



HEARTbeat

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SUMMER EDITION 2011

The Mended Hearts, Inc.
Morris County Chapter 56, Morristown, NJ
Founded October 16, 1968

About Mended Hearts

Mended Hearts is a national non-profit organization made up of and serving people with heart disease and their loved ones. Mended Hearts welcomes anyone who is interested in learning to help those with heart disease. Supported by a national office, 280 local chapters actively serve across the United States and Canada. The network is made up of heart patients, family members, caregivers and health care professionals who provide information and support to recovering patients and their families during hospital visits, by telephone, through group meetings and via the internet.

New for this edition...

Mended Hearts Member Interview with Robyn Schlesinger. See page 3



Meetings

Summertime is here! To all of the Mended Hearts Chapter # 56 members, family and friends, have a safe and fun summer. Meetings will begin again in September.



Please join us for the following upcoming meetings at the Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute. All are welcome to attend.

September 25, 2011 1:30pm
Sarah Fabry
Integrative Medicine
Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute
Schering-Plough Room

October 23, 2011 1:30pm
Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute
Wilf Conference Room
Speaker to be announced

Officers and Chairpersons

President
Harvey Brooks
973-376-6718

Vice President
Marcy Brooks
973-376-6718

Treasurer
Mary Ann Wary
973-267-4267

Secretary
Donna Farley
908-684-8295

Visiting Chairman
Victor Fabry
973-879-5647

Past President /
ARD Northeast Region
George Pometti
973-943-1827

Membership / Website
Chairperson
Jesse Stromeyer
908-418-1484

Fundraising Chairperson
George Pometti, Sr.

Newsletter Editor
Jesse Stromeyer

Its great to be alive...and to help others



President's Message



Dear Members and Future Members,

After what seemed to be a winter that would never end, we can look back and be proud of what Chapter 56 has accomplished. Our first ever Rap Session was well received and well attended. We learned and shared many things about heart disease among ourselves. Thanks to our presenter Howard Yablon. It was an outstanding event, and we will do it again.

We hosted a Northeast Regional (cluster) meeting of Mended Hearts, and I am very proud of the outcome. Our Executive Team led the planning, and the hospital worked with us and gave us whatever we needed. Jack Yuppa, manager of Au Bon Pain, donated breakfast. George Pometti and his friend Dominic Rosatta arranged a wonderful luncheon buffet, and then DONATED IT ALL. If you are ever out in Doninic's area, stop in and say thanks again. The address is Rosatta Pizza and Pasta, 39 A New Street, Hampton, N.J.

Victor Fabry was instrumental in arranging the rooms, and he obtained the "give aways" from the hospital. Dr. Barry Cohen graciously donated enough copies of his book "Coronary Heart Disease" for every attendee. Donna Farley, Daisy Wary, and Marcy Brooks worked long and hard setting up and keeping everything running smoothly as well. Door prizes were donated and obtained by our team.

Our medical presenters Drs. Parr, Brown, and Tansey were as usual outstanding. George Pometti was our Master of Ceremony, and it is always a delight to share the podium with him. Many of our guest were from National Headquarters. Marcia Baker came from Dallas, Texas and spoke about the National Convention to be held in New Orleans in June. We will be represented at the Convention.

At breakout tables, we shared knowledge, procedures, and smiles with our colleagues from the Northeast. I want to give my sincerest thanks to our team and to all who pitched in and helped.

Looking forward to the summer and arranging another interesting and informative year (2011-12) for Mended Hearts Chapter 56. We can be as good as we want to be.

"It is great to be alive and help others."

Dr. Harvey Brooks

Special for this Edition of the *HeartBEAT*, see pages 4 & 5 for pictures from the first ever Regional Cluster meeting hosted by Mended Hearts Chapter # 56 at Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute.

In Memoriam

With much sadness, we note the passing on May 16, 2011 of Mended Hearts Chapter #56 member Irene Soderlund. We extend our sincerest condolences to Irene's family and friends.

