

## Washington Heights Rabbi Donates Kidney To Queens Woman

By Shoshy Ciment

This summer, 63-year-old Rabbi Avrohom Hoffman, a father of nine, decided to donate a kidney. On Wednesday, July 25, Hoffman went under the knife to save a 62-year-old woman from Queens.

The recipient, Berta Ilzarova, was suffering with polycystic kidney disease, a genetic disorder that causes clusters of cysts to develop on the kidneys. The mother of two had been on dialysis for over a year while waiting for a kidney transplant, reported the New York Daily News.

Hoffman, a former principal, trained EMT, and the leader of Congregation Shaare Hatikvah in Washington Heights, decided to donate a kidney after a colleague of his underwent the procedure. A Rabbi in the Breuer's Yeshiva during the year, Hoffman explained that summer break was a prime opportunity to get the job done.

"*Im lo achshav, ein asai*," explained Hoffman, which translates to, "If not now, when?"

The family of the recipient was grateful to Hoffman for his life-saving sacrifice. Ilzarova's two sons and husband visited Hoffman in the hospital.

"She hopes that God rewards him for his help and for what he is doing," said Ilzarova's son Victor Khaimov about his mother to the New York Daily News.

Chaya Lipschutz, the matchmaker responsible for setting up the kidney transfer between Hoffman and Ilzarova, has devoted her life to helping match kidney donors to compatible recipients. After donating her own kidney in 2005, the Brooklyn native has been responsible for arranging dozens of successful kidney matches.



Rabbi Hoffman and his recipient.

(Photo: Fox 5 NY)

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With the summer coming to a close, Hoffman's recovery is almost complete. He believes his display of selflessness this summer will serve as a tangible lesson to his students in Washington Heights about character and altruism.

"The few days of discomfort you go through are gift of life to someone else," said Hoffman. "It's a beautiful thing."