



American
Heart
Association

American
Stroke
Association®

life is why®

CREATING A CULTURE OF HEALTH





YOUR DOLLAR

The American Heart Association funds more cardiovascular and stroke research than any U.S. organization except the federal government.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At the American Heart Association, we celebrate our volunteers and sponsors and their tireless work in support of our mission to save lives. Their dedication fosters continued advancements in medicine and health, in our community, and around the world.

I hope that you will join us on this journey. Together, we can continue to develop innovative solutions to complex problems. Since 1949, we have advanced and funded scientific research and 13 Nobel Prize winners. Last year we awarded \$27 million to institutions in DC, Maryland and Virginia to support groundbreaking cardiovascular research. It is through this research that breakthroughs like the first mechanical heart valve are born.

With you, we can continue to save lives through cutting edge programs like the AHA Institute for Precision Cardiovascular Medicine, centered around more precisely predicting, preventing and treating cardiovascular disease and stroke. Precision medicine considers an individual's genetics, environment and lifestyle, and is the next frontier in science. The Institute includes a data marketplace for researchers that pulls together previously siloed data from vast sources like clinical trials, wearable devices, and other technology. Another exciting part of the Institute is My Research Legacy, where individuals donate their lifestyle and genetic information as partners in discovery.

Our impact is extraordinary, and we will not stop until a healthier, longer life is possible for everyone.

All the best,

SOULA ANTONIOU
Executive Director
American Heart Association,
Greater Washington Region



OUR MISSION...

Building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

OUR GOAL...

By 2020, to improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent while reducing deaths from cardiovascular disease and stroke by 20 percent.

OUR WORK...

IMPROVING PATIENT CARE

We're improving the quality of health care by creating best practices for treating heart disease and stroke. Our Get With The Guidelines hospital-based quality improvement program helps heart and stroke patients get the best treatment consistently.

ADVOCATING FOR BETTER HEALTH

Our nationwide volunteer network, You're The Cure, advocates for key issues at the national, state and local levels such as requiring physical education in schools, clean air legislation and making AEDs mandatory in public buildings.

WORKING TOWARD EQUITABLE HEALTH OUTCOMES

We envision a world where all Americans live in an environment that supports healthy behaviors, timely and quality care, and overall well-being. By connecting like-minded, multicultural organizational leaders, we seek to share best practices, develop strategies and ultimately help drive a sustainable culture of health that begins within our local community and reaches far beyond.

PROTECTING THE FUTURE

As a result of a 1 in 3 obesity rate in the US among children, more kids than ever before are developing high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and type 2 diabetes. We are helping kids establish lifelong healthy habits and working to make sure that today's children can grow up to be tomorrow's healthy adults.

RAISING AWARENESS AND EDUCATING AMERICANS

We save lives every day by offering information and education through campaigns like Go Red For Women and Together To End Stroke. We pioneered CPR and millions of Americans use our education materials and online tools to live longer, healthier lives.

\$4 BILLION SINCE 1949

Since 1949, the American Heart Association has spent more than \$4 billion on research to increase our knowledge about cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Last year the AHA awarded more than \$184 million to research studies.

In all, we spend nearly 80 cents of every dollar on research, education and community outreach.

“As a board we work on priorities goaled to have positive outcomes on lives in the Greater Washington Region. With blood pressure management as a focus, we have worked with local health centers through our Target: BP program that reach over 200,000 people and will continue to increase that number. As advocates, we have helped to impact 670,000 people with the passage of vital tobacco legislation ensuring our sports stadiums are smoke-free and raising the smoking age to 21 in the District.”



DR. RICHARD BENSON
AHA Greater Washington Region Board President and Associate Medical director of the Comprehensive Stroke Center at MedStar Washington Hospital Center

“The American Heart Association is building a culture of health and well-being throughout the country with vital programs that target where we, live, work and convene. Last year over 175,000 people were trained in CPR in Maryland, DC and Virginia. In Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties in Maryland and in DC, over 2.6 million residents now have access to healthy choices in vending machines. I am proud of these solutions that we can feel in our community.”



