Lauren was in her middle school gym jumping rope when she suddenly went into cardiac arrest. She was just 12 years old.

“All I remember is waking up in the ambulance,” she says.​

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She was soon diagnosed with hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM), a genetic condition that prevents the heart from pumping enough blood. There is no cure for this disease and it has slowly worsened over the years. Growing up Lauren loved playing sports but the disease put a stop to all of that.

The disease seemed to be getting better in her 20s and Lauren got married and gave birth to her daughter, Sophia., but soon her body stopped responding to medication and she learned she would need a heart transplant to survive.

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Lauren was just 28 years old and the news hit her and her family hard.

"I never thought it would get this bad,” Lauren says. “Honestly, a transplant was never even on the radar. My dad never cries, but I remember him crying when I told him I needed a new heart."​

Lauren and her family have no idea when — or if — she'll get the heart she needs.​

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"The doctors tell me it could be tomorrow, or it could be a couple years," she says. "I just hope that it comes in time."​

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The pandemic has only made waiting harder. Lauren’s father used to visit her daily and help around the house and play with Sophia, but quarantine restrictions and Lauren’s vulnerability to disease has forces those visits to become virtual. Meanwhile, Lauren's health is declining.

“The list of things I am no longer able to physically do has grown quite a bit,” she says. “Cooking has always been something I find a lot of joy in and unfortunately it has become too much for me. I attempted to go for a short walk with Sophia recently and was able to only walk about a block. I had to stop three times because of chest pain.”

Through it all, Lauren remains hopeful.

“Although physically I feel pretty terrible, mentally I know that I am strong enough to get through this,” she says. “I have faith that my perfect heart will find its way to me when the time is right. The transplant would mean a new life for me and my family.”

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Today is Organ Donor Enrollment Day, a day dedicated to inspiring New Yorkers to sign up as an organ donor. One organ donor can save up to eight lives and give someone like Lauren a second chance at life.

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Sign up online by clicking here: [insert your organization’s unique registration link]​