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Precious Gifts: Katie Coolican's Story

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Precious Gifts

KATIE COOLICAN'S STORY.

Barklay and Eve
Explain Organ and Tissue Donation.
Barklay and Eve Series, Book 7
Written and Illustrated
by Karen L. Carney
For Katie, her Mom, Maggie, her Dad, Don, her brothers, Noel, Kevin, Mike, Patrick, her sister, Kelly... and all organ and tissue donors, recipients and their loved ones.
Precious Gifts

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Barklay and Eve Explain Organ and Tissue Donation.
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Copyright, 1999, 2002
ISBN# 0-9667820-6-2
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A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO...

Maggie Coolican, RN, MS, for sharing her deeply personal story and professional expertise,

Debbie Doll, RN, CPTC for her inspiration and technical assistance, and,

Linda Goldman, MS, for her wisdom, encouragement and friendship.
Dear Friends,

This book, based on the true story of Katie Coolican, will help you to understand something called organ and tissue donation.

There is a list of words and their definitions in the back of the book. We hope that your questions are answered, but if there is something else that you are wondering about, there are lots of people you can talk to. For example, you can call The National Donor Family Council at 1-800-622-9010, or your local organization.

Be sure to color the pictures, draw some of your own, and write down your questions. Remember, we can get through anything with the love and support of family and friends!

Sincerely,

Barklay and Eve

This book is given to __________________________

as a gift from:
Hi! My name is Barklay.
My name is Eve. What’s your name?
We’d like to tell you about our friend, Katie.
Katie liked to collect rocks.

We helped her find some really good ones!
She loved to play in the rain and jump in the mud puddles!
Katie liked to climb trees...and pick flowers.
One day, we went to her house to ask her to come out and play.

Hi Mrs. Coolican! Can Katie come out and play?
Barklay and Eve, please come inside. I have something very, very sad to tell you.
Katie was born with a blood vessel inside of her brain that wasn’t formed the way it should have been. She did well until yesterday, when the blood vessel broke and injured her brain very badly. Now she is in the hospital and everything is being done to try to save her life.
But, she isn’t going to DIE, is she?

The doctors said that when a person’s brain dies, the person dies. They are doing many tests to find out if her brain is alive or if it is dead.
OH, NO! How did this happen? Can’t they make her better? There must be something they can do! There must be some way to make her better!
Mrs. Coolican, is it our fault that Katie is so ill? Did we play outside in the rain and the mud too long? Did we play with her too hard?
Oh, no, not at all! This is not your fault. Sometimes sad things happen and we don’t know why.

Is anybody else going to die? Is it something that you can catch?
No. What Katie has is not contagious. That means that you can NOT catch it. Most people live to be very old. What happened to Katie is very unusual.

Then we all went to the hospital to see Katie.
When we saw Katie at the hospital, her head was bandaged because the doctors had operated on her brain. Lots of machines were attached to her. One of the machines was for pumping air into her lungs, because the part of the brain that makes a person breathe wasn’t working.
The next day, the doctors and nurses told us that they tried everything possible to save Katie. They were very sad to have to tell us that Katie’s brain had completely stopped working, and she died.
We all cried and hugged each other.
A very kind and gentle nurse spoke with us. We told her what a great person Katie was, and what a good friend she was to so many of us. The nurse listened to how sad we were, and how much we would miss Katie.

The nurse said that Katie seemed like a very caring little girl. She asked us to think about allowing Katie to give the gift of life through organ and tissue donation.
Organ and tissue donation! What do you need an organ for?
Don't you know where to get tissues?
The organs that I'm talking about are not like the musical instrument, and the tissues that I'm talking about are not for blowing your nose. The heart, liver and kidneys are called organs. Sometimes people get really sick and may die when these organs stop working right. Sometimes they can be cured if they have a transplant. That means they get a new heart or liver or kidney.

Tissues are parts of the body that help other parts to work. One kind of body tissue is the clear outer covering of the eye, called the cornea. Some people who are blind will be able to see if they have a cornea transplant.
We wanted to make sure that Katie would not feel any pain if her organs and tissues were donated. The nurse told us that Katie would not feel anything at all.

She would be taken to an operating room where her organs and tissues would be removed. It's done just like a regular operation. Her body would be stitched-up and would look complete. It would not look like anything is missing.

We talked about it together and the nurse answered our questions. She offered to call a priest, rabbi, minister, or a pastor of our choice, if we wanted to talk it over some more.

Do you have any questions? Write them here.
We thought of people whose lives were saved by having organ transplants. Our friend Willy needed a liver transplant. We saw him in the hospital when he was waiting for a liver donation. He was so sick that he almost died. He had a liver transplant a few years ago and now he’s doing really well. He just got married!
Christina and Tommy are friends of ours. Their father had a kidney transplant.

We thought of all the people who are blind who might be able to see with a cornea transplant. We thought of all the people who are really weak because their heart valves aren’t working right.

We thought of all the people waiting for organ and tissue transplants.
Katie is our best friend. We know what she would want us to do. Katie would tell us to donate her organs and tissues.

Everyone agreed.
We went back into Katie's room to see her. We asked why the machines were still attached to her. The nurse explained that the organs and tissues that Katie is donating needed the machine to give them oxygen. If they were not given oxygen, they could not be used to help someone else. The nurse told us that after the operation, the machines would be removed.
They gave us some time to be with her. We shared stories of special times with Katie that we will always remember. We clipped a lock of her hair, and made a handprint to put in a memory book.