What's Your Story? By Marcy Brooks

The March Chapter 56 meeting was an adventure in helping others. It was the first time a Rap Session was tried, and it was well received. President Brooks had introduced Howard Yablon who had experience in setting up Rap/Support groups in the past.

After Mr. Yablon told his heart survivor story, our members contributed and learned from each other. It was interesting how some people's wording changed but the experience was the same. For example, some said they had symptoms and it took time to medically diagnose the cause. What all agreed on was know your body and listen to what it is telling you. Don't be satisfied until your problem is diagnosed and solved.

During our informal refreshment time, most people agreed that this type of meeting was helpful and meaningful. They expressed a desire to have other Rap Sessions in the future.

This newsletter is not intended to give personal medical advice, please consult your physician regarding any health concerns you may have.



Marcy's Caregiver Corner

By Marcy Brooks

Friendship-An Extraordinary Relationship

Caregivers, I know how important your family is at the time of illness and the road to recovery. However, friends need to be included in this process. Friendship is an interpersonal relationship that is like no other. This is the person you both can express sympathy as well as empathy, and you both can express mutual understanding and compassion. Usually the relationship has weathered the test of time, and in some instances one can point to their school friends as still being a big part of their life. It has been said that looking back on one's development friendships are often the most important relationship in the adolescent years. It is believed that friendship enhances a person's sense of happiness as well as overall well being. The immune system even gets a boost from your friends.

Did you know that one tends to smile more often in the company of their friend? Interesting discussion usually is part of the relationship. Your friends know where you've been and where you are. Friends can read your body language as to how you are feeling; they can help you relax by telling you to take that deep breath and remind you what really matters. They speak the right words to you to put you on the path that helps you believe that all is "OK", and they will stay with you. No matter the situation a friend brings the two "c's" to a situation, and these strong words are "comfort" and "companionship".

Good friends give up some of their time willingly to accompany you to a doctor's appointment. Sometimes two people hearing what is said can clear up any misunderstanding. They are there too for medical procedures as well as hospital visits. Caregivers you too must heal like your loved one, and your friend helps in the healing process. A positive environment is what the friend brings.

Keep smiling. Stand strong. YOU ARE NEEDED

Member Interview-Robin Schlesinger

by Marcy Brooks



Robin is a member of Chapter 56 since January, 2009. She has the distinction of being the first member to be interviewed by this writer, and to this writer's knowledge she is the youngest active member.

She was proud to report that in high school she supported an American Heart Association fund raiser. With the help of her generous neighbors, she doubled her goal.

Robin is quite the veteran of cardiac surgery. She was born with two complex congenital heart defects, and they are called Transposition of the Great Arteries and Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD). She has undergone 6 open heart surgeries, and the last one being August of 2006.

She shared two personal thoughts. What she mostly likes about Mended Hearts Chapter 56 is the camaraderie we have. Also Dr. Barry Cohen's presentation entitled "Coronary Stents, Where Arts and Science Meet" was one of her favorites.

All the members of Chapter 56 would agree that Robin is an asset to the membership. A welcoming smile and a warm hello are part of Robin's personality.

Robin wanted to remind everyone that February 14 is Congenital Heart Awareness Day. To find out more about Congenital Heart Defects go to www.achdheart.org.

Look for our next Member Interview.

Mended Hearts Chapter #56 Cluster Meeting

On Saturday April 16, 2011, Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute's Mended Hearts Chapter #56 hosted their first ever Regional Cluster Meeting.

The event began with an arrival dinner on Friday evening for our out-of-state guests at The Park Avenue Club in Florham Park. Mended Heart National guests included the Director of Field Services, Northeast Regional Manager, Chairman of the Visiting Program and Assistant Regional Manager.

On Saturday, the cluster meeting had a total of forty participants representing the twelve chapters from New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware and Texas. Guest Speakers included Dr. Grant Parr, Physician in Chief of the Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute; Dr. John Brown, Chief of Cardiovascular Surgery and Dr. William Tansey, Board Certified Cardiologist. Dr. Barry Cohen, Director of the Gagnon Institute Cath Lab donated a copy of his book "Coronary Heart Disease - A Guide to Diagnosis and Treatment" to each attendee.

