

Today is the 40th anniversary of the first organ transplant in B.C. - CBC Radio One
- 6:30 AM - October 24, 2008

Announcer: Today is the 40th anniversary of the first organ transplant in this province. On October 24, 1968, a man received a new kidney at Vancouver General Hospital.

Since then, there has been a revolution in that surgical option. New anti-rejection medication, transplants for virtually all the major organs, the lives of more than 4,500 people extended.

One of those people is Amanda Poch.

Reporter: Amanda Poch is 29 years old. She has more of her life ahead of her than behind her.

Three years ago, she was living with auto-immune chronic active hepatitis, a condition that never stopped attacking her liver.

It became life-threatening, leaving her in a coma for 11 days. When she woke up in the hospital, her life had changed.

Amanda Poch: The doctor woke me up and said he gave me a new liver the night before.

Reporter: Poch, who now works for the Canadian Liver Foundation, hadn't realized her chronic fatigue was due to her compromised liver; not the four jobs she was juggling. Now, she says, it's about awareness. Most people support the concept, but very few British Columbians are registered organ donors.

Poch is clear - if it wasn't for just one person donating a liver in 2006, she wouldn't be alive today. She calls it an amazing gift; one that gave her more than renewed energy and stamina.

Amanda Poch: I mean, I lost my freckles for almost ten years, and I didn't even realize it. And the day after my transplant, it was an overnight change - my colour came back, my freckles came back, I forgot how much I love them! Those type of things.

Reporter: The B.C. Transplant donor registry is now available online.