanism in the approval process whereby patients are encouraged to ask the matched physician questions and view their before and after photos of other patients. The ISHRS wants patients to be as comfortable with their matches as if they had selected the physicians themselves.

The Operation Restore program is made possible by the generous donations of its individual and corporate donors who provide monetary or medical and surgical services. To make a direct donation to help the Operation Restore program, please visit <http://www.ishrs.org/media-center/pro-bono-foundation.htm>.

About the ISHRS

The International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery (ISHRS) is a global non-profit medical association and the leading authority on hair loss treatment and restoration with more than 1,100 members throughout 70 countries worldwide. Above all, the ISHRS is dedicated to achieving excellence in patient outcomes by promoting the highest standards of medical practice, medical ethics, and research in the medical hair restoration industry. The ISHRS also provides continuing medical education to physicians specializing in hair transplant

surgery and is committed to delivering the latest information on medical and surgical treatments to consumers suffering from hair loss, and most commonly from androgenetic alopecia—male pattern baldness and female pattern hair loss. It was founded in 1993 as the first international society to promote continuing quality improvement and education for professionals in the field of hair restoration surgery. For more information and to locate a physician, visit www.ishrs.org.

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