



AlphaNet Mourns the Loss of AlphaNet Coordinator Debbie Labud

It is with great sadness that we share the news that AlphaNet Coordinator Deborah (Debbie) Labud passed away on Friday, March 27, 2026. Debbie worked as an AlphaNet Coordinator for 5 years and was a dedicated and involved member of the Alpha-1 community for over 20 years.

“Debbie was a fixture within the Alpha-1 community. Volunteering tirelessly for Alpha-1 Foundation events and eventually becoming an AlphaNet Coordinator where her compassion and knowledge helped hundreds of Alphas through their Alpha-1 journey,” Dr. Robert “Sandy” Sandhaus, AlphaNet’s Senior Medical Director said. “Both her AlphaNet subscribers and the entire AlphaNet team will miss her knowledge and warmth.”

Debbie’s Alpha-1 journey started in the early 90s, when she began experiencing frequent bouts of bronchitis, which led to worsening breathing after each episode. Eventually, Debbie was hospitalized after struggling to breathe. During her evaluation, a physician noted significantly reduced lung function for her age and referred her to a pulmonologist.

In May 1991, Debbie was diagnosed with Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency, ZZ genotype. Understanding the genetic nature of the condition, Debbie encouraged her family members to be tested as well.

She began augmentation therapy in August 1991. A year later, she moved from Virginia to Florida to be closer to family. As her lung disease progressed, Debbie was placed on the transplant list in 1997 with only 17% lung capacity.

Debbie received a left lung transplant on November 22, 2001 (Thanksgiving Day) and, after spending 10 years on disability, was able to return to work. She remained stable for many years, until complications arose in 2017 when her native lung began to impact her transplanted lung. In November 2018 (also on Thanksgiving Day), Debbie received a second transplant, this time of her right lung.

Both of Debbie’s transplants took place on Thanksgiving, a twist of fate she often reflected on with deep gratitude, describing each as a profound “gift of life.”

“Debbie was an extraordinary woman who gave everything she had to her Alpha-1 family and friends. Her grit, determination, and unwavering spirit set an example for all of us on how to live life to the fullest. She touched so many lives with her kindness and strength. I will miss her deeply,” AlphaNet Program Manager Toya de Leon said.

Debbie was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and dog mom. She enjoyed spending time at family gatherings, traveling, crafting, volunteering, cooking, and bike riding. She was involved with various Alpha-1 community events including Escape to the Cape and the Gulf Coast Bike Trek. Debbie also competed in the Transplant Games and won several gold medals.

A Celebration of Life is scheduled for April 18th at 2pm at The William Thomas Funeral Home in Jonesville, Florida.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in honor of Debbie Labud to the Alpha-1 Foundation by visiting www.alpha1.org/donate or by sending mail to the following address: Alpha-1 Foundation, 3300 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables, FL 33134.