

Let's unite to prevent heart disease and stroke It's time to put our hearts into it and Go Red For Women.®



Left to right: Go Red For Women executive committee members Molly Huffman, Dr. Holly Furlong, Niki Curci Scott (event chair), Ukay Jackson and Elizabeth Hopper.

Family condition

Niki Curci Scott lost both of her parents to heart disease. Now, she raises awareness so that other families won't have to suffer in the same way.

By Harrison Gregory
Special correspondent

"Niki, I've had the worst heartburn today." She had no pain, no sweating—none of the typical symptoms. Niki Curci Scott's mom mentioned the one minor issue during a phone call, a nuisance really, and carried on with her day. Later on the same day in 1996, Scott would lose yet another parent to the same dreaded disease that had struck out of nowhere so many years before.

When she was three years old, Scott's father died. He suffered a heart attack on the eve of Christmas Eve, and when the paramedics had problems reaching the house, the family jumped in a car and sped to the hospital. Sadly, Scott's father passed away on the way to the emergency room.

Her mother was then a single mom, and she was fantastic despite such a devastating early loss. As evidence, Scott is now the executive vice president and national retail production manager at SunTrust Mortgage

in Richmond. Unfortunately it wasn't heartburn that her mother suffered from that day, and she too passed away from a heart attack that lasted 15 hours.

"She had symptoms that most people don't recognize, and I asked the doctor, 'How is this possible?'" Scott recalled. "The doctor said, 'Niki, it's just so different for women.'"

Soon after, Scott took a job in North Carolina and began being proactive about her own health and lifestyle. She was also determined to become an advocate for heart health, particularly as it affects women, who tend to be more at risk than men. She joined the Go Red For Women campaign, part of the American Heart Association, and currently serves as the chair of the local leadership team here in town.

Go Red For Women was launched more than 10 years ago with the goal of inspiring women to come together and create a meaningful and lifesaving culture of health. In that time, women's heart disease death rates have declined by 34 percent. That is extremely encouraging news, but the mission is far from complete. Today, an estimated 43 million women are affected by cardiovascular diseases, and an astounding 90 percent of women have one or more risk factors for heart disease or stroke.

"I can't stress enough how important it is to stay on top of medical tests," Scott said. "It's scary how many women don't know their blood pressure. And obviously family history is so important."

She also emphasized the significance of being in good shape. "Exercise, exercise, exercise—are you doing enough to get out and about? Diet is so very critical as well. Thankfully, people are much more educated now, but it's important to understand what you're eating and in what quantities."

As we move into February, designated as the official heart month, there are three very powerful ways that the community can help the Go Red For Women cause:

The first is show your support on Feb. 5, National Wear Red Day. Simply wear red to spread awareness or help organize an event at work, school or any other local organization. But don't limit it to just one day—it's critical to show support throughout the year as well. Visit GoRedForWomen.org/WearRedDay for more information about this annual celebration.

The second way is to spread the word to other women by simply sharing your stories, what you know about heart health, and what can be done to combat heart-related diseases.

Finally, support the movement locally by joining the Circle of Red or Men Go Red societies, volunteer with the Passion Committee, buy a ticket to the Go Red For Women Luncheon on Feb. 26 at The Jefferson Hotel (richmondvagoredluncheon.heart.org), or become a sponsor yourself.

"All of us can be advocates," Scott said. "My mother had no idea what was coming, but through Go Red For Women, we can help others like her understand the risks."

We Go Red

Cardiovascular disease affects women and men from all age groups, ethnicities, family histories and walks of life. The individuals on this page are prime examples that heart disease knows no boundaries. They are speaking up to help others recognize the importance of living a heart-healthy life.



Pedro Berrios, 22
Hopewell, Virginia
Cardiac arrest

In May 2014, Pedro Berrios was playing a pickup game of basketball at Richard Bland College when he suddenly collapsed and his heart stopped. Thanks to athletic trainer Megan McCauley and softball coach Martha Covington (a certified EMT), he was kept alive by an AED and CPR as his peers watched in horror. Less than nine months later, Pedro was not only back on the court, but soon he was also in the starting lineup at Richard Bland. He scored 33 points, including 12 from behind the three-point line, to help his team win its first ever NJCAA Division II National Championship.



