



It's time to give back.

# *Cucumbers to Factor:* Appreciating Rare Gifts

**W**hat do birthday gifts and cucumbers have in common? Quite a lot, if you are Dilmurod Poshohodjaev from Uzbekistan. As a child living with hemophilia in the rural village of Chust, these things were scarce or simply unavailable to Dilmurod.

So many modern conveniences were just dreams for “Dil,” now 26, and his three older sisters, Surayo, Saodat and Saida. “Our parents never had a cake or gifts for our birthdays,” recalls Saida, the second youngest, “and it was okay with us because we could see they hardly had enough money for food and clothes.” What did the siblings cherish most? “We loved fresh cucumbers and apples like American kids love chocolates and ice cream.”

When Dil was growing up, the family lived on a large plot of land with a cow, sheep and chickens. They had no hot water, and their bathroom was an outhouse—an unpleasant walk on a wintry night. His parents, both teachers, couldn’t afford a car with their combined income of \$20 a month. From Monday to Saturday, the children woke early to walk three miles to school, even when a foot of snow blanketed the ground, because there were no school buses. On Sunday, while his sisters did labor-intensive, all-day chores like laundry, Dil rarely extended himself more than to walk to the grocery store to buy bread because his mother worried that he would hurt himself.

His mother’s worry was reasonable: Dil was diagnosed with hemophilia A at age two. When he bled severely, his parents took him on the train to the capital, Tashkent, the site of the only hospital equipped to treat people with hemophilia. Arranging time away from work and buying the ticket took



Dil with his sisters, Surayo, Saodat and Saida, and mother (second from left).

“a week or two,” explains Dil, and the trip recurred every three to six months. “Those two weeks were a nightmare for me,” he remembers. “I couldn’t tolerate the pain and stayed in bed crying and sobbing. My mother and sisters would try their best to help me, to distract me from the pain. I would laugh at their jokes but continue crying after the entertainment was over.”

In early 2006, 29-year-old Saida, who now lives in Ohio, used the Internet to research hemophilia information for Dil. When Saida first told him about American summer camps for young people with hemophilia, says Dil, “It was amazing! And I learned that there are special books written for children with hemophilia, and books for their parents. I wish we had had such great opportunities, great treatment facilities and enough medicines.”

In late June, a tooth extraction left Dil bleeding for eight days. The hospital in Tashkent had no plasma, and cryoprecipitate wasn’t able to stop his bleeding. Saida grew nervous and sought advice from the hematology

department at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital, where she first learned about Project SHARE. She submitted a request for factor, and on July 7, 2006, the first Project SHARE factor shipment to Uzbekistan was sent to Dil’s doctor. The little boy who never received candy or presents at last received his first infusion of factor concentrate—at age 26.

Next time you spear that boring old cucumber in your salad, or curse the school bus that slows your morning commute; next time you see the glowing candles on yet another birthday cake, perhaps you’ll remember Dil and his sisters, and appreciate these common things for the truly rare gifts they are. ☺

To make a donation of factor or funding to Project SHARE, contact Julia Long, director, at [julia@kelleycom.com](mailto:julia@kelleycom.com) or call (800) 249-7977.