

SHIFLETT STAYING POSITIVE DESPITE OBSTACLES

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Beckley, WV (WOAY, photos courtesy Lisa Ingles) - Baseball is a sport where many players develop a love for the game at an early age, and that is the case for Alex Shiflett, a junior at Woodrow Wilson High School.

"I just love going out there and getting dirty, playing, and having fun with my friends," explains the pitcher and third baseman.

His father, James, agrees, "He's loved it since he was about five years old, that's all he lives and breathes: baseball."

Shiflett always loves a challenge on the diamond, but is now facing a life-threatening obstacle. He is approaching Stage 5 kidney failure, and is home-bound while he waits for a transplant. While he admits the waiting portion is difficult, he's been able to maintain a positive attitude.

"Life is going to be tough, but I'm just lucky that God gave me a great family, great friends, and great doctors to help me through it.

Shiflett has received encouragement from many people, including his Flying Eagle teammates and coaches, and even the Cincinnati Reds, who he had a chance to meet this summer.

"I didn't realize it at first but we were walking in the stadium, the lady gave me a wristband, and I was like, 'Dad, this isn't the zoo,' and he says 'No, son, it's not, we're going to watch the game.'" says Alex.



"He got to go down on the field, have batting practice with the team, meet the team, hang out with them so that was a real good positive thing for him. I've never seen a kid smile so much in my life," explains James.

The Shifletts are hoping the transplant process goes quickly and smoothly, and they hope this encourages others to sign up to become organ donors. Alex was able to play with his Woodrow Wilson teammates recently, and that's helped with giving him hope that he can return to the diamond.

"Last week I went to the fall ball game with Greenbrier East, the first I've gotten to go to because of my condition, and every one of them gave me a hug," says Alex. "They told me they'll play for me this upcoming year, and I told them, 'Guys, this isn't the end.' I couldn't have asked for a better team."

James says, "It'll be a lot of weight off our shoulders, mainly his. For him to know that he's got a kidney, he's got a chance to live a normal life again, that'd mean the world to him, mean the world to us."

There are several ways to become an organ donor. You can register at a DMV office (there are area locations in Beckley, Lewisburg, Princeton, Summersville, and Welch), or online at [Donate Life West Virginia](#) or [ORGANIZE](#).