ROB FRANKLIN
AHA Greater Washington Region Board Chair and President and Co-Founder of GoodSeeker.com

THE CELEBRATION OF HEART MONTH CONTINUES: NEWBORNS SPORT RED HATS FOR A CAUSE

The American Heart Association is delighted to launch the inaugural year of the Greater Washington Region’s Little Hats, Big Hearts. The program that dons newborns with knitted red caps raises awareness of heart disease, the number one killer of Americans, and congenital heart defects, the most common type of birth defect in the country. All babies born at participating hospitals during the month of February will receive a hat.

Over the last few months, the American Heart Association asked for volunteers to knit or crochet red baby hats to distribute to participating hospitals. That call was met with hats pouring in from across the country by knitters who wanted to help. This year, 8 area hospitals will participate to distribute over 1600 hats to babies throughout February and again in June in support of infant CPR.

- Children’s National Health System, Washington, DC
- MedStar Washington Hospital Center, Washington, DC
- Novant Health UVA Health System Haymarket Medical Center, Haymarket, VA
- Novant Health UVA Health System Prince William Medical Center, Manassas, VA
- Sentara Northern Virginia, Woodbridge, VA
- Stone Springs Hospital Center, Dulles, VA
- UM Capital Region Health/UM Prince Georges Hospital Center, Hyattsville, MD
- Virginia Hospital Center, Arlington, VA

“Little Hats, Big Hearts brings attention to congenital heart defects – a condition that affects about 40,000 babies born in the U.S. each year,” says Soula Antoniou, Executive Director for the American Heart Association, Greater Washington Region. “We’re proud of this initiative as it brings together the community to rally around those families affected by CHD. We would like to thank our donors whose generous support has allowed us to bring this to the Greater Washington Region and all the incredible volunteers that share their time and talent to make this program possible. Finally, a huge thanks to Zips Cleaners in Tenleytown for donating their services to clean all of the hats before distribution.”

To participate in future Little Hats, Big Hearts campaigns, email claudio.john@heart.org or visit: www.Heart.org/littlehatsbighearts.





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Tuesday, February 6, 2018 | Marriott Marquis Washington

The Women's Board of the American Heart Association
Greater Washington Region Presents

A Benefit Luncheon & Fashion Show

bloomingdale's



Angie Marriott & Melanie Colton, 2018 Luncheon Co-Chairs



We support the Women's Board of the American Heart Association because it is an amazing group of dedicated women of all ages working on the front lines to end cardiovascular diseases. An Affair of the Heart Fashion Show and Luncheon - now in its 70th year and at a new venue - brings together over 1,000 men and women for a beautiful and fun fashion event that raises money to support fundamental, cutting-edge cardiovascular research.

We love knowing that every dollar we raise funds much-needed research, and that every grant funded by the Women's Board through the American Heart Association helps bring us one step closer to a world free of heart disease.

For more information, visit www.affairoftheheartdc.com

The 20th Annual

Heart Ball



2.24.2018



CARPE DIEM



American Heart Association

life is why®

The Heart Ball, a celebration of life, supports the AHA's mission: building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. The evening features a live band, dinner, dancing, and exciting live and silent auctions. The 2018 Heart Ball will be held at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. For more information, please call 703.248.1717 or visit dheartball.com.



A Celebration of Life: Meet Survivor Prince Pratt

Featured Auction Package: National Geographic Expedition

Prince Pratt, a 17 year old from Olney, Maryland, was diagnosed with rheumatic heart disease in the 6th grade. He went from an active young kid to a sedentary young man battling heart disease without a warning. On December 15, 2016, doctors performed urgent open heart surgery to replace a leaky mitral valve that



was inhibiting blood flow. One year later, after a hard-fought recovery, Prince has returned to his active lifestyle, looks forward to college, and wants to pass on his experience to others with heart disease. AHA research developed the valve technology that saved Prince's life. The DC Heart Ball is a celebration of the research, education, and advocacy of the AHA as well as survivors like Prince.

