

Shad Ireland was born with healthy kidneys in May, 1972. Almost exactly eleven years later, in May, 1983, he and his mother got the news that those kidneys were now diseased and he would have to be on dialysis while awaiting a kidney transplant. Shad eventually underwent two transplant operations. The first kidney transplant, at age 18, lasted for three years. The second transplant was unsuccessful.

Facing a life of illness and having been told he would probably only live until he was 25, Shad decided to cram as much living on the edge into his life as he could. To him, that meant partying and having a good time even as he endured regular dialysis. He had no real goals beyond making sure what happened in the next 24 hours was based on having fun.

Then one day in 1993, weighing just 75 pounds and recovering very slowly from the rejection of his first transplanted kidney, Shad was resting and watching television. Flipping between channels, he saw a race he'd not seen before – a triathlon. He was captivated by the strength and determination the contestants in this difficult race exhibited and told his mother he would some day compete in that race.

The road to meeting that goal wasn't straight or easy, but in 2004, Shad finished his first triathlon – the world famous Ironman - in Lake Placid, New York. He was the first dialysis patient to ever do so. By beating the astronomical odds against him through sheer guts and perseverance, he became a swimming, biking and running symbol of courage and hope in the face of a killer disease.

Shad continues to compete but has also created the Shad Ireland Foundation that is focused on helping people with renal disease improve their lives through physical activity.