

INSPIRING HOPE

Tahira Farooqui - *".....support of family and friends have inspired me to not only stay active, but reach out to others".*

My heart story began in early 1997. I remember mentioning to my family physician that I had family history of heart disease. In 1964, my father died of heart failure at age 74. In 1997, my elder brother suffered a heart attack. Therefore, on my physician's advice, I went for a thorough checkup, including stress test, heart imaging and catheterization. Following the exam, I was happy to learn that physicians only found basal artery blockage. A sense of relief - but only temporary.



Approximately, 6-8 months later, I was watching a movie and started having some chest discomfort. It was 9:30 P.M., and I was at home alone with my 9 years-old son. My husband was out of country on a business trip. I knew something was wrong with me, but was also sure that it couldn't be heart-related. I chose not to call anyone. Instead, I made a list of the names and phone numbers of my friends and neighbors. I advised my son to notify these people in case of emergency. The following morning, December 15th, 1997, I dropped my son at his school, and came home. As soon as I parked my car, I felt cold sweats and my hands began to numb. I immediately called a friend, and also confided in a neighbor. Their advice... CALL 911. When the paramedics arrived, they immediately decided that they were taking me to the Emergency. **I had a heart attack on my driveway.** I don't remember the faces, but remember a sense of calm among them. They were truly angels, working in tandem to save my life.

When I arrived at the Ohio State University Medical Center (OSUMC) Emergency Room, the hospital staff found the list in my purse and informed everyone. Dr. Bacon performed balloon angioplasty on me, and found that one of my main arteries was 90% blocked. During my stay at OSUMC, under supervision of cardiologists and trained medical staff, and of course, support from my children and friends, my condition stabilized. Funniest part was that my husband had no clue.

In January, 1998, I joined Cardiac Rehabilitation Program at The Center for Wellness and Prevention at The Ohio State University. The support and kindness of the medical staff served as the foundation for my recovery. By learning basic cardiac exercises, establishing a workout-regiment, and modifying my diet, I was able to get back to full strength. **Socializing with other cardiac patients also made me realize that I am not the only one to suffer from heart disease.** After accepting this fact, my attitude towards health and life-style changed.

In January 2000, I went back to my full-time job at The Ohio State University. Years later, I involved myself with my husband in writing and editing books. I'm glad that in spite of having heart disease, I can do a lot more physical activity now than ever before. Although, I'm not happy to have heart problems, I consider myself very lucky to now know which precautions (active lifestyle, healthy diet consumption, regular check up with my physicians, and positive attitude) should be taken to delay or prevent future cardiovascular events.

My heart success story: I've lost 20 pounds, my high density lipoprotein has gone up from 38 to 82, my blood pressure is typically 112/68, and other numbers are satisfactory too. Overall, I feel great. **Regular exercise, correlated with interactions and support of family and friends have inspired me to not only stay active, but reach out to others.**

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

Mended Hearts of Central Ohio

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It is great to be alive – and to help others