From the President

Welcome to our August 2022 newsletter.

Last month is now in the record books as the hottest in Huntsville, averaging 84.2 degrees to beat out the 1930 record of 83.9. It's a heat only two other months have ever achieved: August 2007, when the average temperature reached 85.7 degrees; and August 2010, when it reached 84.7 degrees. I hope everyone was able to stay comfortable during this time.

The hospital visits have been going great and the patients are eagerly awaiting their pillows after surgery. So far, we have been able to keep up with the demands for pillows, but it is becoming more difficult. I have several volunteers to help assemble the pillows and just recently purchased material and had a volunteer cut it into squares. The tops are now at the printers and hopefully, they will soon be ready. The Huntsville Von Braun Lions Club has added pillow making for Mended Hearts ®, Huntsville Chapter 260 to their list of projects.

Remember the Mended Hearts web site (mendedhearts.org) has tools, articles, chat rooms, etc. all available to support your vision of a healthy life. Although we cannot meet in person, we still need to remain in contact with each other and give encouragement. **Please mark your calendars for August 18, 6:30 PM for our Zoom meeting.**

Continue to take your medications and follow the instructions of your health care professionals and hopefully it won't be too much longer before we can meet in person.

**IT'S GREAT TO BE ALIVE AND BE ABLE TO HELP OTHERS.**

Lindell Smith, Chapter President
When walking hurts

Maybe you're just starting a walking routine or you're a walking veteran with years of brisk daily walks under your belt. Either way, it's no fun when aches and pains slow you down or even send you back to the couch. But not all pain is created equal, and while some pains are just inconvenient or uncomfortable, you should know when to call your doctor.

**Heel pain** is often caused by plantar fasciitis, when the band of tissue that runs from your heel to the ball of your foot is strained, according to Prevention. Pain in your heel or arch first thing in the morning is a common sign. Stretching and supportive shoes are a must, or you can try cold packs or shoe inserts, according to the Harvard Health Letter. Call your doctor if the condition persists.

**Calf pain** that primarily shows up on one or both sides of the lower calf may be due to spinal stenosis, a condition in which a narrowed spinal canal results in compressed nerves. According to the Harvard Health Letter, symptoms often worsen during the day, so you may choose morning walks instead of evening walks. If you experience pain while walking, take breaks until the pain subsides.

**Knee pain** that feels like a throbbing in front of the kneecap is often a simple case of runner's knee, according to Prevention. Try another type of exercise, like cycling or swimming, for a few weeks until the pain subsides. You might also consider some exercises to strengthen your quads and help support your knee for future activity.

Pain throughout the leg that occurs every time you start activity and stops when you finish could be a sign of **peripheral arterial disease, or PAD**. According to Duke Health, PAD occurs when major blood vessels that supply blood to limbs become fully or partially blocked by fatty deposits. If you're obese, a smoker, diabetic or have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, you may be at increased risk for PAD. If you have leg pain that starts and stops with activity, contact your doctor. A variety of treatments are available, and the earlier the condition is treated, the better.

Fitness trackers may help with weight loss goals

If you're trying to drop some weight, a fitness tracker might boost your chances of success. According to a new study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, fitness trackers -- such as smart watches or other bracelet-style devices -- helped overweight or obese people with chronic conditions reduce their body weight and lower their body mass index (BMI). Researchers found that weight loss programs lasting at least 12 weeks were the most effective, and individuals who wore commercially available trackers, such as a FitBit, lost an average of six pounds. According to the study, the devices helped remind participants to stay on track with health-related goals and participate in daily activity. But there's a catch -- according to the Mayo Clinic, while fitness trackers are a great way to keep yourself moving, there's no substitute for keeping your diet on track.

Whatever task you undertake, do it with all your heart and soul. Always be courteous, never be discouraged. Beware of him who promises something for nothing. Do not blame anybody for your mistakes and failures. Do not look for approval except the consciousness of doing your best.

Bernard Baruch
Good sleep may stave off dementia

According to a recent study published in the journal Aging, sufficient sleep may be protective against dementia. The study surveyed 2,600 adults ages 65 and older, and found that those who slept less than five hours per night faced nearly double the risk of dementia over five years than those who got seven to nine hours of shut-eye, as is recommended.

