

INSPIRING HOPE

John Afek - "I've been blessed with a supportive family, great doctors, a generous organ donor, and a new heart"



I was born with a normal heart and spent most of my life enjoying life to the fullest; raising my children and devoting myself to my early passions, which included staying in shape and boxing. The 2004 picture below is of me and my children on vacation without any indication of a heart problem, even though my family on my father's side, including my brothers, had various issues with heart disease. My father passed away at age 48 with congestive heart failure and my brother (in the picture below) at 49 from a massive heart attack.



One year later, in 2005 at age 48, my life changed abruptly. After having chest pains, medical tests found a 95 percent blockage in my arteries. During the next 5 years, I had three heart attacks, a massive heart attack in 2007 (lost 2/3 of my heart muscle), and a congestive heart failure (CHF) diagnosis. My doctors at the OSU Wexner Medical Center, Ross Heart Hospital declared that my heart was failing and I would need a heart transplant to survive.

After waiting for approximately two months for an organ donation, the call of a lifetime for my heart transplant came on December 22, 2011—while in the hospital suffering with a failing heart. My children and I were not sure if I would be alive for the holidays. I was sick for so long with congestive heart failure that I consider myself a miracle having survived the heart attacks, CHF and the subsequent heart transplant to be here today. At death's edge, the gift from an organ donor gave my children their Dad back and a future full of possibilities. I'm blessed every day for this gift of life! After a long recovery, I returned to work as A CPA and a Financial Advisor and my life has returned to normal, taking care of my new heart and staying fit through exercise and boxing at the Sullivan Boxing Gym in Powell Ohio (picture below).



Being able to do the things I love, includes inspiring and supporting other heart patients, and being there for my children, family and friends. It's difficult to express my gratitude to the donor of my heart and for my faith and God pulling me through the years of heart failure and transplant, and the prayers and support from family and friends.

I say to people who ask me how I am doing: **"I am so grateful to be here"!!**

If you've had a similar experience, struggling with congestive heart failure, or would like to talk to John about living with heart disease and his new heart, his contact information is below!

Mended Hearts of Central Ohio

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It is great to be alive – and to help others