

## ***Maria R. Garcia***

*Big hearts give back woman's independence.*

For six months, Maria Garcia dealt with a sickness that doctors could not properly diagnose, surviving only through frequent platelet transfusions.

Admitted to the hospital with an extremely low platelet count, doctors looked for the cause. Despite having blood transfusions, Garcia's platelet count would only be at an acceptable level for a few days.

With such a low platelet count, doctors kept Garcia in the hospital as a precaution. Despite having blood transfusions, Garcia's platelet count would only be at an acceptable level for a few days.

"Because I had such a low platelet count, doctors thought I had fatty liver disease but when treatments for that did not have results, doctors moved onto other diagnoses," said Garcia.

It was not until doctors had eliminated other diagnoses that it was determined that Garcia had idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura, (ITP). The illness is an immune disorder in which the body attacks the cells responsible for blood clotting (platelets), usually when they reach the spleen.

Under doctor's advice, Garcia elected for her spleen to be removed. "It was a hard surgery that included platelets before, during and after the operation," said Garcia.

After half a year of battling her illness Garcia left the hospital with a normal platelet count of 400,000. "I have my independence back and able to do the things I once was able to do including spending time with my big family," said Garcia. "I am able to do simple tasks once again because of the platelet donors. I think they have hearts as big as Texas if they can think of somebody else and donate."



*Maria R. Garcia*