



For Immediate Release

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Oakland Teen receives CNN award for feeding homeless

Michael Carraway's project began when he was 11 and his life was saved by a transplant



Michael Carraway Jr., a 15-year-old from Oakland, Ca Sunday (Dec. 11), became one of three young people recognized by CNN as a “young wonder” for his work to feed the homeless. Michael and his mother, **Shaheda Wright**, received the honor in a live broadcast of “CNN Heroes, An All Star Tribute”.

Michael was chosen for the work he's done to feed the homeless in Oakland. He began "Mikey's Meals" with his mother, Shaheda Wright, in 2008 when Michael was 11 years old.

Until late 2008, feeding the homeless was not part of the active typical teenager's game plan. Then in October, 2008, his health began to quickly deteriorate. Doctors told his mother her son faced a grim outlook without a liver transplant and quickly.

Michael Carraway Jr. with program host Anderson Cooper. The photo on the button he wears is that of his liver donor.

During the internationally-televised honor, Shaheda told the interviewer a liver became available in late October. She later learned that the family of an 18-year-old from Los Angeles who died in a motorcycle accident made his desire to become an organ and tissue donor come true.

After Michael received the gift of life, his mother asked what he would to "pay that gift forward" -- to help others without asking for anything in return. Michael formed Mikey's Meal's which began by serving a couple of dozen meals from the trunk of the family car.

That spirit of giving has lead Michael to be honored locally and in September he was featured as one of several young people on a special on the Nickelodeon network. The young high school student in December 2010 also for the first time met the family of his donor and since, the two families have remained close.

In 2010, Michael was honored as the California Transplant Donor Network's choice to ride on the 2011 Rose Parade Float to recognize organ and tissue donors and recipients. CTDN serves as the link between organ and tissue donors and area transplant centers.

Just three days before stepping on that float Michael walked into a hotel room not far from the site of the New Year's Day event in California to meet his donor family for the first time.

"We just want to say to you that if it wasn't for your decision at tough time in your life, my son wouldn't be here today," Shaheda Wright, told the mother of Johnny Hernandez who died in 2008 and whose liver was transplanted into Mikey.

"You don't have to thank me," said Christine Hernandez, tears spilling down her cheeks. "It was a gift from God."

An organ and tissue donor can save eight lives and enhance the lives of 50 others. To register as a donor, go to www.donatelifecalifornia.org or www.donevidacalifornia.org or register at the DMV when obtaining or renewing a driver's license or state ID card.



The California Transplant Donor Network (CTDN) saves and improves lives by facilitating organ and tissue donation for transplantation. CTDN helps 175 hospitals in 41 Northern and Central California and Northern Nevada counties offer the option of organ and tissue donation to families whose loved ones have died, coordinates deceased organ recovery and placement, and provides public education with the hope that every resident will become a donor. It is



Donate Life California administers the nonprofit, state-authorized organ and tissue donor registry with the support of California's four nonprofit, federally-designated organ recovery agencies: California Transplant Donor Network, Sierra Donor Services, Lifesharing and OneLegacy. Those wishing to make the commitment to donate may sign up when