

Organ recipients thank family of shooting victim: Five lives saved

News in the [March 10, 2009](#) issue

Just a few moments after she met James O’Hea, Aley John leaned against him and pressed her ear to his chest. She wanted to hear her son Dennis’s heart. “I want you all to have lives like Dennis,” she told O’Hea and four other recipients of her slain son’s organs.

The tearful first meeting on Sunday, February 8, came more than two months after Dennis John Malloosseril, 25, was shot and killed inside the St. Thomas Syrian Orthodox Knanaya Church in Clifton, New Jersey.

The recipients of Malloosseril’s heart, lungs, liver, kidneys and pancreas visited the church on that Sunday to thank his family and honor his life with a standing-room-only memorial service.

Tributes flowed to Malloosseril’s love of family, friends and faith, with a slide show and speeches depicting a young man whose selflessness was reflected in his death. Malloosseril was shot November 23 when he tried to intervene in a dispute between 24-year-old Reshma James and her estranged husband, Joseph Pallipurath.

“His motto was ‘Help others,’ and that’s what he did at the end,” said Malloosseril’s aunt, Suja Alummoottil. His parents had “no doubt” that he would have wanted his organs donated, she said.

The recipients, some wearing T-shirts emblazoned with Malloosseril’s grinning likeness, spoke of their suffering before the transplants and the relief and gratitude that followed. O’Hea, 57, of Woodbridge, said his cardiologist had said before the transplant that his congestive heart failure left him with less than a month to live.

“It goes against nature for a parent to have to bury their child, so it’s a very touching situation—emotional that way,” O’Hea said. “On the other hand, I’m alive, and I wouldn’t be if it wasn’t for Dennis.”

Meanwhile, Pallipurath, 27, has been charged with murder, attempted murder and weapons offenses and is being held in lieu of \$5 million bail. -*Religion News Service*