Meet a Patient

LOREN - THE ART OF SECOND CHANCES

Before his HeartMate 3™ LVAD implant in February of 2018, Loren says he “went off the grid for a while.” He stopped playing guitar and giving lessons. Nearly everything in his life stopped because his heart failure decline was so rapid – just 5 months from his first symptoms to the implant of his HeartMate 3 LVAD.

“Today, it’s so different. I have such a good life,” says the 55-year-old. “It’s a life beyond my wildest dreams.”

Since receiving his HeartMate 3 LVAD, Loren is busier than ever. Fans and friends begged him to return to music. Loren agreed it was time. He also felt that his new lease on life warranted a new name for his band, and “Operation Loren and the Transplants” was born. “The response has been incredible,” he says.

Locally, in New York, “Operation Loren and the Transplants” has a big following and played to an audience of 300 for New Year’s Eve. Loren and his girlfriend, Sandy, sing most of the vocals.

“We mostly play covers, from Johnny Cash’s ‘Folsom Prison Blues’ to Wild Cherry’s ‘Play That Funky Music White Boy,’ it’s an eclectic set and audiences love it,” says Loren.

Loren loves performing and believes the music has gotten better. “One of the many benefits of having my HeartMate 3 LVAD, I’ve found, is that my voice is so much stronger because I can breathe so much better!”

In addition to his roles as a musician and music teacher, Loren has a booming photography business. He specializes in landscapes and portraits, but also shoots some weddings and corporate photography. And if all of that wasn’t enough, Loren is pursuing a master’s degree in liberal studies. He hopes someday to be a professor of music and photography.

In his spare time, he enjoys camping, hiking and bicycling. Of a recent hike, he remarked, “I couldn’t even walk these hills last year.”

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Loren feels so great with his LVAD, that he’s “no longer in a rush for a transplant.” He’s been inspired by so many “LVAD’ers” out there, living many years on their devices and enjoying their lives. “I feel great right now,” he says. He and Sandy are taking it one day at a time and enjoying every minute along the way.
You know the value of your heart failure care team, and they want to make sure you know the value of self-care. Simply put, one of the best things a person with heart failure can do is to closely manage their own care.

The American Association of Heart Failure Nurses offers the following reminders to take good CARE:

- **C**onnect with your health care providers and keep your appointments. Follow through with labs and procedures as instructed. Follow up about your care plan.
- **A**sk your care team anything and everything related to medications, caring for your equipment and caring for yourself. It is important that you have a full understanding of your role in self-care.
- **R**eport any symptoms right away. Be thorough and honest about what you believe may have caused them. Early and honest symptom reporting helps your health care provider care for you.
- **E**ngage and be active in your own care. Understand your equipment. Look for more information. Follow the advice of your care team.

*Adapted from https://www.aahfn.org/page/hfawarenessweek2019

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**Getting Involved**

**THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE***

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**A Story Shared**

**HOW KEITH DECIDED ON LVAD THERAPY**

When Keith’s doctor told him that he needed an LVAD, he said: “I don’t want that. I’ll be fine with the medicine.”

Six months and several visits to the hospital later, the doctor suggested Keith go to a seminar at his local hospital to learn more about LVADs. It turned out to be a very eye-opening experience.

“I spoke to a couple of LVAD recipients there. One, who had the HeartMate II™ LVAD for several years, talked about how he’s been hunting and working in his garden. I saw and learned enough at that event to convince me.”

Within a month, Keith was implanted with the HeartMate 3™ LVAD. “I noticed a difference in how I felt right away,” said Keith. “I was breathing better by the time I left the ICU.”

His new-found energy has fueled Keith in many ways. He’s returned to work full-time as a construction superintendent and he’s also participating in one of his favorite activities again – shooting pool. In fact, he’s planning to participate in a pool tournament in Las Vegas, his first since receiving his HeartMate 3 LVAD two years ago.

Keith’s journey has come full-circle. He recently spoke at an event similar to the one that helped him to understand, and be open to, LVAD therapy. “Whenever I’m asked, I talk to patients who need a little extra encouragement. I know exactly how they feel.”

To share your story, go to: http://bit.ly/LVADStory and click on the Share Your Story button. Or email us at HeartMateAmbassador@Abbott.com

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Each testimonial relates an account of an individual’s response to the treatment. The patient’s account is genuine, typical and documented. However, it does not provide any indication, guide, warranty or guarantee as to the response other persons may have to the treatment. Responses to the treatment discussed can and do vary and are specific to the individual patient. See Important Safety Information referenced within.
Siblings Kristi M. and Ralph M. have always had a special relationship. They talk several times a week – even if it’s just a silly voicemail with a song Ralph has made up about his little sister. One year ago, the siblings’ bond became even stronger.

Ralph, a former truck driver, was on a trip when he called his sister and told her he was feeling ill. She demanded that he park the truck and fly home. Ralph agreed and flew home to Texas, where he went straight to the emergency room.

