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COMMUNITY HELPED MAKE LIFE-SAVING TRANSPLANT POSSIBLE Matthew Pusch Is “Pusching Forward” Following Liver Transplant on Feb 2

PENSACOLA, Fla.—Matthew Pusch and his wife, Melissa, are well-known and well-loved across their home community in Pensacola for their advocacy work in the fight against fentanyl. Facing a sudden, life-changing diagnosis and transplant need, these helpers became the ones in need of help.

With support from 2 caring communities across Pensacola and Ocala, and a fundraising campaign with the nonprofit Help Hope Live, Matthew received a liver transplant on February 2, 2026.

Fundraising is still critical to Matthew’s transplant recovery and treatment. Donations are tax deductible at: <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/26735/>

“I don’t Google what happens before or after a procedure—9 times out of 10 that’s not how it goes for me or for him.” That’s one way Melissa, Matthew’s wife of 10 years, described the reality of their difficult medical journey since Matthew was diagnosed with liver disease on August 31, 2024 (his 45th birthday).

While liver disease runs in Matthew’s biological family, he was unaware of the risk because he was adopted. The sudden diagnosis rapidly changed not only Matthew’s physical health but also every other aspect of his life.

He experienced 3 hernias that impacted his ability to walk, insomnia, weakness, and 100 pounds of rapid weight loss. “He became a different person,” Melissa reflected. “He was in the hospital more often than he was out of it.”

Through their podcast community, [Pusching Forward](#), Matthew and Melissa have maintained strong ties to the community and continued their work and outreach in

the thick of Matthew's fight. The podcast started when Melissa began working from home to care for Matthew.

"We did not want to stop giving back," she explained. "We wanted to create a space where we could provide assistance to the community without unnecessary barriers."

Their Facebook page includes candid videos, milestone celebrations, and fundraisers—and a beat-by-beat journey through the day Matthew got "the call" that would change both of their lives.

"We just got word from the doctor today that his body is receiving the liver as it should," Melissa shared in a video update to their community on February 18. "Everything we have done for the community involves the word Hope, and now he gets to experience some of that hope for himself."

The ability to keep their community close is more important to the couple now than ever: they had to relocate from Pensacola to Ocala for Matthew's transplant.

The cost of that relocation and a litany of other expenses are not fully covered by insurance. "A social worker told us the pre-insurance cost of a transplant like his is over \$1.8 million," explained Melissa. That's why they turned to the trusted national nonprofit Help Hope Live.

Over the past 2 months, their community has raised over \$1,300 to assist with the most urgent costs they are facing to give Matthew healing and hope post-transplant. Fundraising is essential now as Matthew continues to require follow-up surgical procedures to keep his new liver healthy.

The community's help hasn't just been financial, either: as Melissa explained, "We've had people help with yardwork, groceries, moving, and so much more."

While they are in the midst of their hour of need, Melissa knows that their vision of continuing to positively impact their community will only be possible with a little help. "Matthew is a caring, kind person with a huge heart, and this transplant gives him a second chance to make even more of an impact. It will let him be that caring self again."

Online donations can be made at: <https://helphopelive.org/campaign/26735/>

There are also in-person fundraisers planned within the Pensacola area, including a handbag bingo event on Saturday, March 7. Details at:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=122120113749155698&set=pb.61584670963093.-2207520000>

[Follow their Facebook page](#) to keep up with the latest updates on Matthew's health and upcoming fundraising opportunities.

Unlike a GoFundMe campaign, donations to Help Hope Live are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law, and all funds raised will be administered by the nonprofit to cover verified medical and related expenses. Help Hope Live verifies medical and financial need for every patient.

Help Hope Live is a national nonprofit that specializes in engaging communities in secure, tax-deductible fundraising campaigns for people who need a transplant or are affected by a catastrophic injury or illness. Since 1983, campaigns organized by Help Hope Live have raised over \$193 million to pay patient expenses, assisting more than 25,000 patient families.

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