Visit the Galápagos Islands! Traveling in a Category 2 cabin aboard the National Geographic Endeavour II, experience up-close encounters with unique species such as flightless cormorants, marine iguanas, and domed giant tortoises. Trip highlights include: Snorkel amid shimmering fish, sea turtles, penguins, and playful sea lions; Cruise to pristine islands and walk among colonies of animals and birds unfazed by your presence; Observe rare giant tortoises at the Charles Darwin Research Station; Explore the waters of the Galápagos by kayak, glass-bottom boat, or Zodiac. First-class round-trip flights on Delta Air Lines included.



Photo credit by Michael S. Nolan

For more information, visit dheartball.com



34th Annual Golf Tournament

American Heart Association 34th Annual Golf Tournament Monday, April 30, 2018 | Woodmont Country Club



Thank You to Our 2018 Tournament Sponsors

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Senior level executive leaders from across the metropolitan DC region compete in the tournament. The event day includes breakfast, silent auction, exciting challenges, player gifts, special drawings, and a post-event awards dinner. For more information please call 703.248.1717 or visit:

www.ahagolftournament.org

Mike Rickard, Marsh & McLennan Agency, LLC & 2018 Golf Tournament Chair



I've had the pleasure of serving on the AHA Golf Tournament Committee since 2011 and have the honor of chairing the 2018 tournament. Come join the top companies in the greater DC area as we engage in a fun day of exercise and fresh air at the beautiful Woodmont Country Club, one of the top private clubs in the DC area. We strive to make the event better and better each year and will continue to do so in 2018. The tournament will be held on April 30, 2018 which is a perfect time to kick off the golf season. Come out and help us make a difference!

We are reminded everyday about the impact of cardiovascular disease on our lives. With millions of Americans living with heart disease, stroke or a cardiovascular condition, virtually every family has been directly affected. The AHA's mission isn't to just teach us how to manage these health issues, but to actually provide education and lifestyle programs aimed at preventing the disease before it occurs. The AHA funds important initiatives that teach us all how to live healthier, happier and longer lives.

MAY 9-12, 2018

Heart's Delight Wine Tasting & Auction

BENEFITING THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION



THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 HEART'S DELIGHT WINE TASTING & AUCTION SPONSORS*

Heart's Delight is recognized as a premier destination event where master winemakers, culinary greats and our distinguished guests gather to play and bid in the Nation's Capital. With our 18 year history of incredible generosity from around the world, Heart's Delight has raised more than 16.5 million dollars for the American Heart Association.

- MAY 9** Congress Has Heart Reception & Collectors Dinner
- MAY 10** Embassy & Winemaker Dinner Series
- MAY 11** Vintners Dinner & Auction
- MAY 12** Bordeaux Master Class & Grand Tasting

2018 Heart's Delight Chairman
Mitch Bainwol, Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers

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Jimi Brooks with his son Pascal Brooks

Brooks Wines in the Willamette Valley is the living legacy of Jimi Brooks, a visionary Oregon winemaker devoted to holistic farming. Tragically, Jimi's life was cut short from an aortic dissection on the eve of harvest in 2004.

His unexpected passing left the winery to his eight-year old son, Pascal. The grapes Jimi had purchased could have been sold, and Brooks would have shut down. However, in a show of great camaraderie, 12 of Jimi's closest winemaker friends joined forces and produced Brooks' 2004 vintage together.

Jimi's strong commitment to biodynamic farming, his gentle approach to winemaking and his excitement for the Willamette Valley live on through our site-driven Pinot noir and Riesling--and through our close-knit team. Since 2004, Chris Williams, Jimi's longtime winemaking accomplice, and his

sister, Janie Brooks-Heuck, have stayed true to Jimi's founding principles and share his story everyday to an ever-expanding audience. Pascal, now 21, remains the sole owner of Brooks.

