

Rock On and Be Kind!

Mother of Organ Donor Spreads Awareness with Hand Painted Stones

More than 100,000 people are waiting on the national transplant list for lifesaving organ transplants, with another person being added every nine minutes.

April is organ donor awareness month and Anne Carleton, an orthopedic technician at Kaiser Permanente's Westside Medical Center, is spreading kindness and raising awareness in memory of her son, Hayden.

To honor her son and share his lasting impact of kindness, Anne recently gave away 3,200 hand-painted rocks at Westside Medical Center to raise awareness on the importance of organ donation. "Hayden gave life-impacting organ donations to seven people. My heart is full to share his life message, 'rock on and be kind,'" she said.

Over 150 people, including Kaiser Permanente staff, family and friends volunteered to paint the rocks over a three-month period. "Anne has been a kindness



Anne Carleton with Hayden and eye donation rock

inspiration to me and many of her coworkers," said Gretchen Dallman, a nurse manager with Kaiser Permanente. "Painting Hayden Kindness Rocks has brought us closer together and

allowed us to learn and give back in a different way."

In 2022, about 250 people and 27 groups from around the community volunteered to paint Hayden Rocks with

Anne. Each rock receives four coats of paint and a coating to increase its color and shine. Rocks are painted year-round and distributed at events across the community.

Hayden lived an active life — football, snowboarding, skateboarding and camping — but especially enjoyed sharing smiles with friends and family.

In 2011, 15-year-old Hayden passed his drivers permit test, and asked what an organ donor was. He signed up on the spot. Eight months later, Hayden passed away suddenly during a run with his mom and their dog near the Rock Creek home they shared.

Years later, Anne came across two rocks she and Hayden had painted, making her smile. Soon she was painting and spreading smiles everywhere she went.

Anne's commitment and kindness continue to impact strangers, friends and colleagues on a daily basis. And each time someone new takes a moment to ask about being an organ donor, Anne knows Hayden lives on.

"My mom just had multiple heart issues and a cardiovascular surgery. She lives out of town, and I brought her to my house to recover. When Anne found out she delivered a rock to my mom. It meant the world to my mom," Carolyn Ortman, rock painter and Regional Manager for In-Patient Volunteer Services at Kaiser Permanente.

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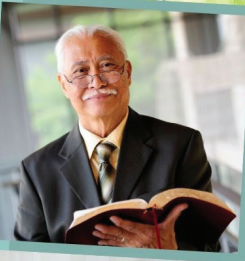
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