

THE CITY OF SUMMIT

N E W J E R S E Y

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News Release

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Summit Police Department Assists Officer Karen Stenstrom Sauers

SUMMIT, NJ, September 28, 2022– The Summit Police Department, Summit Fire Department, Summit PBA Local #55, Summit FMBA #54, Summit Volunteer First Aid Squad and city officials are joining together to raise awareness about the immediate need for a living donor kidney transplant for Summit Police Officer Karen Stenstrom Sauers.

Karen was diagnosed at age 24 with polycystic kidney disease, an inherited disorder in which clusters of cysts develop primarily within the kidneys, causing them to enlarge and lose function over time. At the time of diagnosis, she was told that one day she would need a kidney transplant to prolong her life. Now is that time.

Raised in Summit from the age of eight, Karen Stenstrom was a scholar and an athlete. She was co-captain of the women’s lacrosse team, graduated from Summit High School as part of the Class of 1989 and pursued a degree in education at Boston College. After graduation, Karen returned to Summit, began teaching in Newark public schools and volunteering on the Summit Volunteer First Aid Squad.

As she watched the twin towers fall on September 11, Karen realized that she was meant to serve the community in a different way and enrolled in the John H. Stamler Police Academy. She is now a valued and decorated police officer in Summit and has served the community faithfully for more than 20 years.

Karen met and married Jon Sauers, also a Summit Police Department officer, and is a co-parent to Andy, age 20, and the devoted mother of 13-year-old twins Tommy and Maggie. None of her immediate family or relatives are a match for a kidney transplant so her life depends on receiving a donor kidney. Karen is a patient with the Living Donor Institute at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center. The program allows patients with chronic kidney disease to receive kidney transplants from living donors and deceased donors as soon as possible.

While receiving a kidney from a deceased donor would prolong Karen’s life for a handful of years, a living donor kidney would extend Karen’s life expectancy for 10 to 15 more years.

“Officer Karen Sauers is one of the kindest and most positive individuals I know,” explains Summit Police Chief Steven Zagorski. “Throughout her distinguished career with the agency and now on this difficult journey, she has shown great strength and commitment. As colleagues and friends, we want to do everything possible to help find a potential donor. Please consider learning more about it.”

For more information on the process of kidney donation, visit <https://www.CBMCLivingDonor.org>. Please include the code KARENSAUERS if completing the health history questionnaire so all potential matches are connected to Officer Sauers.

For more information on Officer Karen Stenstrom Sauers and the Summit Police Department go to <https://www.cityofsummit.org/police> or contact Nikki Griffiths at 908-277-9472.

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