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Photo by: Courtesy of Israel Transplant

## Family of deceased 46-year-old donates 7 organs

By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH  
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“He lived his life as a person who gives,” Merav Karo says of husband Gil whose organs will help save others.

Gil Karo, a seemingly healthy 46-year-old chef and father of four, collapsed and suffered lower-brain death just moments after getting up in the night and falling on his wife. Four days later, the family agreed to donate his lifesaving organs plus his two corneas.

“He lived his life as a person who gives,” said his wife, Merav, on Monday to *The Jerusalem Post*. Three years ago, a representative of ADI, the organ donor registry, came to her school in Kiryat Ono to discuss organ donation. When Dvora Sherer, spokeswoman of Israel Transplant, called her to ask whether she would talk to the press about their ADI organ donation work, Merav said she knew her, as they had met during the school campaign.

Gil “was healthy and rarely needed a doctor,” said Merav, who was married 19 years to her husband, the father of their children aged 17, 15, 12 and 10. One day two weeks ago, he said he had a headache and went to sleep early.

Suddenly, he awakened and got up, as if he was sleepwalking, and fell on Merav without saying a word. His brother Tal, who lived nearby, rushed over and performed cardiac resuscitation, but Gil did not regain consciousness.

He was hospitalized in the intensive care unit in Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer for four days, during which doctors determined he had suffered lower-brain death and had no chance of survival. The family initiated the discussion of donating his organs, Merav said.

“It was clear to all of us that he wanted to donate his organs to save lives. Over 2,000 people came to the funeral,” she said. When a friend’s father died after suffering from irreversible heart damage and not getting an organ in time, the couple had discussed organ donation, Merav recalled. “When we see the recipients recovering from their transplants and succeeding to live regular lives, that will be the happy thing out of all our pain.”

The recipients were a 42-year-old man who received a heart; a 54-year-old man and a 52-year-old man who got the lungs; a 24-year-old woman who received both the liver and a kidney (all these at the Rabin Medical Center- Beilinson Campus in Petah Tikva); and a 35-year-old man received a kidney and pancreas at Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center.

The corneas will be transplanted into the eyes of two patients to restore their vision in the next few days.

The 35-year-old recipient was “jumped ahead in the queue,” said Sherer, because he had signed up with ADI’s campaign earlier this year to give precedence for those who registered then with ADI (telephone \*6262) as a potential donor. Sherer said that the special campaign, which offered immediate higher priority to potential donors, had a very positive effect in increasing the number of ADI registrants. Since April, dozens of transplants have been performed, and those who joined ADI during that period and had the same number of credit points to receive an organ had priority over those in the same condition who had not joined.



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