

# INSPIRING HOPE

*Carl Smerdel - "I've been given back my vitality & it's great to be alive!!!"*

Physical fitness became my top priority, when at age 40 I received my first significant **"Wake-up Call"**.

I was diagnosed with "Type 2" Diabetes. As late as age 51, I was working out 30 to 60 minutes a day, 5 to 7 days a week, alternating between cardio and weight training. Suddenly at age 53, with my first of what would eventually be a total of five heart catheterizations, I was found to have nearly a 2" **total blockage** in my **"Widow Maker"** which I had naturally Bi-passed and narrowly avoided a Massive Heart Attack! After the procedure, I began drug therapy and was told: ( 1) not to lift more than 25 lbs.,( 2) It was OK to resume my unhealthy eating habits and (3) continue to work-out with no more than 25 lbs. This natural Bi-pass had occurred, according to my Cardiologist at the time, because I was physically fit. However I continued to eat the "Comfort Foods" I had grown up with, mistakenly believing that working out would somehow off set poor nutrition. I remained the "Fit, Health Looking Obese Man" I'd been for decades...



Then suddenly at age 57, I was diagnosed to be living on less than a third of normal coronary blood flow, as the good collaterals that had literally saved my life were clogged up and the 3<sup>rd</sup> main artery on the face of my heart (the 2<sup>nd</sup> had been stented years earlier) was over 90% blocked. My new Cardiologist informed me that I was, "In the worst coronary condition he had seen in a long time"! This led to an urgent new procedure, part of a nationwide 11 hospital study at The Ross, **"Hybrid Cardio Revascularization"**- Open Heart Bi-pass Surgery (without stopping my heart), **and** a stent all in the same week!

This time I was told not to pick up more than A Gallon of Milk (10 lbs.) and to dramatically improve my diet, **"Eating to Live NOT Living to Eat"**! And, I began walking around the 4th floor at The Ross, the day after my CABG, completing 3 laps, doubling the prior day's distance each day, culminating in walking 3 miles (36 laps) the morning I was released, six days later! The great team of nurses and exercise physiologists at The Martha Morehouse Cardiac Rehabilitation Center challenged me to take my vitality back! Starting 6 weeks after my release from the Ross, I completed a baseline VO2 Stress Test and started working out with an hour of: treadmill, stationary bike and the "arms machine" 3 days a week for the 1<sup>st</sup> month. This led to a 90 minute work-out, adding weight training, 3 days a week for 8 more weeks. And, **since my Graduation from Cardiac Rehab.....**

I am proud to report that I have achieved the following: (1) A **20%** Improvement in my VO2 results, (2) trimming down to **185 lbs.** (under 200 lbs. for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in 30 years), losing **35 lbs.** since my hospital discharge, (3) lifting more weight than I ever have in my life **and** working out on the EFX, Bike, etc. Longer than I ever have before, ( 4) getting completely Off of Insulin,( 5) getting off the CPAP, after 14+ Years, and (6) getting a weaker eyeglasses prescription **And I Feel Great!!!**

*If you've had a similar experience, or would just like to talk to Carl about living with heart disease, his contact information is listed below!*

**Mended Hearts of Central Ohio**

www.MendedHeartsCentralOhio.org - [cmsmerdel@gmail.com](mailto:cmsmerdel@gmail.com) – 614-323-6597

*It is great to be alive – and to help others*