



Press Release

Service to those affected by chronic kidney disease

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Lori Hartwell
PR@RSNhope.org
(818) 284-6763

WINNERS of 14th ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST ANNOUNCED BY RENAL SUPPORT NETWORK!

Glendale, CA – September 15, 2016 – Now in its 14th year of providing a voice for people who have kidney disease and are passionate about writing, Renal Support Network (RSN) announces the winners of its 14th Annual Essay Contest. This year's theme was *"What Do You Know Now About Chronic Kidney Disease That You Wish You'd Known When You Were Diagnosed?"* Entrants needed to meet only one qualification— to have been diagnosed with chronic kidney disease.

"This year's theme was incredibly moving to me. So much hope, honesty and inspiration in each word that I read. I laughed, I cried and nodded my head in agreement. I am so lucky we have a group of volunteer judges that make the final decision. I want to give everyone an award," said Lori Hartwell, RSN's founder and president.

This year's 1st place winner Sasha Couch said, "I'm surprised and thrilled to win! Having kidney disease can be a very lonely journey despite being surrounded by people who love and support you. It feels less lonely when others who know exactly what you experience daily share their stories and feelings. I really value the stories others share."

Joy Araujo, who is the second place winner, said, "When I got the phone call that I had won, it truly made my day! I try to remain optimistic throughout my struggles, but sometimes things do get hard. This contest reaffirmed to me that if you just stay positive and keep your head up, miracles can happen!"

- 1st Place – "Note to Self," by Sasha Couch of Santa Monica, Calif.
- 2nd Place – "Silver Linings," by Joy Araujo of Fishers, Ind.
- 3rd Place – "I Never Knew a Kidney Was More Than a Bean!" by Debbie Sorensen, Fullerton, Calif.

The contest is growing in popularity and the margins are thin among the judges scoring that RSN is proud to announce the following honorable mentions:

- "What I Know Now That I Wish I Knew Then," by Virginia Gibson of Boyds, Md.
- "Role Model," by Ishrat Riya Khan of Tampa, Fla.
- "Too Many Good Intentions," by Guy Churchouse of Huntington Beach, Calif.

An illness is too demanding when you don't have hope!

Renal Support Network

For the first time, RSN Founder Lori Hartwell picked an essay that she thought was extraordinary, titled “The Discombobulated, Yet ‘Totally Unfiltered, Kidney-Shaped Childhood’” by Stacy Hoblitzell of Santa Rosa, Calif. “This essay spoke to and the creative angle and poetic pacing is amazing,” noted Hartwell.

High blood pressure and diabetes are the two leading causes of kidney failure. People who have kidney failure need dialysis or a kidney transplant to live. More information is available at www.RSNhope.org.

RSN would like to thank Fresenius Medical Care, NxStage and U.S. Renal Care for their support of RSN’s Annual Essay Contest.

#####