

DEFINING EXCELLENCE

# Active Life Restored Through Innovative Surgery



**A** 2011 car accident left Jaclyn Strong Osrtom with debilitating injuries and nearly crippling back pain. As the years went by, her pain got worse and she relied on regular cortisone shots just to be able to function.

"I tried to stretch and do what I could, but I didn't have a normal life whatsoever," said Ostrom. Referred to NorthShore Orthopaedic Surgeon Eldin Karaikovic, MD, Ostrom had an ally in her quest for a solution. While Dr. Karaikovic helped her manage the pain with cortisone injections, he was determined to find a better treatment option. After a thorough review, Dr. Karaikovic was convinced Ostrom was a good candidate for a relatively new, minimally-invasive procedure that would address the real problem and leave her pain-free.

The source of Ostrom's pain was actually her sacroiliac (SI) joint, notoriously difficult to treat and even diagnose, explained Dr. Karaikovic, who studied the innovative SI fusion procedure that would ultimately be a life-changer for Ostrom. The procedure creates a bridge from the iliac bone to the SI joint, similar to a dental implant, joining the bones and eliminating the source of pain, all done through a tiny, inch-long incision. A complex procedure in a sensitive area near nerves and close to the spinal canal, the surgery requires precise skill.

Ostrom had complete confidence in Dr. Karaikovic, who she said became like a member of the family meeting with her parents and new husband and answering everyone's questions.

"I trusted him, and I'm so glad I stayed with him," said Ostrom. "He cared so much and gave me all the research to review."

Ostrom had the surgery last year, and it truly changed her life. "The recovery was pretty fast, and within months I was back to my pre-accident self, working out and feeling great," she recalled. And perhaps the best part of her new dramatically reduced pain life is yet to come as Ostrom is pregnant with her first child. "I knew I wanted to have children, but there was no way I would have gotten pregnant without this surgery," she said. "It's amazing—when I told Dr. Karaikovic I was pregnant, he was so happy I thought he was going to

cry.”

“Jackie is a wonderful woman, and I’m thrilled she has this new life,” said Dr. Karaikovic. “And I know there are many other people out there who may recognize their situation in her story. It’s really an injustice for so many people with back pain relying on shots and more shots when this procedure is available.”