

A Thanksgiving Message

November 20, 2012

Dear Colleagues and Students,

Dawn Nelson never attended the University of Kentucky. Until several months ago, Dawn and other members of her family had never even set foot on our campus. But this afternoon, the 29-year-old is in a conference room in downtown Louisville, effectively celebrating an early Thanksgiving and discussing the work of the people of the University of Kentucky.

Through remarkable efforts of doctors at UK HealthCare, Dawn received two lungs and a heart from the same donor in one procedure — the first heart lung block performed in the state in 15 years. Such procedures are rare — less than 30 were performed nationwide in 2011. One of them was here at the University of Kentucky.

After a few months of treatment and follow-ups, Dawn is strong enough to start resuming her normal life. Now she is telling her story. It's the kind of transformative work that happens so often at UK. Lives are touched. Communities are impacted. A state and world are changed for the better.

Breakthroughs in advanced health care are but one example. A group of students is developing gardening and agriculture initiatives in Owsley County. A continent away our faculty and students are ensuring clean water is available in Ecuador. In China, researchers with our Center for Applied Energy Research are consulting on cleaner, more sustainable production of energy.

Closer to home students captured the imagination of audiences in sold-out performances of "Phantom of the Opera" in the Lexington Opera House — inspiring not only their fellow students, faculty and staff; but an entire community and region.

I hear and see these stories every day. They reinforce an apparent truth: The University of Kentucky is you. It is revealed in the young and ambitious scholars who inspire us each day and in faculty who teach and mentor future leaders, create new knowledge and art, and discover life-saving treatments. It is evident in clinicians and health care professionals deeply devoted to rendering remarkable care and in extension agents uplifting communities through service and support. All of this is made possible by committed staff. Each of you is an integral part of our Promise for a new generation and a brighter tomorrow.

As we embark upon a season of gratitude and hope, I know these stories remind us all of the appreciation we hold for one another, our families, and our communities.

Please know how thankful I am — each day — for all you do to make real the promise of the University of Kentucky.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family. And remember to always See Blue.

Eli Capilouto
President