

July 6, 13

Dear Dr. Bitan, M.D. and the Orthopaedic Research Department,

I have just completed the Hybrid Study Health Survey for my 8 year "checkup." I wish it were possible for me to be there personally, but there always seems to be more *month* left at the end of the *money*. The survey is great, but I wanted to tell you again just how this surgery has changed my life.

Starting in high school I saw countless doctors and specialists for my pain and continuing physical and mental decline. Each doctor told me the same thing; I "definitely needed surgery," but I was "too young" and to "come back in 25 years." They wrote me a prescription and sent me out the door. I felt dismissed. Some say the constant pain is the reason for being mentally worn down. For me, it was the feeling that no one cared, no help, no hope.

In 2004, despite my challenges, I was accepted into a great university here in Michigan on full scholarship for opera/vocal performance. However, soon after starting the first semester I realized I couldn't continue singing and performing on stage because of the debilitating pain and all the medication I had to take to make it though my day. Unfortunately, I lost my scholarship and left school.

I couldn't work, go to school, or take care of myself. At 23 my life, as my 14 year old niece puts it, "like, totally sucked." There was no way I could wait 25 years for a doctor to help me.

On May 3, 2005 I received a call from Dr. Bitan telling me I was a candidate for surgery. HALLELUIAH! For the first time it gave me hope, and I flew to NYC and had the surgery. It was a difficult recovery, but everyday I woke up feeling better than the day before. Any pain I experienced after the surgery couldn't touch level of pain I was in for years before. If I had to have the surgery every year for the rest of my life, I would do it.

Just for the record, I have been pain and medication free for about 7 years!

I have my life back! I am fully employed and able to perform on stage again. Every day is a gift. This may sound a bit dramatic or cliché (cue the orchestra!), but Dr. Bitan's decision to perform this surgery saved my life. It's true. Thank you again for helping me. Your work means a great deal to my family, my friends, and of course to me. If I can help further with the study please let me know.

Sincerely