We celebrate our 20th anniversary in the Willamette Valley this year, with events honoring the wineries who rescued Brooks on the heels of heartbreak. With guest winemaker take-overs at our friendly tasting room, to an interview series in collaboration with Linfield College's Oregon Wine History Archives, Brooks looks to preserve the cornerstones of Willamette Valley wine:

collaboration, camaraderie, and compassion.

We are proud supporters of Heart's Delight. Our participation in this worthy cause over many years has allowed us to give back--and to honor Jimi's memory. We are looking forward to joining everyone in DC this May.



Pascal Brooks, Janie Brooks Heuck & Chris Williams of Brooks Wine



**American
Heart
Association®**

LAWYERS HAVE HEART

28th Annual Lawyers Have Heart 10K & 5K

Saturday, June 9, 2018 | Georgetown's Washington Harbour

www.LawyersHaveHeartDC.org



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Emily Wang Murphy, Thompson Coburn LLP & Eric Reicin, MorganFranklin Consulting 2018 Lawyers Have Heart Co-Chairs



The American Heart Association is dedicated to greatly reducing deaths from heart disease and stroke, and it's come a long way. I am honored to co-chair Lawyers Have Heart this year and proud that the D.C. legal community has raised more than \$12 million for this worthy cause. The American Heart Association is working hard to build healthier, longer lives for all Americans and their families. This cause is vital, and I look forward to seeing more people than ever at the starting line this June 9.



I am truly honored to impact the American Heart Association and serve as a 2018 Lawyers Have Heart Co-Chair. Often called the premiere athletic philanthropic event, specifically led by the greater D.C. legal community, Lawyers Have Heart enables employees and friends to give back to the community while improving their personal health and building positive relationships. Lawyers Have Heart helps the American Heart Association further its important education, advocacy, and research mission. I would encourage everyone to join our efforts in 2018.



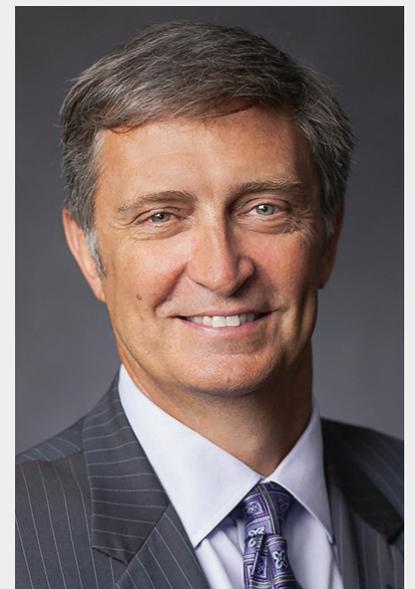
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GREATER WASHINGTON REGION HEART WALK**
NOVEMBER 3, 2018 ON THE NATIONAL MALL
www.GreaterWashingtonHeartWalk.org



Heart Walk®



**AMERICAN HEART
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ANNOUNCES
2018 GREATER
WASHINGTON
REGION HEART
WALK CHAIR**



The American Heart Association is pleased to announce that Mark Gray, President and Chief Executive Officer at ASRC Federal, has been named Chair of the 2018 Greater Washington Region Heart Walk.

Gray leads a family of companies under ASRC Federal with employees dispersed across 40 states. Since joining the company in 2014, Gray has directed a corporate strategy that has led to significant organic growth as well as the successful integration of acquisitions - expanding the company's capabilities and customer base.

Gray has previously served on the Executive Leadership Committee for the Greater Washington Region Heart Walk. "It is an honor and a privilege to chair the 2018 Greater Washington Region Heart Walk," said Gray. "AHA and the broad government contracting community work tirelessly together to raise funds for, and awareness of, cardiovascular-related illnesses. In November of each year, the Heart Walk - a family event on the National Mall - is the culmination of many months of heightening awareness and fundraising for cardiovascular research. The walk inspires us all to participate, contribute and make a real difference in many, many current and future lives."

