

# MARRIED STONE OAK PHYSICIANS SURVIVE, TACKLE COVID-19

PAIR DONATES  
PLASMA TO HELP  
OTHERS FIGHT  
PANDEMIC

by LAKENDRA LEWIS



**TWO MARRIED STONE  
OAK-BASED DOCTORS**

**and their kids didn't expect to contract COVID-19 during Spring Break, but their recovery is helping others battle coronavirus.**

And, after beating the contagion, the couple said they feel it's safe to return their offspring to school as long as safety protocols are maintained.

The physicians' brush with the disease led them to contribute plasma through the South Texas Blood &

*RECOVERED continues from pg. 01*

Tissue Center in an attempt to heal other patients. They're urging all who've developed antibodies to do the same.

"There's a short window of opportunity to donate because your antibody levels rise quickly, then peak and decline in about two to three months," said Elizabeth King, an obstetrician and gynecologist with Northeast OB/GYN Associates in Stone Oak who fell ill. "We only ended up being able to donate for about six to eight weeks. So, if people want to give back and help others, plasma is one of the treatments that helps."

"There's a shortage in San Antonio and all the hospitals have strict guidelines on dispensing it," the doctor

added.

The path to infection, and then recuperation, began when King and her husband, Aaron, a family-practice physician with HealthTexas Medical Group, ventured with their four children to Colorado's mountains for a vacation.

They expected to relax and ski a little.

But, sometime during the road trip, 5-year-old Olivia, the Kings' youngest, developed a cough, although no one was too concerned. News the state's governor had issued warnings of a COVID-19 eruption in three counties hadn't yet reached the remote Crested Butte resort where the family vacationed.

A little later, the couple canceled a scheduled birthday party with extended family and drove back to San Antonio over the weekend.

"We didn't know there was an outbreak until we'd been in the car for three days with our kids," said Aaron King.

While he initially tested negative, his wife was positive and became symptomatic. A week later, Aaron King also got sick.

"I immediately quarantined and didn't return to work for 14 days," Elizabeth King said. "Aaron

quarantined longer, as did the kids. Schools had closed. Everything was pretty much shutting down."

The couple, both in their early 40s, stayed in medical seclusion as a family and recovered within two weeks. Olivia and 8-year-old Eve had mild symptoms including a runny nose and cough.

Daniel, 13, and Kate, 11, the Kings'

Aaron King, a Stone Oak-based family-practice physician, and some family members contracted COVID-19 during a vacation in March. Now recovered, he does not worry about sending his kids to school as long as safety protocols are in place. Courtesy/HealthTexas Medical Group





Elizabeth King, an obstetrician and gynecologist in Stone Oak, came down with COVID-19 during a family Spring Break outing, as did her husband. Once the couple recovered, they donated potentially lifesaving plasma with antibodies. Courtesy photo/HealthTexas Medical Group

other children, never became unwell.

“We fortunately had a pretty mild case,” Aaron King said. His practice had received testing supplies the day he came back to town, so he arranged to have a swab done.

Early on, Elizabeth King experienced dizziness, fatigue, chills and fever; she underwent a drive-thru swab test through her husband’s company. She received her results 24 hours later.

In the midst of the new “normal,”

which now involves wearing masks and social distancing – tactics the Kings support – both of the couple’s clinics closed to protect patients and moved to telemedicine within 48 hours of Gov. Greg Abbott’s initial statewide mandate to shelter in place.

“My group was really great about that,” Aaron King said. “It was important in limiting the spread of the virus. You can see that made a difference.”

But lax attitudes on the part of some when Texas reopened led to a surge in positive test results across the state, the physician noted.

In light of the growing numbers, the Texas Education Agency backtracked on a recent order requiring public schools to reopen for in-person instruction three weeks from the start of the fall semester. School districts will now be allowed to delay on-campus classes for at least four weeks.

School boards also may request waivers to continue remote learning for up to four additional weeks in areas seriously hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the Kings quickly acknowledged they aren’t trained to moonlight as teachers, and plan to send their youngsters to a local charter school

this fall once restrictions are lifted.

“The school environment is a much better environment for learning, especially for the younger children,” Elizabeth King said. “Our kindergartner really struggled.”

“I feel having watched our kids do remote learning, that their education was not nearly as good as when they were being taught by professional teachers,” her spouse added. “Parents are not teachers. Teachers are trained professionals and do a much better job of teaching our children than laypeople. Most children are low-risk ... and we think the chances of our kids contracting (COVID-19) again are relatively low.”

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