

Kansas man donates kidney to boy in Israel

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MARYSVILLE, Kan. — Eric Swim was surfing on the Internet in June when he stumbled across the story of a 10-year-old Jewish boy from Israel who was in desperate need of a kidney transplant.

“I began thinking that I have two good kidneys,” the Marysville man said, “and I didn’t have to have one of them.”

Swim, 38, returned Sunday from Israel with one less kidney and the thanks of the many Israelis he met.

“It’s a humbling thing when a Holocaust survivor comes up to you and says ‘you’re a big hero,’ or ‘gibor’ in Hebrew,” Swim said Monday during an interview at his home, “when in reality all I did was donate a kidney. It’s very humbling.”

The organ recipient, Moshiko Sharon, who had waited for a compatible kidney donor for more than a year, is doing well after undergoing implant surgery Sept. 21 at a Tel Aviv-area hospital.

Swim was raised as a Missouri Synod Lutheran but he and his wife began studying Judaism several years ago and are considering converting. His wife, who has an education degree, home-schools the couple’s children.

The organ donation was facilitated by the New York-based Halachic Organ Donor Society, which educates Jews about organ donation.