



Changing Faces, Transforming Lives

myFace Plays Key Role In First Successful Face and Double Hand Transplant At NYU Langone Health

NEW YORK, February 3, 2021 -- myFace (www.myface.org), the nationally renowned non-profit organization that has helped thousands of children and adults with craniofacial differences, played an integral part in the care of Joseph DiMeo, 22, of Clark, NJ, the first successful face and double hand transplant patient in the world.

DiMeo's successful 23-hour surgery was performed in August 2020 at NYU Langone Health under the leadership of Eduardo D. Rodriguez, MD, DDS, the Helen L. Kimmel Professor of Reconstructive Plastic Surgery and chair of the Hansjörg Wyss Department of Plastic Surgery at NYU Langone. It brought together more than 140 health care professionals from multiple disciplines, joining the ranks of just a few dozen such cases of its kind performed worldwide.

myFace helped DiMeo and his family to manage his operative needs by providing 62 nights of free housing for him and his family in the myFace apartments near NYU Langone while on extensive stays in New York City for pre-surgery, surgery, recovery and follow-up care.

DiMeo had been critically injured in a car accident in July 2018, while on his way home from working the night shift. The accident was a rollover motor vehicle collision, which resulted in an explosion that caused third-degree burns covering 80 percent of his body. After many reconstructive surgeries, the family was referred to Dr. Rodriguez at NYU Langone in March 2019, who is renowned for having performed some of the most complex face transplants to date.

Following the surgery performed by Dr. Rodriguez in August 2020, DiMeo spent several weeks at NYU Langone, first in the intensive care unit and then continuing his recovery at NYU Langone's inpatient Rusk Rehabilitation unit. He was discharged in November to the myFace apartment where he continued outpatient rehabilitation including physical, occupation and speech therapy.

“The support myFace provides to reconstructive plastic surgery patients at NYU Langone Health each year greatly enhances their overall experience, emotional well-being, and, most especially, the clinical outcomes,” said Dr. Rodriguez. “We are incredibly grateful for this long-standing partnership, and for the myFace services Joe and his family have been able to utilize since he became a participant in our face transplant programs.”

Like all patients with whom myFace works, the end goal is to not only help DiMeo receive the best medical care possible, but also focus on his overall well-being beyond his medical care. myFace provides programs such as support groups, educational webinars and workshops,

and many other resources for all members of the family that directly address these issues and others -- so that patients can focus on recovery and adjustment.

"Transplants are not only revolutionary, they also are a unique opportunity to highlight how an exceptional collaboration like the one between myFace and NYU Langone Health works with patients in a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach," said Stephanie Paul, Executive Director at myFace. "We are grateful to have the resources available to support families like the DiMeo's and glad to have had the opportunity to work with him and his family."

About myFace

myFace is a leading non-profit organization dedicated to transforming the lives of patients with craniofacial conditions. Every hour a child is born in the United States with a craniofacial difference, which uniquely impacts both the body and spirit. Each year, the faces of another 100,000 individuals are disfigured through accident or disease.

For 70 years, myFace has advocated for individuals and families to ensure them access to comprehensive craniofacial care and support. By providing important services, such as emotional support groups, educational webinars, and online resources, myFace helps individuals achieve their potential to live their best life possible.

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