The Greater Washington Heart Walk is the American Heart Association's mission in action. This annual celebration of life promotes physical activity and heart-healthy living for the whole family. The Walk is a non-competitive, three-mile walk or one-mile walk and is open to both corporate and community teams as well as individuals. Event festivities include Zumba by Bling it on Fitness, a Kids Zone, a Doggy Parade, activity stations, and fun for the entire family.

For more information: GreaterWashingtonHeartWalk.org or 703-248-1715.

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IN 2018!**

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THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION SALUTES CENTURLINK AS THE CHAIR COMPANY OF THE 2017 GREATER WASHINGTON REGION HEART WALK



With a combined total from team fundraising and event sponsorship, CenturyLink generously contributed more than \$280k in support of the AHA mission last year. Thank you to 2017 Heart Walk Chair and CenturyLink Senior Vice President for IT Solutions and New Market Development, Erich Sanchack, for leading the charge to last year's overall event fundraising record of \$2.46 million dollars.

"The American Heart Association's mission hits close to home for me. I have been involved with the Heart Walk for about ten years because I believe in the mission and wanted to be a part of my company's involvement. In 2015, my family learned of my daughter, Daniella's, undetected congenital heart defect. These defects are usually found postmortem, but thankfully, her symptoms led us to a cardiologist and now, her future is bright. The AHA is part of my family for life – and with heart disease and stroke affecting everybody in some way – we need the entire community to join us in this fight."

MILITARY MATTERS:

PROTECTING THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO SERVE

The American Heart Association has funded numerous research projects proposed by doctors and researchers within the military medical system that have yielded findings around chronic illness and combat injuries, PTSD and more. From an education and risk reduction standpoint, the AHA has been a longtime partner to servicemembers through the collaboration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The VA is dedicated to fighting heart disease in women veterans, the fastest growing segment of the veteran population. For over five years now, the VA has teamed up with the American Heart Association's Go Red For Women movement to help inform women veterans of their risk for cardiovascular disease—the No. 1 killer of women and women veterans. Over the years, the VA has hosted National Wear Red Day events and provided resources across the country at in-network hospitals and providers. This has been a vital opportunity to utilize this network to impact and improve the health of a significant number of women veterans. This past August, the AHA was proud to take part in the VA Women's Summit in Houston to engage in dialogue about issues impacting women veterans, share women-focused research, and connect with community partners in a lively, interactive environment.

The VA annually hosts a Go Red Field Challenge to increase awareness and address cardiovascular disease and risk factors in women veterans at facilities around the country. A grant is awarded to the winner which is earmarked for sustainment of VA Go Red activities including: educational workshops or materials for patients and providers, heart-healthy fitness and physical activity groups or equipment, and heart-healthy nutrition or cooking demos for patients.

Locally, the Greater Washington Region Heart Walk salutes the VA for their participants that join us on the National Mall every year. As we look at transforming the health of all Americans, those who serve are a vital piece of making the healthy choice the easy choice.



EXECUTIVES WITH HEART

THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION HOSTS SUMMIT ON SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH; ADDRESSES BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS TO HEALTHY LIVING AND WELLBEING

The AHA hosted its inaugural EmPOWERED To Serve™ Summit in Washington, DC on October 17 and 18. As part of the EmPOWERED To Serve movement, which was developed to build a sustainable culture of health in diverse communities across America, leading experts and thought-leaders from around the country, convened to discuss strategies to achieve improved health in under-resourced communities. Workgroups focused on the root causes that impact social determinants of health and how to engage unconventional partners to drive creative solutions for collaborative impact. Also, time was spent examining how zip code affects the risk of stroke, high blood pressure and other types of heart disease.

As part of the summit, 10 finalists in the EmPOWERED To Serve Urban Business Storytelling Competition presented innovative, urban business solutions to remove barriers to health. Finalists competed for grant funding and the opportunity to work with local AHA teams to activate in their communities. First place and \$30,000 went to Nyasha Nyamapfene of Gospel Run based in Chicago. Nyasha partners with the faith community to create a culture of health via organized walks and runs. She plans to organize a Gospel Run in Washington, DC for the Fall of 2018. Second place and \$20,000 went to Maria Rose Belding of MEANS Database from Philadelphia. She uses technology to move excess food to communities in need. Third place and \$10,000 went to Cecil Wilson of GoffersGotIt of Chicago. GoffersGotIt is an on-demand delivery service that connects people to services and access to products and income opportunities.

