

A Twin Dilemma: The Medical Breakthrough of Organ Transplants

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## Process Paper

Choosing a topic proved to be very difficult as the theme, “Breaking Barriers”, covers a broad spectrum of events in history. Many topics fall under this category. As we began to research, we discovered that organ transplants were not only a huge breakthrough but is also a topic that is majorly overlooked. Although this isn’t something we learn about in school, it should still be recognized as an important breakthrough in history. Since this event is not well-known, we really enjoyed researching and never lost interest. All of us were aware that organ transplantation was important, but we never really gave the topic much thought. One of our teammates has an aunt who is not only on a kidney dialysis machine, but on the Transplant Waiting List. This goes to prove that this procedure was not a one-time event, but a continuous history that is still directly impacting people today.

We began our project by first researching the basics of organ transplants. We wanted to have a strong foundation and a good understanding of our topic before diving deeper. Our quotes mainly came from Joseph E. Murray himself, and from his autobiography *“Surgery of the Soul: Reflections on a Curious Career”*. Since he experienced the organ transplant firsthand, we knew that his book would be a reliable and valuable primary source. We also got quotes from the Herrick Twins about the procedure and personal notes from doctors about Richard’s condition.

Originally, we planned on creating a documentary, but then realized that none of us had the proper technology. So, we decided to switch to a website. Two of our teammates competed in this category last year, so we knew what we were capable of. However, when we discovered that the website maker changed this year we were discouraged and considered switching categories, but we came together as a group and decided that to be proud of our project we needed to overcome hardships. Once the production of our website had started, we divided the jobs among

the four of us, and spent long hours watching the tutorial videos discussing each tool and its function. The orange theme throughout our website is a silent salute to those with kidney cancer and disease, as this is the color of the awareness ribbon. After placing first in the regional and state competitions, we took advice from the judges and drastically changed our website. We don't think that we would have made it this far in any other category, and we are incredibly proud of our work.

The theme, "Breaking Barriers", applies to organ transplants in many ways. This procedure, and the thousands that followed, broke the natural barriers of death and fear. It also broke many medical barriers, as there are now cures, treatments, and medicines for conditions involving organ failure. Now, millions of people world-wide can receive a second chance through the gift of organ transplantation; they no longer must live in the shadow of despair, but in the light of hope.