

INSPIRING HOPE

Drew McCartt - "I'm among the lucky ones - I'm alive, active and in the hands of great physicians and AHA researchers."



Click . . .click . . . click . . . the sound I've heard coming from my chest day-in and day-out, for nearly 25 years now, is music to my ears – thanks to the American Heart Association and this incredible piece of high technology, the **artificial heart valve**, which allows my heart to function.

Yes, in June of 1987, I was at home recovering from my heart valve implant surgery and at the time had no idea how it would change my life directly and indirectly.

I was 26; my wife Gwen and I had been married less than a year and were trying to make ends meet. I was about to graduate from OSU Graduate School and begin my career.

What I did know in 1987 were two important things:

1. I was so glad to be alive and continue my life with Gwen, and;
2. I was thankful to the American Heart Association for funding the research that developed this amazing artificial heart valve.

Surprisingly, what I would discover over the next two decades was that I would develop venous disease in my legs, and worst of all, an aneurysm on my aorta, all unrelated to my heart valve. . . .

But as bad as all that sounds – *I'm among the lucky ones - I'm alive, active and in the hands of great physicians and AHA researchers.* I am a competitive **distance runner**, enjoy hiking and camping with the Boy Scout troop I help lead, and in addition to my wife, share my life with two great kids, one in college and one in high school. I am a partner with a Columbus based marketing firm and quite active with many non-profits beyond the AHA.

Many other people are not as fortunate, and in fact, heart disease remains the number one killer of Americans, regardless of age, taking more lives than the next seven causes of death combined.

Indeed, I have the AHA on my side as I battle this slow growing aneurysm on my ascending aorta which was diagnosed 18 years ago and will eventually require surgical intervention to repair it. As a slow growing enlargement of the vessel, with the potential of bursting not out of the question, it is always on my mind.

But great AHA funded research is developing new methods, procedures and medications to help me and many others battle conditions like aneurysms so in that way, **we are all quite fortunate.**

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

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Mended Hearts of Central Ohio
www.MendedHeartsCentralOhio.org –
It is great to be alive – and to help others