

**L**ife is precious, and Peace alumna Katie Holland '00 '02 is celebrating her second chance. Holland was given the gift of life just over one year ago when she received a kidney transplant.

In 2005, just three years after graduating from Peace College, Holland was diagnosed with Polycystic Kidney Disease, a cystic genetic disorder of the kidneys that is one of the most common life-threatening genetic diseases, affecting an estimated 12.5 million people worldwide.

Due to Holland's worsening condition, in 2010 she began researching organ donation. What she found was frightening: the wait time to receive a kidney in her region was five years. So, she began looking for help. That's when Holland's friend, Felesia Buczynski, made an offer to donate her own kidney.

"I put myself in Katie's parents' shoes, knowing that every minute of every day, I would spend praying for a living donor to come forward," Buczynski said.

"She stepped up to the plate, so to speak, and hit a homerun," Holland added.

The two began the testing process to see if they were compatible. "She was a perfect match," Holland said. "And, on October 23, 2012, she gave me her kidney. This was truly a blessing."

Holland's years at Peace College gave her confidence and the belief that she could conquer anything. While on dialysis, she would wear her 'Peace-gear'— t-shirts or pants with Peace College emblazoned on them to remind her of how tough she really was.

"Since I was struggling so greatly then, I needed something to remind me that I would persevere and that I was strong enough to survive end stage kidney disease," she said. "My time at Peace taught me that I could overcome a number of obstacles in my life, and if I had what it takes to make it through college, I had what it takes to survive dialysis and kidney disease."

Holland is currently working toward a Master's degree in Social Work at the University of South Carolina. One day, she hopes to work in a dialysis clinic as a social worker.

For more information on PKD or other kidney diseases, visit: [www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org).



# Gift of Life

by Christiane Newell '15

FELESIA BUCZYNSKI | KATIE HOLLAND '00 '02