According to another study published in Nature Communications, people in their 50s and 60s who slept less than six hours per night were about 30 percent more likely to develop dementia. While the research isn't yet conclusive about the link between sleeplessness and dementia, there are still lots of good reasons to try to get at least seven hours of quality sleep per night, including better brain health, mood and overall physical health.

Lifelong exercise leads to big health care savings

As individuals, insurers and governments look for ways to save on rising health care costs, exercise stands out as one way to potentially save big. According to a study published in the British Medical Journal, physical activity throughout adulthood is strongly associated with decreased costs for medical care.

Researchers examined Medicare claims data from 1999 to 2008 linked to a previous study on diet and health, and found that average health annual health care costs were all lower among adults who maintained steady physical activity, increased their activity or decreased it while still remaining active. The study also found that even individuals who didn’t start exercising until after age 40 enjoyed better health and lower medical costs.

Medications can contribute to dry mouth

In the fall or spring, if you take antihistamines to combat seasonal allergies, you may find yourself with an annoying side effect: Dry mouth. But, it isn't just antihistamines. Hundreds of medications cause dry mouth including pills for blood pressure, pain, muscle relaxants, anxiety, depression and simple decongestants. Also, health conditions, including diabetes, or treatments such as cancer radiation therapy can cause the condition.

Symptoms of dry mouth include severely painful dry tongue, choking, sore throat, and hoarseness. It can change the taste of food, cause bad breath, and affect teeth and gums.

You can get relief through some prescription medications. However, home care can help.

* Use a humidifier at night. Chew sugar-free gum. Sip water frequently. Avoid sugar, acidic foods, caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco.

* Try switching out medications with your doctor's help. Many dry mouth over-the-counter symptom relievers are available, including special mouthwash that does not contain alcohol. Dry mouth sprays can be helpful at night, but if they don’t seem to have staying power, try the gels.
We recognize member birthdays and surgery dates referred to as Mendiversaries. Congratulations to everyone who is celebrating a heart procedure anniversary this month.

If we have your month listed incorrectly or you would prefer not to be listed, please notify the chapter president. If we are missing your celebration, let me know at 256.837.7354.

**August Birthdays**

Betty Johnson
Donald Elyea
Eric Lundquis

**August Mendiversaries**

Sherrill Altice
Randy Boyette
James Carter
Kathy McFarland
Maureen Nix
Melissa Roebuck

**Hope you’re feeling better!**

Barbara Morris
Donnette Smith
James Wright

Lindell Smith

James Forman

Mended Hearts 260 membership drive. Help us reach a goal of 71 membership renewals or new members (1 membership for each year of Mended Hearts.) Mended Hearts began in 1951.

**Thanks to all who have renewed their membership. The chapter’s funding depends on renewals and new memberships.**

Renew Your Mended Hearts membership or join us.

National dues individual $20; family $40
No local dues as chapter receives 25% of national dues paid

To renew over the phone, please call 888-432-7899 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET.

To renew through the mail, print off and fill out the membership form found in this newsletter. It can be mailed to the address for the Mended Hearts Resource Center found on the form.

♦ Please do not mail to Huntsville Hospital Volunteer Office.

**About Mended Hearts:** “Mended Hearts is a national and community-based non-profit organization that has been offering the gift of hope to heart disease patients, their families and caregivers. To offer this hope Mended Hearts provides a variety of programs.”

**Mended Hearts Mission Statement:** “To inspire hope and improve the quality of life of heart patients and their families through on-going peer-to-peer support, education, and advocacy.”

**Vision Statement:** “To be the premier nationwide resource and peer-to-peer support network for all heart patients and families affected by Heart Disease across the life span.”
Effective January 1, 2021, the Resource Center will process all new memberships (all levels) and all membership renewals.

All chapters will be reimbursed 25% of all paid national dues or renewals of dues.
The Mended Hearts, Inc
Huntsville Chapter 260
The Beat Goes On

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Huntsville Hospital
Volunteer Services
101 Sivley Road  Huntsville, AL  35801