In the afternoon, six roundtable discussions were held on topics vital to Mended Hearts chapter leadership which included; MHI Partnership Programs, Building Membership, Visiting Programs, Fundraising, Newsletters / Website and Visiting PTSD Patients. We were honored by the contribution of the outstanding guest speakers, and we would like to thank the Northeast Mended Hearts membership and every member of the Chapter 56 team who participated.



Above: Mended Heart Members representing twelve different chapters, discuss chapter best practices during the breakout session



Above: Victor Fabry and George Pometti present Jack Yuppa a certificate of appreciation for Au Bon Pain's donation of coffee for the cluster meeting as well as the monthly chapter meetings.

Left: Pre-cluster meeting room arrangement. A special thank you to Chapter #56 members Daisy Wary, Victor Fabry, Donna Farley, Harvey and Marcy Brooks, for the beautiful décor of the meeting room.

Mended Hearts Chapter #56 Cluster Meeting



Above: Dr. Brown is presented with a certificate for his presentation during the regional cluster meeting.



Above: Mended Heart Member representing 12 different chapters, listen to one of the many informative presentations during Chapter #56's first ever cluster meeting



Above: Dr. Tansey is presented with a certificate for his participation as one of the guest speakers at the cluster meeting.



Above: Victor Fabry presents Dr. Parr a certificate of appreciation after Dr. Parr presented on the history of Gagnon Cardiovascular Institute to all of the Mended Heart Members who participated in the cluster meeting



Left: Chapter President Harvey Brooks, Victor Fabry and George Pometti present Dominic Rosatta, owner of Rosatta's Pizza and Catering in Hampton, NJ, with a certificate of appreciation for donating the a full spread of hot and cold foods for the cluster meeting.

Visiting Chairman's Report

by Victor Fabry



Don't Ignore a Racing Heartbeat

"Her heart fluttered with excitement ... He felt his heart skip a beat".

These well worn phrases describe sensations that nearly everyone has felt. And for most people, an occasional skip or flutter of the heart is nothing to worry about. But for those with a sustained irregular heartbeat called Atrial Fibrillation (AF), these sensations may indicate serious heart risks.

What is Atrial Fibrillation? ¹

A normal heartbeat begins with a electrical signal. The signal tells two upper chambers, the atria, to contract first. This is followed by contraction of the ventricles, the two lower chambers. In people with AF, the electrical signal is fired irregularly. The atria quiver ineffectually, and the heartbeat loses its rhythm. The can cause blood to pool in the hearty and form clots. Sometimes, these blood clots can lead to stroke.

Risk Factors and Symptoms

AF is the most common of heartbeat abnormalities, affecting more the 2 million Americans. Also, AF is more common in older adults. Other risk factors include:

- Heart Disease
- High Blood Pressure
- Recent heart attack or heart surgery
- Caffeine, tobacco or alcohol use
- Diet pills, cough or cold medicines

In many cases, AF has no symptoms and is discovered when a patient is being treated for another condition. When symptoms do occur, they may include chest pain, sensations of a racing or fluttering pulse, dizziness, fatigue, or shortness of breath.

Treatment options

If you are diagnosed with AF, your doctor may prescribe medication, such as digitalis, beta-blockers (Lopressor, Toprol, or Metoprolol) or calcium channel blockers. You may also need a blood-thinning drug, such as aspirin or warfarin, to help prevent blood clots and reduce your risk for stroke.

One type of surgical treatment is the implantable defibrillator. Placed inside the chest, this small device detects heartbeat irregularities and sends a shock to restore the heart's rhythm.

Other options include implanting a pacemaker or an ablation procedure preformed by Cardiac Electrophysiologist. Other measures that can help manage AF include the elimination of smoking and removal of caffeine and alcohol from the diet.

¹ Abstracted from an article by Roy Sauberman,, MD, in Healthy Connections

This newsletter is not intended to give personal medical advice, please consult your physician regarding any health concerns you may have.