In the hospital, Ralph was told he wouldn’t live until summer without an LVAD or a transplant. “For me, it was a no-brainer,” said Ralph. “Kristi has been doing this for nine years. If she can do it, so can I.” With little chance for a transplant, the 58-year-old opted for the HeartMate 3™ LVAD as Destination Therapy (long-term support). Ralph was released from the hospital on Kristi’s ninth ReBirthday.

“I have a lot of faith in this technology after seeing how well my sister has done for so long,” Ralph said. Kristi was implanted with the HeartMate II™ LVAD in 2009 at the age of 45 and has been living well ever since.

This April, Kristi marked 10 years on support, and Ralph, his first. “We had so much fun celebrating our ReBirthdays together at the Dallas Renaissance Festival,” said Kristi.

At 79 years young, Denny says he’s truly excited about celebrating 10 years on HeartMate II™ LVAD support. His wife Sarah, who is also thrilled, plans to send his implanting surgeon 10 red roses in gratitude.

“Denny was so fragile and ill, and the HeartMate II LVAD was truly his only hope,” Sarah recalls of the day they learned about the device. “We will forever be grateful for the second chance it has given us.”

Denny and Sarah have been a part of the HeartMate LVAD™ Ambassador Program since 2011, and in honor of his ReBirthday, they offer some wisdom:

**On being a new LVAD recipient:** “If you’ve just received an LVAD, know that it is going to get better. It becomes the new normal and it beats the alternative.”

**On getting back to your quality of life:** “Stay busy. Have a purpose and work toward it each day. I build furniture in my shop at home. Having a hobby keeps you from sitting and wishing for something different, and it feeds your soul too.”

**On taking care of yourself:** “Have a routine designed around caring for yourself. I get up every morning, weigh myself, get dressed and start my day. I am vigilant about maintaining my equipment and keep in close contact with my LVAD team.”

**On being an advocate:** “Help others. Share your story in support groups and with those considering an LVAD. It’s a great feeling to know you can make a difference.”

**On being a caregiver:** “Caregivers, don’t put yourself last. Take it seriously, but also trust in the knowledge you and your partner have, and use that to motivate you to care for yourself.”

**On longevity:** “Don’t worry. This is your life now, and it can be really enjoyable if you decide it will be. I’ve never given up and I’m still having a ball”!  

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Individual Experience: Each testimonial relates an account of an individual's response to the treatment. The patient's account is genuine, typical and documented. However, it does not provide any indication, guide, warranty or guarantee as to the response other persons may have to the treatment. Responses to the treatment discussed can and do vary and are specific to the individual patient.

Important Safety Information

Brief Summary: Prior to using these devices, please review the Instructions For Use for a complete listing of indications, contraindications, warnings, precautions, potential adverse events and directions for use.

HeartMate 3™ LVAS Indications: The HeartMate 3 Left Ventricular Assist System is indicated for providing short- and long-term mechanical circulatory support (e.g., as bridge to transplant or myocardial recovery, or destination therapy) in patients with advanced refractory left ventricular heart failure.

HeartMate II™ LVAS Indications: The HeartMate II Left Ventricular Assist System is indicated for use as a “bridge to transplantation” for cardiac transplant candidates who are at risk of imminent death from non-reversible left ventricle failure. It is also indicated for use in patients with New York Heart Association (NYHA) Class IIIB or IV end-stage left ventricular failure, who have received optimal medical therapy for at least 45 of the last 60 days, and who are not candidates for cardiac transplantation. The HeartMate II Left Ventricular Assist System is intended for use both inside and outside of the hospital, or for transportation of Left Ventricular Assist Device patients via ground ambulance, airplane, or helicopter.

HeartMate 3 and HeartMate II LVAS Contraindications: The HeartMate 3 and HeartMate II Left Ventricular Assist Systems are contraindicated for patients who cannot tolerate, or who are allergic to, anticoagulation therapy.

HeartMate 3 and HeartMate II LVAS Adverse Events: Adverse events that may be associated with the use of the HeartMate 3 or HeartMate II Left Ventricular Assist System include, but are not limited to those listed below: death, bleeding, cardiac arrhythmia, localized infection, right heart failure, respiratory failure, device malfunctions, driveline infection, renal dysfunction, sepsis, stroke, other neurological event (not stroke-related), hepatic dysfunction, psychiatric episode, venous thromboembolism, hypertension, arterial non-central nervous system (CNS), thromboembolism, pericardial fluid collection, pump pocket or pseudo pump pocket infection, myocardial infarction, wound dehiscence, hemolysis (not associated with suspected device thrombosis) and pump thrombosis.

* Based on clinical and device tracking data as of April 12, 2019

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CONNECTING MORE HEARTS™

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TO SUBSCRIBE, EMAIL YOUR NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS TO: HEARTMATEAMBASSADOR@ABBOTT.COM

The quarterly HeartMate™ LVAD Community Newsletter is for current or prospective HeartMate LVAD recipients and their caregivers. In it, you will find interviews with HeartMate LVAD Ambassadors, articles on life with an LVAD, caregiver-focused articles, and tips on things like traveling and exercising with an LVAD.

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