

Kidney Transplant Patients 'Doing Fine'

BY MARILYN ADAMS

Mrs. Gerald F. Johnston was a recent donor in a kidney transplant operation.

Her sixteen-year-old daughter, Linda, was the recipient.

Both are now "doing fine".

Mrs. Johnston, "Barb" as she is usually known, is at home supervising the family activities from her bed — with telephone installed nearby.

Linda is also doing well, and will be home with the rest of the family soon. The rest of the family is three boys: Mike, 14; Scott, 11 and Bruce, 9.

Linda's kidney condition was first noted when she was in fifth and sixth grade, her mother said. "She was sick about two weeks out of every six. She was over-tired a lot, had temperatures and was shaky. We thought it was a virus at first but then it was diagnosed as acute nephritis and later became chronic."

Linda, then 14, became the youngest patient to be on a kidney machine. She was also hospitalized at the Northwest Kidney Center last year from December until May.

After a period of time and much careful screening at the Center, it was decided to let Linda lease a home kidney machine. Because this can be a traumatic experience for a family, Mrs. Johnston explained that the Kidney Center gives careful counseling to outpatients.

"They decided Linda had the strength of character to do it", Mrs. Johnston said.

Linda herself, now a senior at Sammamish High School, said "The responsibility rested on me."

Since kidney patients don't eliminate wastes properly, this affects the heart and other organs so the patient must



MRS. GERALD JOHNSTON

constantly be aware of the time to go on the machine.

Linda said, "I had to weight myself and then prepare the machine which took about an hour. I was on three times a week usually about eight hours at a time. I found I usually slept through the dialysis because I was tired."

It was necessary to re-weight herself following the use of the machine, she said.

Since sodium is present naturally in so many foods, Linda said it was necessary for her to be on a strict diet.

"Actually, one-quarter teaspoon is the daily ration for a kidney patient and that isn't very much."

For teen-agers who like to eat potato chips and snack foods, it



LINDA JOHNSTON

was a real problem, her mother said.

The kidney weighs only one half pound, Linda's dietician, Linda Koh, told her. "The kidney is a thrifty filter and the finest one. But when it is lost, it's an expensive one to replace," she said.

Even with reductions in cost of care due to development of the home dialysis with the portable kidney machines, the Kidney Center notes that the initial and subsequent year costs of a kidney machine are beyond the average family budget.

When it was found that Linda could be on a home machine. Mrs. Johnston's mother, Mrs. Anice Guimond of Onekama, Michigan, did what she could. She urged all her friends and neighbors to help her save enough food manufacturers coupons to pay for the life-continuing machine for her

granddaughter.

She arrived in Bellevue in early spring with 32,000 coupons. The Sweet Adelines Club of Manissee County also sent 16,000 coupons.

It takes 800,000 coupons to buy a kidney machine.

Though the Johnstons are fortunate and will not now be needing to buy a machine, the coupons continue to pour in from friends of the Kidney Center.

A group called Clippers Auxiliary are now collecting the coupons on a state-wide scale and Mrs. Charles McCall of Renton is state chairman. Any new groups who wish to collect the food coupons as part of their volunteer work are asked to call her at BA 6-3897.

Mrs. Johnston noted that there are presently 90 King County residents who are patients at the Northwest Kidney Center. There are 173 in the total patient population.

Mrs. Johnston, who was a former knitting instructor in a Bellevue department store, found that some of her hobbies helped her raise extra "egg money". She did custom knitting jobs and sold some decoupage decorator items she had made.

When Linda was a student at Highland Junior High School, fellow students assembled and sold a cook book to raise money for Linda's cause.

Since a conservative description of Barbara would be "active", it's a safe bet she won't be a bed patient very long.

As for Linda — she's anxious to re-join her senior class at Sammamish. And because of the research, treatment and surgery at Northwest Kidney Center, she should be able to do that soon.