

Features

February is Heart and Stroke month

Halton Hills' Heart and Stroke Foundation will be launching its local campaign with the annual luncheon at North Halton Golf and Country Club this Tuesday with well-known Georgetown resident, Laurent Thibeau as guest speaker.

Mr. Thibeau is an economist and President of the Canadian Manufacturer's Association. "We hope he'll attract manufacturers and local residents to hear him speak about what lies ahead," said Carol McMurray, who's co-chairing the luncheon with Wheldon (Steamer) Emmerson, residential chairman for the local foundation.

Last year, over 80 people attended the luncheon raising over \$500 for heart and stroke, said Mr. Emmerson, a former mayor of Georgetown and current columnist with the Halton Hills Herald.

With the luncheon kick-off, other local fundraising events will take place in Halton Hills to raise money for Canada's number one killer.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario is hoping to raise \$29.4 million throughout the year.

The money raised will be used mainly to fund critical research and education programs for heart disease and stroke, which claims more lives than any other disease in Canada.

One of central western Ontario's biggest fundraisers is a health and fitness centre in Georgetown, Work That Body, owned by Laurie Burns. Last year, through her annual aerobathon, she helped raise \$20,000 for the foundation which in turn awarded her for being the top fundraiser in central western Ontario.

This year, the aerobathon will be held Feb. 13 with two sessions. The first one begins at 9:15 a.m. lasting to 11:15 a.m. and the second from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Participants in the aerobathon raise the money through straight donations. There is no sponsoring per hour, explained Ms. Burns.

Local schools also help raise funds for heart and stroke by taking part in Jump Rope for Heart. M.Z. Bennett Public School in Acton kicked off its jump rope with the Burlington Bouncers, a team of talented skippers from W.E. Brecken P.S. in Burlington. Ac-

ton's Jump Rope will be on Feb. 27. Joseph-Gibbons P.S. and George Kennedy in Georgetown participated in the event last year.

Money is also raised by volunteer canvassers, of which there are about 160 in the area. Each canvasser receives a kit giving helpful hints on canvassing and vital information about heart disease and stroke, said Mr. Emmerson.

And the statistics are frightening.

Heart disease and stroke claims 80,000 lives each year, which means more than four deaths in 10 are due to heart disease and stroke.

Of these numbers, 27,000 deaths are due directly to heart attacks, 14,000 to stroke and 33,000 to other cardiovascular conditions.

One of the greatest risks associated with heart disease and stroke is smoking. High-fat dairy products and deep-fried foods are other risks. Proper diet, including regular consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals help reduce the risk.

The Heart and Stroke Founda-



MIRACLES OF MODERN HEART AND STROKE RESEARCH

PROBLEM	BEFORE RESEARCH (1952)	AFTER RESEARCH (1990)
Patients born with heart defects	Most "blue babies" died, some lived and grew up as invalids	Most forms of heart defects can be corrected surgically
Heart Attack	No drug to stop the attack but give no relief for the pain. After attack, patient advised to rest, eat, and avoid any strenuous activity for type of life	Thrombolytic drugs and emergency surgery can save the patient's life and reduce the amount of damage to the heart. Physical activity begins to be of benefit in recovery. Most heart attack victims recover in full.
Anginal (Chest pains caused by insufficient blood flow to the heart)	No glycerol as needed. No means of correcting the blood flow problem	Coronary artery bypass surgery and balloon angioplasty can restore healthy blood flow to the heart
Phenomenic heart disease	Hundreds of people died each year, hundreds more suffered permanent damage to the heart	Coronary artery bypass surgery and balloon angioplasty can restore healthy blood flow to the heart
Heart clots (result in heart attack and stroke)	Heparin discovered in 1939 but poorly understood and not widely used	Drugs are available to prevent blood clots, to "thin" blood, and to dissolve blood clots. Such drugs make it possible to prevent many heart attacks and strokes
Disorder of many of the valves of the heart	Open heart surgery with experimental and risky, no artificial valves	Replacement of diseased or damaged heart valves is a routine operation
High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)	Relationship between hypertension and heart disease and stroke not understood. Hypertension often not treated. Fearing its effects had many side effects	A variety of treatments for hypertension are available. Widespread use of anti-hypertensive drugs has contributed to decrease in the number of deaths due to stroke
Sudden cardiac death	No drug could be done	Defibrillators can be used to restart the heart. Widespread use of CPR. Automatic, implantable defibrillators available

Improving your odds against Canada's #1 killer

tion of Ontario says 32,000 lives are saved each year due to improvements in diagnosis and treatment and research has helped to reduce deaths from heart disease and stroke by 40 per cent over the past four decades.

