

# Moscow man gives a gift that goes a long, long way

Clint Hughes participates in kidney exchange program to help friend, many others

By Holly Bowen  
Daily News staff writer

Clint Hughes isn't entirely sure where one of his kidneys went.

He knows it's inside a complete stranger, but the evidence of his donation comes in the form of the good health of his longtime friend, Daniel Ene, who has a new kidney of his own.

Hughes, 39, moved to Moscow with his wife and children in August from southern California, where he and Ene worked together in the piano restoration business for 18 years.

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Clint Hughes  
kidney donor

“He's struggled with kidney disease all his life,” Hughes said of Ene, who is from Germany. “It got worse and worse and got to the point where

he needed a donor.”

Hughes said Ene had to undergo dialysis three hours per day, three times per week — an excruciating experience. Hughes offered to donate one of his kidneys to Ene, who declined and said he had enough family to help.

That was two years ago, “but it became apparent that a lot of his closest family members were prone to the same kind of diseases,” Hughes said.

So, Hughes contacted doctors at

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## Gift

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UCLA and went through the blood work and other tests necessary to determine if his kidney would be compatible with Ene's body.

It wasn't a match, but Ene wasn't out of luck yet. UCLA has a kidney exchange program that enables a friend or family member of a patient in need of a new kidney to donate theirs to another patient who has a compatible blood type. In exchange, the first patient receives a new kidney from the compatible friend or family member of the second patient.

It's a promising development for the more than 80,000 people in the United States who are waiting for a compatible donated kidney, Hughes said.

In his and Ene's case, the exchange involved 16 people in a handful of hospitals across the country.

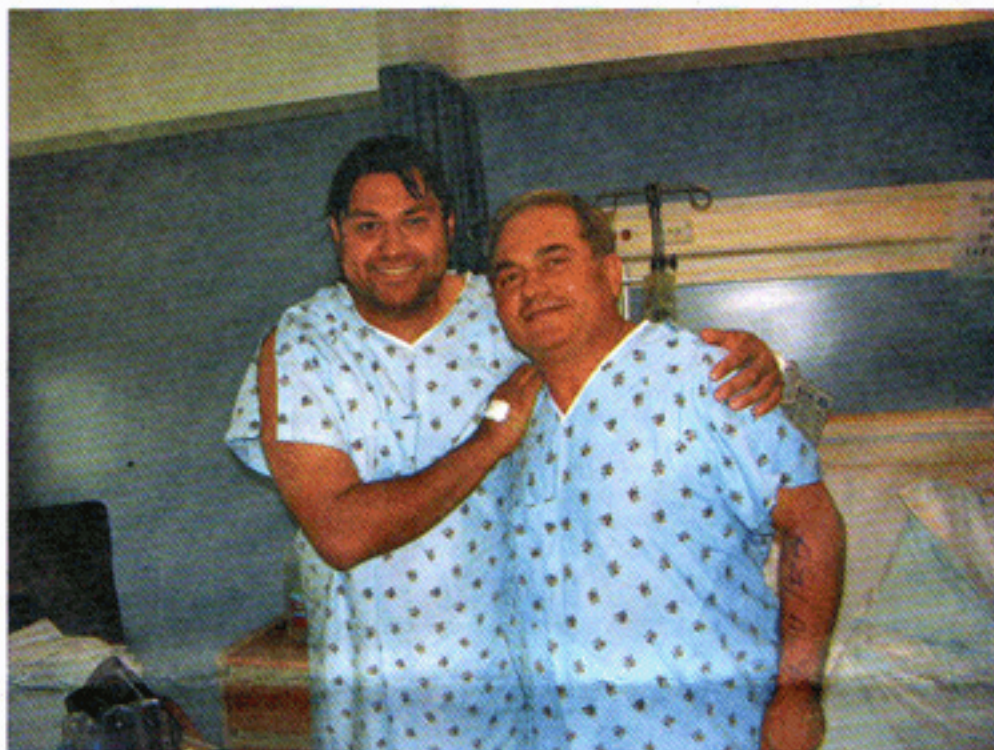
“It was from East Coast to West Coast and all the way around,” he said. “Within a week's time or so, they had to coordinate all these operations across the country.”

Ene and Hughes both underwent surgery on Oct. 6 at UCLA, and timing was critical.

“With me on the operating table, they were able to take the kidney (from another matching donor) and put it in Daniel,” Hughes said. Meanwhile, Hughes' kidney was flown to Stanford University to be placed in an Egyptian man in his 50s.

“There's really no downside on my end, except for a couple months of recovery,” Hughes said. He said his remaining kidney stepped up to take over the job that was formerly done by two, and he's back to work at his business, GrandAmericanPiano.com.

Because of the complicated and unprecedented nature of the 16-person kidney exchange, Hughes and Ene were interviewed by CBS News for



Clint Hughes of Moscow, left, and his friend Daniel Ene pose at UCLA following their Oct. 6 kidney operations.

Courtesy photo

a segment that will air in January.

During the visit with CBS staff, the men found themselves in the same room as a young woman and her father. The woman had donated one of her kidneys so her father could receive one from someone else.

“In the same room, we had four of the 16 people in the chain,” Hughes said.

He said it's incredible how the entire exchange and its set of operations came together.

“It's just going on trust,” he said. “The morning of, I (or anyone else in the chain) could have backed out, and everything would have stopped.”

Hughes said his motivation to donate his kidney to help his friend was based in his Christian beliefs.

“The Bible says you're bought with a price, and you're supposed to glorify God with your body,” he said, adding that he doesn't feel

like he sacrificed too much because it's a small price to pay for letting Ene live another several decades.

“You don't even think about it, but it's very easy,” he said. “It's an incredible program, because it really does save lives.”

### On the Web

■ **UCLA kidney exchange program:** <http://transplants.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=112>

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