Learn more about the summit and competition at empoweredtoserve.org.

1. Linda Gooden, Gooden LLC **\$51,350**
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19. Barbara Humpton, Siemens Gov. Technologies **\$5,785**
20. David Clark, SC3 **\$5,750**
21. Mark White, DXC Technology **\$5,750**
22. Jason Seibel, CenturyLink **\$5,710**
23. Christopher Crowder, Unanet **\$5,630**
24. Lydia Martinez, Long & Foster **\$5,550**
25. Bill Clark, Blake Real Estate **\$5,510**
26. Liz Anthony, ViON **\$5,404**
27. Vicki Schmanske, Leidos **\$5,277**
28. Greg Flatt, Booz Allen Hamilton **\$5,235**
29. Badal Patel, CenturyLink **\$5,220**
30. Steve Solomon, Blake Real Estate **\$5,184**
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37. Connie Peduzzi **\$5,000**
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EMPOWERED TO SERVE AMBASSADOR: MARK MOORE

When life gives you a second chance, you embrace it to live life to the fullest. For McLean resident, retired business owner, and EmPowered to Serve ambassador for the American Heart Association, Mark Moore, that was exactly the case when he survived two strokes at the age of 46. In 2007, Mark Moore was a successful businessman who co-owned Segovia Inc., a business (Mark and his friend) founded in 2002, that sold global IP services to the Department of Defense.

Married to his longtime love Brenda and a father of two, Mark felt good about life. He ate healthy, exercised regularly, didn't smoke or drink, and had good blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Learning that he developed a blood clotting deficiency, which led him to have two strokes that same year, completely shocked Mark and his family.

It was the day before Mother's Day in 2007 and Mark was coaching his son's baseball team when he noticed something was wrong. While driving home with his son, Mark made an excuse to stop and get a

Mother's Day card; the pain he felt was worsening. That's when he called his wife, who advised him to call an ambulance immediately.

At the hospital, it was confirmed that Mark had a stroke. Two days later, Mark had a second stroke. To alleviate the pressure on his brain, doctors had to remove a small piece of Mark's skull and put him into an induced coma for six weeks to reduce the swelling and rest his brain. Brenda was by his side every night and when Mark came out of his coma, she told him what had happened. "She said, 'You've had two strokes and you've got a long recovery ahead,'" Mark told the American Heart Association's Stroke Connection. "It was an absolute shock, and my initial reaction was 'I don't want to work that hard.'"

But Mark's faith pushed him through. "I said to myself, 'God must think I can handle this, and I'll handle it.' That was the moment I began to surrender and things changed for me," Mark recalled. With faith as his center and a new outlook on life, two months of intensive physical therapy four days a

week, and the support of his wife who went to every appointment with him, progress was slowly showing for Mark. Continuous support from his family and friends gave him the boost he needed. Determined and driven, Mark set a goal to run a 5k exactly one year after his stroke. By the end of the summer Mark returned to Segovia Inc. as chief operating officer and a year after his stroke completed a 5K in 36 minutes. At 49, Mark retired after he and his business partner sold their company. Since then Mark and his wife have dedicated their life to serving others with a focus in health care, education, culture, and Christian evangelism; They've started the Mark and Brenda Moore Family Foundation. "I realize I didn't recover on my own," Mark told Stroke Connection. "I believe we have an obligation to pay it forward."

The Moore's philanthropic projects are numerous; and Mark has recently penned a memoir entitled, "A Stroke of Faith." Mark and Brenda Moore are also part of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's EmPowered To Serve program, which brings together faith-based



organizations to provide health education and resources to multicultural communities through discussion and group activities.