Mr. McMurray and Ms. McMurray know how important it is to support the foundations. That's why they are volunteering, along with hundreds of other local residents, their time to raise funds to help promote new advances and lifesaving breakthroughs.

First-person account of heart problems trauma

"I always thought I was healthy and active person," recalls Hamiltonian Derek Hartwell. "The first inclination I had that anything was wrong was when I had surgery on my lower back in 1979. I kept coming in and out of hospital. When I went back into the hospital for about the second time - this was within days of coming out. I took a turn for the worse and it was then that my doctors realized that there was something drastically wrong. They gave me a lung scan and found the blood clots."

These were not ordinary blood clots. Derek and his doctors figure that the clots were the result of a broken leg sustained decades earlier in a parachuting accident. The blood clots had become calcified and were blocking his pulmonary arteries.

"They gave me a drug called

cumidine for a while but it wouldn't dissolve the clots," Derek explains. "I had this real shortness of breath, pains in the chest and very little energy. After a lot more lung scans and tests my doctors decided that there was nothing else they could do for me. They took me off the blood thinners and sent me home. That was alright, except that I was very short of breath. I still managed to function and go to work, though any exertion was an effort as far as breathing was concerned."

Over time, Derek's conditioned worsened. By 1989, he was unable to do the things he'd always enjoyed - like playing golf or working on his cottage. Life had become a struggle, a continual battle between what he wanted to do and what his body could tolerate. Moreover, the struggle

was taking an enormous toll on his heart.

"Because I couldn't get enough oxygen in the blood, the heart was like a pump, pumping against a closed circuit. The heart was enlarging on one side only. It got to the point where it would've just collapsed and that would've been the end. The heart couldn't generate the pressure for more than a couple of years."

By this time, Derek was under the care of Drs. Hirsh and Anderson at Hamilton's Henderson Hospital. Due in large part to research funding from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, Hamilton is a world-recognized centre for the study of blood clots, means of diagnosing them and the drugs used to dissolve or prevent them. Despite the many advances research has brought, the doctors found that

there was nothing they could do for Derek. His problem is one of the many that Canadian researchers are still trying to solve.

The Hamilton doctors were not without hope. They knew that research in this problem had resulted in a treatment - an experimental one - in San Diego.

"Through a vast series of tests, Drs. Hirsh and Anderson decided that it was an operable thing but that there was a certain amount of risk. And besides it wasn't even being done in Canada. Well, at that stage, I had nothing to lose and everything to gain, because they had only given me a certain amount of time with the strain on my heart. So I jumped at the opportunity to go. The University of California in San Diego specializes in this one particular operation. They've developed a technique that nobody else has been able to copy."

"The process that these doctors have developed is very much like open heart surgery where your body is cooled down to a certain extent and your blood goes on bypass," explains Derek. "They open you up and they cut the pulmonary artery vertically along the line into the lungs and from there they have a process whereby they go and gradually work out these blood clots from the lining of your arteries. They can get down to what they call the third level of branches. That's as low as they can go because

everything gets too small. That's one level more than what they've ever done in Canada.

Derek went to San Diego in March, was operated on at the beginning of April and was out of hospital and home by the end of April.

"The first two months you're pretty weak," he reports. "You're on oxygen for the first two or three weeks until you can manage on your own. From that point on, however, it's nothing but rapid recovery."

Just recently, Derek and his son reshingled the roof of his cottage. "There's no way I could've even thought of tackling that job prior to the operation," Derek states. More than just Derek's life was saved - saved was the quality of his life.

Derek credits his recovery to two things: the doctors involved and to research.

"I've supported research most of my life," he points out. "A lot of money has to be spent in research to do anything. In some cases, the returns are not measured financially but they can be measured in other forms of spin-off benefits. For that reason alone, I support research. Medical research is very expensive - and they don't always come up with exactly what they want - but in the majority of cases they get something that's of benefit to mankind. That, I think, is the name of the game."



The Burlington Bouncers from W.E. Brecken Public School in Burlington visited M.Z. Bennett School in Acton to present their skipping routine in support of Jump Rope for Heart, a fundraising activity public school kids take part in for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. M.Z. Bennett students will

show off their own skipping skills on Feb. 27 which is their jump for Heart competition. The Burlington Bouncers travel to various schools and enter skipping competitions. Some of the skippers are Canadian Skipping Champions. (Herald photo)

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