

Pellston graduate part of 16-person kidney chain

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Clint Hughes is a part of more than one life.

The 1988 Pellston High School graduate who now resides in Moscow, Idaho, with his wife, Lisa, and their three children, is part of a 16-person kidney donation chain. His desire to become a kidney donor began when his good friend, Daniel Ene, who had battled kidney disease all his life, needed a new one.

"I volunteered early on, but he thought he had family who could help," Hughes said. "After a couple of years, it became apparent that they were not working out. My blood didn't match his, so we got on a list for a kidney exchange, which eventually turned into this 16 person, multi-hospital event."

Although Hughes was not able to give his kidney to Ene, both men had surgery on the same day, Oct. 6, at UCLA medical center in West Los Angeles, Calif. Admitting being a little apprehensive prior to the surgery and experiencing "normal pains" afterward, Hughes said the results far exceeded his expectations.

"I have participated in a real life



COURTESY PHOTO

Clint Hughes (left) and Daniel Ene are part of a 16-person kidney donation chain. Pictured here on Oct. 6, four days after surgery, Hughes' desire to become a kidney donor began when Ene, who had battled kidney disease all his life, needed a new one.

rescue and deepened friendships beyond what I thought possible. I was able to be a part of not only one life, but two — Daniel, and the person who actually got my kidney. My life is richer now, in a way

few people have the privilege of experiencing," he said.

In light of Thanksgiving, the 39-year-old said he's thankful for his

See **KIDNEY** on **PAGE A10**

KIDNEY FROM A1

mother and father, Ray and Alice Hughes, for instilling in him the desire to help others, despite the fact that he tended toward selfishness as a child. He's also thankful for Lisa's support of his decision to become a kidney donor and for the Christian faith that he, Lisa, Daniel and Daniel's wife, Tamara, share.

"For me, the decision was very easy," Hughes said. "The Bible says we are not our own, we have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body. Daniel is a dear Christian man and for him to be able to live for many years to come glorifies the one who gave his life for us."

Having not made contact with his kidney recipient yet, all Hughes knows is that he's an Egyptian man in his 50s. But with

At a glance

ACCORDING TO THE ALLIANCE

for Paired Donation Web site, more than 83,000 people in America are waiting for a kidney transplant. Many kidney patients have someone who is willing to donate, but because of immune system or blood type incompatibilities, they are not able to give a kidney to their loved one.

WITH PAIRED DONATION, one incompatible donor/recipient pair is matched

to another pair in the same situation, so that the donor of the first pair gives to the recipient of the second, and vice versa. The Alliance for Paired Donation has also pioneered a new way of using altruistic, or good Samaritan, donors, so that the transplants no longer have to be performed simultaneously. Non-simultaneous Extended Altruistic Donor Chains allow donors to "pay it forward" after their loved one receives a transplant.

more than 80,000 people waiting for a kidney, Hughes said the reward of being a donor far outweighed any sacrifice.

"I didn't know it was possible to give so much to someone else without giving up any quality of life in

myself. Within literally minutes of receiving the new kidney, the color started coming back into Daniel's face — it started working immediately. I now belong to an exclusive club that changes lives, just by saying 'yes.'"