The best advice Mark can offer from his experience is to develop a support system that is dependable and helps you recover emotionally and mentally. "Don't try to go at it alone. Family and friends have been instrumental in my recovery and return to normal life," Mark said.

Photo: Mark Moore, 56, stroke survivor
Courtesy of The Washington Post.

THANKS TO ALL THE HARD WORK OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS. TOGETHER, WE ARE MAKING THE HEALTHY CHOICE THE EASY CHOICE.

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BOARD PRIORITY: BLOOD PRESSURE REDEFINED

High blood pressure should be treated earlier with lifestyle changes and in some patients with medication – at 130/80 mm Hg rather than 140/90 – according to the first comprehensive new high blood pressure guidelines in more than a decade. Rather than 1 in 3 U.S. adults having high blood pressure (32 percent) with the previous definition, the new guidelines result in nearly half of the U.S. adult population (46 percent) having

high blood pressure, or hypertension. However, there will only be a small increase in the number of U.S. adults who will require antihypertensive medication. These guidelines, the first update to offer comprehensive guidance to doctors on managing adults with high blood pressure since 2003, are designed to help people address the potentially deadly condition much earlier.

Through education in the community and the workplace as well as provider programs like Target: BP, The AHA seeks to get the region’s blood pressure in check. Target: BP supports

physicians and care teams by offering access to the latest research, tools, and resources to reach and sustain blood pressure goal rates within the patient populations they serve. Working together, medical practices and health service organizations can significantly improve the nation’s current national blood pressure control rate.

Learn how to help create a culture of health with the Board of Directors for the American Heart Association, Greater Washington Region by emailing gwraha@heart.org.

JOHN HARRITY

“I HAVE NO INTENTION OF WASTING MY HEART ATTACK...”

For years, John Harrity, had exercised seven days a week. Once, almost on a whim, he’d bought a bike and cycled with friends from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC. At 49, he still played pickup basketball with friends. In fact, he was on the court in May 2016 when he started feeling short of breath and having chest pains.

“I told the guys I needed to go outside for some fresh air and that’s when I passed out,” he said. “The next thing I remember it was three weeks later.”

As he lay unconscious, his friend Rocky Berndsen called 911 while another friend, James Bennin, started CPR. “It was a scary situation because John was the fittest guy on the court,” Berndsen said. “Fortunately, the woman at 911 talked us through giving him CPR until EMS arrived.” Harrity had what’s known as the “widowmaker” heart attack, triggered by a blockage of the left main coronary artery that runs down the front of the heart.”

Harrity, who lives in Centreville, Virginia, with his wife Eileen, daughter Jordan, 15, and son Clark, 12, survived in large part because he was in such good physical condition. “All those years of exercising had trained John’s heart to operate in an environment of low oxygen levels,” explained Ameya Kulkarni, M.D., of the Kaiser Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical group in McLean, Virginia. “So even though so much of the blood flow was cut off by the clot, his heart was able to survive longer than it would have for many other people. And once he received proper medical care, he was able to recover much faster too.”

Harrity spent eight weeks in intensive care and two weeks in rehab. Again, his physical fitness helped him recover quicker than he would have otherwise. “There was one day, a Saturday, when I needed two people to help get me to the bathroom,” he recalled. “Three days later, on the Tuesday, I was able to stand up and walk there with only some slight assistance.”



Today, Harrity is fully recovered. He’s exercising again and ran his first 5K since his heart stopped – the AHA’s Lawyers Have Heart race this past June. His law firm, Harrity & Harrity, LLP has been a longtime supporter of the race and recently chose to donate a portion of the firm’s profits to the organization as part of their new giving back initiative, Harrity 4 Charity.

Since his recovery, Harrity has also been focused on raising money to fund heart research and raising awareness. “Despite doing everything right, I still developed heart disease,” he said. “Obviously, my event had a huge impact on me, my family, and my friends. I have no intention of wasting my heart attack. So, raising funds for the American Heart Association and sharing my story are the least I can do.”

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