Katie, we will always remember you.
We said good bye to Katie and thanked her for being a good friend.

Katie, we will always love you.
At the funeral, lots of people shared their favorite stories about Katie. Her mom read a note from the organ donor program. It said, “Thank you. Katie’s gifts are helping so many people who need the precious gifts of organ and tissue donation. We are deeply grateful.”

Katie’s mom and dad told everyone that allowing Katie to be a donor helped them, too. Her gifts have saved someone’s sight, and they even saved someone’s life. Nothing could save Katie’s life, yet she saved someone else. That gives them some comfort.
The nurse let us know about support groups and other people we can call when we have questions or if we just need someone to listen. Write the names of the people you will talk to. Be sure to include an adult who can answer your questions about organ and tissue donation.
Do you know anyone who donated their organs and tissues?
Do you know anyone who received (got) an organ or tissue donation? Here's a space where you can write their name, draw or put in their picture, and tell the story.
We learned a lot about ourselves and about what it means to be a good friend. We learned a lot about organ and tissue donation.

Most of all, we learned that we can get through anything with the love and support of our family and friends!
Thanks for listening.
You’re a good friend!

P.S.
Just a reminder to look at the definitions that follow...
Definitions

**Brain** - The brain is located inside of the skull, or head. It controls our thinking, feeling, moving, and **all** of the functions of the body.

**Brain death** – When a person’s brain has died, there is no chance that they can get better. Brain death means that the brain has completely stopped working. It cannot come back to life, and the person will die.

**Organs** – Organs are internal parts of the body that have very important functions. Examples of some organs are the heart, kidneys, liver and lungs.

Heart – The heart is an organ that pumps blood through the body.

Kidneys – The kidneys are organs that help the body to get rid of waste products through our urine. The human body has two kidneys.

Liver – The liver is an organ that is needed to do many things, like produce chemicals that the body needs to turn the food we eat into energy.

Lungs – The lungs are organs in the chest that fill with air when we breathe.

**Organ Donor** – An organ donor is someone who gives their organs to someone who needs them.

Sometimes, people can donate one of their kidneys while they are alive and healthy. This can be done because we have two kidneys, and we can live with just one kidney. Also, because the human body has more than one lung, some people can donate part of a lung while they are alive and healthy. These are examples of what is called a **living donor**.

**Organ Recipient** – An organ recipient is someone who needed an organ transplant in order to live, and received (got) an organ from an organ donor.
Tissues – Tissues are parts of the body that help other parts to work. Here are some examples of body tissues:

Cornea – The cornea is a clear covering over the eye that helps the eye to see. Without cornea transplants, some people will be blind (they will not be able to see).

Heart Valves – Heart valves are tissues that help blood to flow through the heart.

Bone – Some people who have a type of bone cancer need bone transplants so that they can walk again.

Skin – A very, very thin layer of skin is sometimes used to help people who have serious burns. The very, very thin layer of skin is taken from a place on the body where it is not noticeable.

Tissue Donor – A tissue donor is someone who donates their body tissues to someone who needs them.

Transplant – To transplant organs or tissues means that they are taken out of one person’s body (called the donor) and placed into another person’s body (called the recipient).

Do you have any questions?

If there is anything that you are wondering about, or don’t understand, be sure to ask an adult who knows how to find the answer. If you would like, you can leave us a message on our web site: www.BarklayandEve.com

Your friends,

Barklay and Eve
About the Author:

Barklay and Eve, the inspiration for the series, are Portuguese water dogs. They are the actual pets of author and illustrator, Karen Carney. Karen is a registered nurse and licensed clinical social worker with an extensive professional background. As a recipient of the American Cancer Society Lane W. Adams Award, she has earned national recognition for clinical excellence. She has been an adjunct college professor for over 10 years, conducting courses in Death and Dying, Bereavement, and Aging.

All of the proceeds from the Barklay & Eve Book Series go to the D’Esopo Resource Center which helps support children of all ages through the grieving process.

“Barklay and Eve speak to the child in all of us. Sensitive topics are treated with care and dignity. They are wonderful resources and essential for children in today’s world!!!”

Linda Goldman
Author, Therapist, Educator, Lecturer

“The Barklay and Eve Series is exceptional. Everyone claims to write at a children’s level but Karen Carney truly does.”

Paula D’Arcy,
Author, Therapist, Lecturer

“The stuffed animals are beautiful, soft and cuddly. Perfect for fuzzy nap companion and confidant.”

Tom Goldman,
Author, Therapist, Lecturer

“Carney offers brilliance in insight, blended with well crafted art.”

Reverend Richard Gilbert,
World Pastoral Council

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please note that Barklay is spelled with an “a”.....Thanks!
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Book 4: Our Special Garden: Understanding Cremation

Book 5: What IS Cancer, Anyway?

Book 6: Everything Changes, But Love Endures: Explaining Hospice

Book 7: Precious Gifts: Katie Coolican’s Story. Barklay and Eve Explain Organ and Tissue Donation

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All proceeds from the Barklay and Eve Book Series go to the D’Esopo Resource Center, to support grieving children and adults.

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