

Guest Spotlight



Emilia

Age: 24
Transplant: Pre-Liver
Hospital: Texas Children's Hospital
and Houston Methodist
Hometown: Col. Zarco, Chihuahua

Transplant Journey: I was born with *biliary atresia*. I had a procedure at two months old called *Kasai procedure* at Texas Children's Hospital to help my liver. Many babies have this procedure and will eventually need a liver transplant and I've been very blessed that this procedure helped me into my 20's. As a child, my family and I traveled to Houston every few months for tests and observation and I was listed on the transplant list in 2013. My doctors asked us to relocate to Houston so we could be close to care and if a liver became available. My mom and I packed up and moved here and Nora's Home was one of the places we lived for a year and half. We lived in boxes and were ready to pack them up each time we had to move around. I was in high school at the time and transferred to a local school so I could keep up with my schooling.

After a year living in Houston, there weren't any offers given for a liver. We asked if I could move back home. I wanted to finish high school at my own school and be back home with my father and brother. They gave us permission to do so and we moved back in 2016. I am lucky that I am healthy enough to not need a transplant right now. I travel to Houston every six months for tests, labs, an MRI and an endoscopy to check my liver. They pay close attention to my Model for End-Stage Liver Disease (MELD) scores which will be telling if I need a transplant.

What are you up to now? After moving back home in 2016, I graduated high school and entered university to be a doctor. I am currently a general practitioner and was always interested in medicine and maybe even more so I have been a patient for so long. I was recently accepted to a medical residency for anesthesia in Monterrey, Mexico. During my last year of medical school, I was able to be a part of a *Kasai procedure* in the operating room for a child with *biliary atresia*. It was a full circle moment as I had this same procedure as a baby. I am excited to be a doctor and help people. Not only do I understand my prognosis better and what my doctors are telling me but feel I can be an advocate for others, maybe even those children with *biliary atresia*.

What do you enjoy most about Nora's Home? We've been staying here since 2014. Before we knew of Nora's Home, we stayed in hotels. These were so costly, and we were grateful to find a home in Nora's Home. I love that we have our own room and certainly feel at home. It's nice to have a kitchen to cook in and I love meeting the other patients and guests staying here! I wouldn't have this connection anywhere else.

What is your favorite memory? While at Nora's I helped with the Art Tile Project. This project was just beginning, and I got to be a part of getting it going, taking it to the hospitals and working with the guests who were staying at the home. I know where my family's tiles are on the wall at the home and it's so special to see them! I had such a great time working on this while I was living in Houston. Each tile tells a story!



What would you say to someone who is considering becoming an organ donor? You can't take your organs with you. You can truly help someone else and why wouldn't you do that? You can save lives!

