

# HERO® Allograft

Net proceeds from the sale of Hero Allograft are donated to charities benefiting children with life-threatening medical conditions.

## GREELEY AREA MAKE-A-WISH KID HAD WALT DISNEY WORLD® RESORT WISH UNVEILED BY MICKEY AND MINNIE IN LOCAL APRIL “DONATE LIFE MONTH” EVENT!

### Boulder-Based Spine Surgeon and National Spine Company Recognized for Helping Making Wishes Come True, and Raising Thousands of Dollars for Local Make-A-Wish® Chapter

**Lafayette, CO – April 10, 2014** – In celebration of “Donate Life Month,” Spinal Elements®, Inc., a California-based spine technology company, announced this week that local Boulder spine surgeon Dr. Cathleen Van Buskirk, M.D., a leading Orthopaedic Spine Surgeon in the area, is the first surgeon in Colorado to join their new “Pledge to be a Hero” program. Because of Dr. Van Buskirk’s participation, Spinal Elements was able to adopt and grant a very special wish to a local Greeley-area Make-A-Wish kid, and donated a check for \$26,000 to Make-A-Wish® Colorado. This is the first of many ongoing donations Make-A-Wish® Colorado will receive because of Dr. Van Buskirk and Spinal Elements. As more surgeons and hospitals use Spinal Elements’ Hero Allograft®, (of which 100% of proceeds go to children’s charities), the money donated to Make-A-Wish® Colorado will grow dramatically. Hero Allograft is processed for Spinal Elements, Inc. by local Denver company AlloSource, a non-profit founded in 1994 to honor and respect the gift of human tissue donation. Spinal Elements’ CEO Todd Andres resides in Denver.

The highlight of the morning was Gabe Daggett, age 6, of Greeley, CO, having his Wish -- to go to Walt Disney World® Resort because he loves Disney so much! -- celebrated in a special Wish Send-off with **Mickey and Minnie** present! Marc Yap of Spinal Elements, and hometown hero Dr. Van Buskirk celebrated the adoption of Gabe’s wish with his family, and also granted Gabe his very own “Hero Cape” for his heroism. Local Make-A-Wish representative Jeff Krebs of the Make-A-Wish Colorado chapter was on hand to honor both Gabe and Dr. Van Buskirk, and to accept Spinal Elements’ donation. Gabe suffers from Chronic Kidney Disease. In addition to Disney characters, Gabe loves the color blue, mac and cheese, vanilla cake and strawberry candy. He also loves zebras! He and his family will be flying to Florida in late April for the wish.

As his mother, Kayla Daggett said at the ceremony, “We are so humbled and thankful that Gabe has been granted a wish from Make-a-Wish. It’s the best gift you never want to receive because it means your child is sick. But I do believe that the anticipation of it, the hope, and the excitement has brought a bit of health to our family. We are beyond words excited for our family to step out of the drudgery of prescriptions and appointments and into that world of carefree innocents, magic, wishes and dreams. It’s in that world that an organization like Make-a-Wish exists, and it’s in that world that little boys who are sick feel well.” The ceremony was held on Monday at the Minimally Invasive Spine Institute in Lafayette, CO.

**ABOUT DR. VAN BUSKIRK’S “PLEDGE TO BE A HERO” AND HERO ALLOGRAFT®:** Spinal Elements launched its national “Pledge to Be a Hero” program in 2012, which offers surgeons and hospitals across the country the opportunity to pledge to use only allograft tissue from companies that do not profit from the transfer of that tissue whenever clinically feasible. Allograft is human tissue that is obtained by way of an authorized gift of a donor and/or their family, and can then be turned into scores of medical products. Every year, 1.5 million of these products are used in the treatment of American patients.

Spinal Elements chose to name its first allograft tissue product “Hero®” to honor those whose donation made the tissue product available. Although many companies earn significant profits from the sale of allograft, Spinal Elements has chosen to donate all profits from the sale of its Hero Allograft to charities benefiting children with life-threatening medical conditions, such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation® and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. Hero was launched in October, 2012 at the North American Spine Society (NASS) convention. Spinal Elements donated over \$334,000 from the sale of Hero Allograft in 2013.

**BACKGROUND:** See the following national NPR story that details why Spinal Elements created the “Hero” program and is donating 100% of their profits from this product to children. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2012/10/07/162399318/spinal-surgery-company-to-give-tissue-proceeds-to-charity>

#### About Dr. Van Buskirk

Dr. Van Buskirk is a renowned spine surgeon with the Minimally Invasive Spine Institute, the Boulder Community Hospital, the North Suburban Medical Center and the Exempla Good Samaritan Hospital. She has been practicing in Boulder since 1999. Dr. Van Buskirk has written and published several book chapters on various topics in spine surgery and has given numerous presentations at the local, national and international level. She is a member of the North American Spine Society, Scoliosis Research Society and American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Dr. Van Buskirk earned her medical degree at Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and completed her residency in orthopedic surgery at the University of New Mexico. Her additional training includes a fellowship in spine surgery at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia and in pediatric orthopedic spine surgery, where she trained with one of the world’s most renowned pediatric spine surgeons, Dr. Jean Dubousset. In her downtime, she also enjoys heli-skiing, flying airplanes and traveling.

#### About Make-A-Wish Colorado

Founded in 1983 as one of the nation’s first Make-A-Wish chapters, Make-A-Wish Colorado has granted more than 4,200 wishes to eligible children throughout Colorado. Its mission is to grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength, and joy. The Foundation finances its endeavors through corporate sponsors, foundations, service clubs, fundraisers and individual contributions. For more information about Make-A-Wish Colorado and how you can share the power of a wish please call 303.750.9474, visit [colorado.wish.org](http://colorado.wish.org) or connect with us on Facebook at [facebook.com/WishColorado](https://www.facebook.com/WishColorado) or on Twitter @WishColorado.

#### About Spinal Elements

Spinal Elements, headquartered in Carlsbad, CA, is a spine technology company for spine surgeons who demand innovative, extremely high quality surgical solutions. From the company’s early work which helped make PEEK commonplace throughout the spine industry to recent advancements in controlled delivery and stand-alone technology, Spinal Elements has built a reputation for being trustworthy, innovative and different. The company is focused on the development and marketing of progressive spinal treatment options and markets a complete portfolio of advanced spinal implant technologies across the globe. The company most recently launched its line of Lucent Ti-Bond® products that feature a coating of plasma-sprayed titanium on PEEK interbody devices. Additionally the company distributes Hero® Allograft, the net proceeds from which are donated to charities benefiting children with life-threatening medical conditions. For more information, please visit [www.spinalelements.com](http://www.spinalelements.com).

#### About AlloSource

AlloSource is a Centennial, CO-based nonprofit organization founded in 1994 to honor and respect the gift of human tissue donation by responsibly developing, processing and distributing life-saving and life-enhancing allografts for our communities. We offer more than 200 types of precise bone, skin, soft-tissue and custom-machined allografts for use in an array of life-saving and life-enhancing medical procedures.

#### FOR INTERVIEWS OR MORE INFORMATION:

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Paying it Forward.



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