

Former Schoolmate Donates Kidney, Inspired By Student

▲ by Mike Lang

CLAYMONT, Del. (CNS) – Archmere Academy in Delaware has an expansive campus, but at its heart, the size of the student body at the private Catholic school fosters close bonds between members of the community.

Or, as 1979 graduate Michael Hare puts it, “It’s a tiny place. Everybody knows everybody.”

And last fall, Archmere principal John Jordan found out his former schoolmate needed a kidney transplant. Hare’s mother had called headmaster Michael Marinelli to have her son listed among the school’s prayer intentions.

With his longtime friend on the donor list for the second time in his life, Jordan decided he would offer his own organ. A few factors helped him make the decision.

One of those was a discussion with Marinelli and another was the example set by one of his students. Anthony Penna – an Archmere junior – was removed from life support during the first week of October last year, a few days after he was gravely

injured in an automobile accident. (His sister, Gabrielle, was injured but returned to school shortly thereafter.)

Jordan was with Anthony’s parents, Melanie and Robert, when he died.

“It was just a moment that was sacred, tragic,” Jordan told The Dialog, the newspaper of the Diocese of Wilmington.

“And Mel leans over and was like, ‘Now go help others.’ I think that phrase in that moment, combined with Michael Marinelli’s commentary and my friendship with Mike (Hare), it was like I should try and do that. It sounds so much more linear than it was in my head.”

Jordan, who graduated in 1980, and Hare were connected through athletics at Archmere, one as an athlete, the other as a team manager. After college, they both migrated back to the Claymont campus.

Jordan, 56, has spent most of his professional career at the school as a teacher, administrator and coach. Hare spent several years as a boys basketball assistant coach, and he would see Jordan nearly



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▲ Michael Hare and John Jordan at Archmere Academy in Claymont, Del.

every day during the season.

Hare, who turns 57 in November, also has spent time on Archmere’s board of directors and has been involved with the alumni association. He was on the board when Jordan was named principal.

He was diagnosed with end-stage renal failure in 1992, when he was just 31. He spent more than seven years on dialysis before receiving his first kidney transplant in 2001. He returned to the transplant list for five years and remained on it for five years when Jordan offered one of his.

His medical team at Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia knew he was headed for dialysis again, so they were proactive in getting him on the list. They also encouraged Hare to seek a living donor. “Frankly, I don’t know how to do that. I don’t know if anyone does,” said Hare, a member of St. Elizabeth Parish in Wilmington.

Hare nearly had a new kidney last November, before he heard from Jordan, but that did not come to pass.

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