



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mended Hearts Launches Contest to Celebrate Advanced Heart Failure Survivors

- ***LVAD Recipients and Loved Ones Invited to Submit Short Videos before April 13, 2016; Each Submission Generates a \$100 Donation to Mended Hearts -***

DALLAS, February 18, 2016 – Mended Hearts, the largest heart-patient support network in the world, announces today the launch of a new, national video contest (www.ThanksLVAD.com). The contest, which is hosted by Mended Hearts (MHI) with support from St. Jude Medical, is designed to provide education and encouragement to the millions of Americans living with heart failure – as well as their friends and families – through the personal stories of advanced heart failure survivors.

The Thanks To An LVAD Video Contest will celebrate people who have received a left ventricular assist device (LVAD) to treat their heart condition. Although LVADs are a potentially life-saving treatment for some advanced heart failure patients, there is limited awareness about these devices among physicians and patients.

“Advanced heart failure is a frightening and debilitating condition with few treatment options,” said Michele Packard-Milam, CAE, executive director of Mended Hearts. “Studies have shown that LVADs can help extend the lives of some heart-failure patients and improve their quality of life, but there is frustratingly limited awareness about them among the physician and patient communities. We created this national contest to capture the stories of real LVAD recipients – both to celebrate them and to make other heart-failure patients aware of LVADs as a treatment option.”

According to the American Heart Association (AHA) and the Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA), more than five million Americans are currently living with heart failure. The [AHA](#) estimates there are 50,000 to 100,000 advanced heart failure patients in the United States today who could benefit from an LVAD, without which most would have poor prospects for survival and significantly limited lifestyles. Still, many patients who have experienced advanced heart failure report a lack of education and resources related to LVADs.

Through the Thanks To An LVAD Video Contest website (ThanksLVAD.com), LVAD recipients are invited to submit a short video (30 seconds or less) in which they are joined by at least one friend or loved one sharing what they believe is the best thing about the recipient having received an LVAD. Every qualified video entry will trigger a \$100 donation to MHI from St. Jude Medical; based on participation rates, donations through this contest could total as much as \$25,000.

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“The best thing about my life with an LVAD is simply being here to experience life with my daughter,” said Laura Huber, an LVAD recipient. “Learning that LVAD was a treatment option for me has allowed me to live life to its fullest today, and I believe that it’s extremely important to raise awareness of LVADs and what it’s like to live with one among people who may be seeking to understand their options.”

Thanks To An LVAD contest entries will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on April 12, 2016. A diverse panel of judges will select five winning videos based on specific criteria. The first place winner will be highlighted through a national and social media campaign, and all five winners will have the opportunity to be part of separate media campaigns targeting the local areas where each of them lives.

To submit a video, learn more about heart failure, LVADs and contest rules, or share contest information with others, please visit www.ThanksLVAD.com. To join the contest conversation on social media, please use #ThanksLVAD.

About Heart Failure

Heart failure is a widespread, chronic condition that develops when the heart muscle weakens and is unable to pump a sufficient amount of blood throughout the body. Heart failure worsens over time and is typically caused by persistent high blood pressure, heart attack, valve disease and other forms of heart disease or birth defects. Left untreated, the lack of adequate blood flow causes the body’s organs to progressively fail, resulting in numerous medical complications that deteriorate a person’s quality of life and often lead to death. According to the [AHA](#), an estimated 670,000 Americans are newly diagnosed with heart failure each year and 250,000 die from the condition – more than double the number of annual deaths recorded just 25 years ago.

About LVADs

A left ventricular assist device or "LVAD" (sometimes called a "VAD" or "heart pump") is a mechanical device that is designed to restore blood flow throughout the body when the heart is too weak to pump blood adequately on its own. Restoring blood flow to heart failure patients can result in improved breathing, reduced fatigue, and improved organ function, and many LVAD patients report that they can resume their normal activities. An LVAD can be used as a permanent solution ("Destination Therapy") for patients who are not eligible for heart transplantation, or to support patients and improve their quality of life while awaiting a donor heart ("Bridge-to-Transplant").

About the Thanks To An LVAD Video Contest

The Thanks To An LVAD Video Contest is an easy-to-enter nationwide video contest in which participant teams submit a short video (30 seconds or less) featuring an LVAD recipient and at least one friend or loved one, the latter of whom will share specifically in the video the best thing about the recipient having received an LVAD. In addition to the \$100 donation per contest submission, St. Jude Medical will make a \$1,000 donation to Mended Hearts, Inc. in honor of each of the five contest winners, to be announced publicly in June 2016. Combined, St. Jude Medical will make a maximum grant and donation to MHI of up to \$25,000 for all components of this contest, including donations received from contest entries and donations on behalf of winners.

About Mended Hearts

Mended Hearts is the largest heart patient support network in the world, with 20,000 members and 300 chapters. Recognized for its role in facilitating a positive patient-care experience, Mended Hearts partners with hospitals and cardiac rehab clinics to offer support through trained peer visitors, group meetings and educational forums. Mended Hearts inspires hope and improves quality of life for heart patients and their families through ongoing peer-to-peer support. For more information or to locate a local chapter, please visit www.mendedhearts.org, call 888-HEART-99 or email at info@mendedhearts.org

About St. Jude Medical

St. Jude Medical is a leading global medical device manufacturer and is dedicated to transforming the treatment of some of the world's most expensive epidemic diseases. The company does this by developing cost-effective medical technologies that save and improve lives of patients around the world. Headquartered in St. Paul, Minn., St. Jude Medical has five major areas of focus that include heart failure, atrial fibrillation, neuromodulation, traditional cardiac rhythm management, and cardiovascular diseases. For more information, please visit sjm.com or follow us on Twitter [@SJM_Media](https://twitter.com/SJM_Media).

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