



Youngstown Spine Surgeon Helps Make-A-Wish® Grant Local Teen's Wish To Go on an Australian Dream Vacation

Dr. Douglas Musser Is First Ohio Surgeon to Participate in Spinal Elements' National "Pledge to Be a Hero" Charity Program and Establish a Legacy of Granting Wishes to Youngstown Kids; Spinal Elements makes \$15,000 Check Presentation to Local Make-A-Wish® Ohio, Kentucky & Indiana Chapter

YOUNGSTOWN, OH – January 5, 2018 – Auprelee, a 19-year-old Youngstown-area Make-A-Wish kid, was able to receive her wish of a lifetime last month – an Australian dream vacation -- thanks to Youngstown Orthopaedic Associates spine surgeon Dr. Douglas H. Musser and spine technology company Spinal Elements®. One of the leading surgeons in the area, Dr. Musser has teamed up with Spinal Elements in an effort to benefit local children with life-threatening medical conditions. Dr. Musser is the first surgeon in Ohio to join Spinal Elements' national "Pledge to Be a Hero" program, and is primarily responsible for helping to generate donations from Spinal Elements of up to \$23,000 to date to the local Make-A-Wish chapter, making Auprelee's and other local wish kids' dreams come true. **Dr. Musser and Spinal Elements are celebrating Auprelee and her family in a special Hero-themed ceremony on Thursday, January 11th at 6:00pm where they will present this latest donation check for \$15,000 to the Make-A-Wish® Ohio, Kentucky & Indiana chapter in the offices of Youngstown Orthopaedic Associates.**

The California-based company Spinal Elements launched its national "Pledge to Be a Hero" program in 2012, offering surgeons and hospitals across the country the opportunity to pledge to use only allograft tissue from companies that philanthropically apply the profits from the transfer of that tissue. Allograft tissue is bone graft material commonly used in spinal fusion surgery that comes from deceased donors via a tissue bank. Spinal Elements has chosen to honor tissue donation as a gift of life by donating a portion of the proceeds from the sale of its allograft, called Hero Allograft, to charities benefitting children with life-threatening medical conditions, such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation. By using Hero Allograft, doctors across the country are able to raise thousands of dollars for kids like Auprelee. **To date, Spinal Elements has donated over \$1.3M through the Hero program.**

Auprelee and her family will be honored in this Hero-themed ceremony on January 11th with friends, family and hospital staff at a special reception, where the family will share pictures and stories of their Australian vacation and where Auprelee will be given her own Hero medal. Auprelee battles Sickle Cell Anemia, and a vacation to Australia was on her bucket list because she wanted to explore a place she had never been to that was outside of the U.S. – and she wanted to see a kangaroo in person instead of just looking at pictures. While there, she and her family stayed at a private residence in Sydney, and saw landmarks such as the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and of course met some friendly kangaroos at a VIP tour of the Taronga Zoo.

"We named our allograft program "Hero" to honor the donors of allograft, and because we see these kids as the true Heroes," said Jason Blain, President and CEO of Spinal Elements. "As more and more surgeons become a part of our "Pledge to Be a Hero" program, more and more children like Auprelee will be able to get the treatments they deserve and have their wishes come true."

Dr. Musser hopes his support of the program through his decision to use Hero Allograft will inspire other surgeons and hospitals to do the same and thereby significantly expand the benefit to children with life-threatening conditions.

"I feel that simply by choosing to use Hero Allograft in my spinal operations and procedures, I double the impact. I get to heal patients using superior medicine and also support children suffering from some of the worst medical conditions. I'm thankful I can do my part and urge my colleagues across Ohio and the country to do the same," commented Dr. Musser.

Spinal Elements chose to name its first allograft tissue product "Hero®" to honor those whose tissue donation made the gift of life possible. Hero was launched in 2012 at the North American Spine Society (NASS) convention. **To date, Spinal Elements has donated over \$1.3M through the Hero program.**

About Spinal Elements:

Spinal Elements is an outcomes-driven spinal surgical solutions company with locations in Carlsbad, California and Marietta, Georgia. A leading designer, developer, manufacturer, and marketer of innovative medical devices used in spinal surgical procedures, our mission is to develop novel medical device technologies, biologics, and instrumentation to create positive surgical outcomes that exceed surgeon and patient expectations. For more information, please visit www.spinalelements.com.

About Make-A-Wish® Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana:

Make-A-Wish® Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy. Currently, there are more than 200 children in northeast Ohio waiting for their wish to come true. You can help share the power of a wish® by making a donation, volunteering, or referring a child. For more information, visit our website at ohio.wish.org or call 1-877-206-9474.

About Dr. Musser:

Douglas H. Musser, D.O., is a board-certified orthopaedic spine surgeon. His interests include adult degenerative disease of the spine, artificial disc replacement of the lumbar and cervical spine, microsurgery, herniated/ruptured disc surgery, minimal invasive spine surgery, osteoporotic and pathologic compression fracture. He treats cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spine problems.

Dr. Musser graduated from Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency in Orthopaedic surgery at Cuyahoga Falls General Hospital. With affiliated training at University Hospitals of Cleveland and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. He went on to complete his Orthopaedic Spine Fellowship and continued his training in Neurosurgical Spine. Dr. Musser continues to be active in continuing education in the field of Spine Surgery and Orthopaedics and is clinical assistant professor of Orthopedic Surgery at Ohio University, a member of the American Osteopathic Academy, American Osteopathic Association, and also a member of the North American Spine Society.

Dr. Musser's hobbies include sports (especially college football and golf), fitness training, traveling, and movies. He is dedicated to helping his patients achieve total spine care, whether it is non-operative or operative.

For interviews or more information, contact:

Laura Charlton (formerly Johnson) for Spinal Elements

laurajohnsonpr@yahoo.com

(760) 450-7749 cell