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Merrick man needs life-saving liver transplant

Posted August 22, 2025



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David Mogel enjoyed hiking and camping before falling ill. COURTESY AMY MOGEL



By Brian Kacharaba (mailto:sports@liherald.com)

David Mogel needs help, and his life depends on it.

The 67-year-old Merrick resident urgently needs a liver transplant after being diagnosed with autoimmune hepatitis five years ago. His best chance for survival is through a humanitarian donor — a living person who chooses to donate a portion of their liver to a recipient.

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The liver is unique in its ability to regenerate, meaning both the donor's and recipient's livers can grow back to full size after the procedure.

To ensure safety, potential donors undergo a rigorous evaluation process and must meet specific criteria, including being between 18 and 60 years old, in good physical and mental health, having a healthy liver, and possessing a compatible blood type. Insurance would cover the cost of the transplant, and the Mogels have offered to pay for transportation and lodging for whomever chooses to donate.

Mogel said he first suspected something was wrong about five years ago. He saw his primary physician, who suggested that he see a specialist — advice that Mogel said “effectively saved my life.”

“We went through a couple of specialists until one said, ‘Look, you definitely have AIH,’” he recalled. “It’s relatively rare. It’s only about one in 100,000 in the general population, and it mostly affects women. So that’s one of the reasons most doctors weren’t alert for it in terms of a diagnosis.”

Since then, Mogel has been taking immunosuppressants that stabilized his condition until July, when a routine visit turned into an immediate recommendation for a transplant after his platelet count dipped to 40,000. A normal platelet count is typically between 150,000 and 450,000 per microliter of blood.

Mogel, who has type O blood, is not on a regular donor list yet because he must complete one more medical evaluation, which could take 30 to 60 days. Even once he qualifies, he would likely be

placed at the back of the already lengthy list, since type O is the most common blood type.

“I read gold and silver coins that are transplanted are from cadavers,” Mogel said. “The number of people who are willingly stepping up and saying, ‘Yes, I want to do this,’ is really vanishingly small. So, it is somewhat disheartening from time to time. But the reality is, you know, we’re going to take a whack at seeing if we can move the needle, and hopefully one of the small number of cases proves the rule wrong.”

Autoimmune hepatitis is a chronic liver disease in which the body’s immune system attacks liver cells, causing inflammation and potentially leading to cirrhosis or liver failure if untreated. While AIH can occur in anyone, it is far more common in women, particularly between the ages of 15 and 40. According to the American Liver Foundation, about 80% of diagnosed cases occur in women, making male cases relatively rare.

The condition’s overall prevalence is estimated at 100 to 200 cases per million people in the United States, but its exact cause remains unknown. Genetic, environmental, and immune factors are all believed to play a role.

For men, contracting AIH is considered uncommon, and when it does occur, diagnosis can sometimes be delayed because the disease is less expected in male patients. A 2018 review in the journal *Hepatology International* notes that men represent only about 20% to 30% of AIH cases worldwide, and their symptoms may be overlooked or attributed to other liver disorders.

Before falling ill, Mogel enjoyed woodworking, hiking and camping, but those hobbies have been put on hold since his diagnosis. He says he has good days and bad days, and he and his wife spend most of their time at home.

“Yesterday, I felt OK, and today I’m just exhausted. Like, can’t-get-out-of-bed exhausted,” he said during an Aug. 14 interview. “But that’s typical. It’s more of a roller-coaster type thing. You can have a good day and then have a very bad day. Liver failure can take years, or you can get it all of a sudden.”

Amy Mogel is doing everything she can to spread the word about her husband’s condition. She has contacted numerous news organizations in hopes of publicizing David’s situation, handed out fliers to fellow members of Bellmore’s Congregation Beth Or, and shared his story across social media.

“When it’s somebody that you love, sure, and you think about it, especially in the first weeks or so, you’re constantly thinking about it,” Amy Mogel said. “And when you finally fall asleep, you have this little kind of window where you’re not thinking about it, and then you wake up and it’s right back there.

“I’m constantly thinking about it. I’m constantly worrying about finding a donor. I’m constantly thinking about waking up and going, well, maybe I can try this, or maybe I can call this person and they’ll spread the word, or maybe I can try to figure out how to post it on Instagram, which is what I’m attempting to do.”

For now, all the Mogels can do is wait. If his condition remains the same, there is no telling how much longer David can last.

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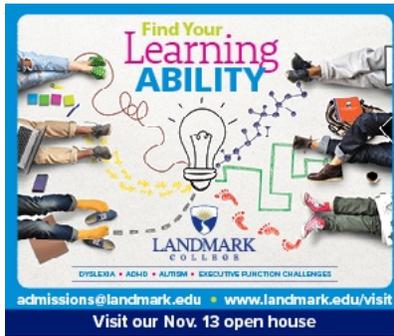
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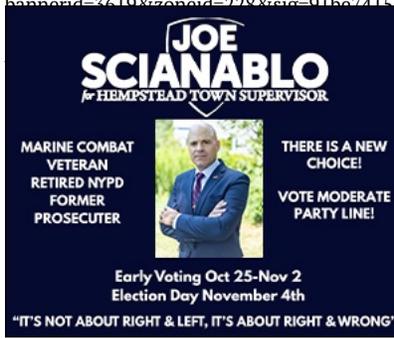


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Nassau County homeowners are bracing for rising taxes and unexpected expenses that always seem to pile up. Luckily, they can authorize Maidenbaum to file their property tax grievance for the 2027/28 tax year. Acting early makes all the difference, because waiting too long could mean missing opportunities, or worse, ending up with a company that doesn't have the experience to represent you properly. Don't let misleading promises impact your results – if something seems too good to be true, it usually is!