Glennys Fleming, 61
Richmond, Virginia
Heart attack and stroke

2006 is a year Glennys Fleming will never forget. Not only was it the year she gave up smoking, it was also the year she suffered two strokes and a heart attack. She encourages others to "listen to your body (and gut instincts) when something doesn't seem right or feel right." A strong advocate and champion for healthier living in our community, Glennys was recently honored as the "Volunteer of the Year" for the American Heart Association in Central Virginia.



Andrea Woie, 36
Richmond, Virginia
Heart attack

Andrea Woie was in good health when she started having shortness of breath, tightness in her chest and back pains at age 32. Much to her surprise, a trip to the ER indicated that she was having a heart attack and had 100 percent blockage in one of her arteries, often called the "widow maker." She uses her experience to educate others about the warning signs and taking your symptoms seriously. This February, Andrea and her husband, Ian, will be celebrating Heart Month in a big way with the birth of their first child.



Kyle Schwandt, 43
Richmond, Virginia
Heart attack

For several days this past summer, Kyle Schwandt experienced bouts of heart burn and fatigue along with aches in his back and jaw. After checking his symptoms online, he was shocked to learn that one of the causes indicated myocardial infarction. Kyle drove to the ER and told the nurse, "I think I'm having a heart attack." Within the hour, Kyle received two stints to open up his arteries. He had just survived a massive heart attack. In October, he participated in his first Heart Walk and ran the 5K course in less than 30 minutes.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Macy's Wear Red Sale

Feb. 3-8
Macy's will offer all-day savings to customers wearing red and for those not wearing red who purchase a Red Dress Pin for \$3.00 with all proceeds benefitting Go Red For Women.

Go Red Zumba Class

Thursday, Feb. 4, 6:30 p.m.
Peter Paul Development Center, 1708 N. 22nd St.

By Body Bounce Fitness. Cost: Free—all donations will go directly to the American Heart Association. Hands-Only CPR™ training will be offered following the class. Contact Dionne at bodybouncefitness@gmail.com for more information.

National Wear Red Day

Friday, Feb. 5
Support the fight against heart disease in women by wearing red or organizing an awareness event with your employees or colleagues. Download free resources at GoRedForWomen.org/WearRedDay and share your pictures on our RichmondAHA Facebook page using #GoRedRVA.

Heart Health Fair

Friday, Feb. 5, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
VCU Health, Main Hospital, 1200 E. Broad St., Rooms 422-426
Free heart health screenings provided by VCU Health Pauley Heart Center team members. Includes blood pressure, BMI and glucose testing. Accessorize with red and receive a gift (while supplies last).

Bollywood Goes Red

Friday, Feb. 5, 6-9 p.m.
VMFA
Join us for an Indian-inspired evening filled with food, music and entertainment! Festive Indian attire or black tie preferred. This event is sponsored by VCU Health in support of The American Heart Association. For Bollywood tickets, visit bollywoodgoesred.com.

Free Heart Health Screenings

Saturday, Feb. 6, 1-5 p.m.
Macy's: Short Pump Town Center, Chesterfield Towne Center and Southpark Mall

Do you know your risk for developing heart disease? Knowledge is power, and once you know your numbers, you can start making positive changes to your lifestyle. Let the professionals at Bon Secours Richmond Health System provide you with that knowledge by giving you a free heart health assessment.

Richard Bland College Go Red Basketball Game

Sunday, Feb. 14, 2 p.m.
8311 Halifax Road, Petersburg
Cost: Free with code word "Go Red." Hands-only CPR training will be offered at the game. Wear red!

VCU Go Red Basketball Game

Saturday, Feb. 20, Women 2 p.m., Men 4 p.m.
1 Hayden Dr., Petersburg
Cost: Women's game \$5, men's game \$15. Hands-only CPR training will be offered at the game. Wear red!

Go Red For Women Luncheon

Friday, Feb. 26, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
The Jefferson Hotel, Richmond
Networking Reception with silent auction, including the highly anticipated "What's In Her Bag" purse auction, followed by inspirational survivor speakers and a heart healthy lunch. Proceeds benefit the American Heart Association's women and heart disease research and education. Sponsored nationally by Macy's and locally by Bon Secours. For sponsorship information or tickets, please contact Lauren Schingh at (804) 965-6522 or Lauren.Schingh@heart.org. Visit RichmondVaGoRedLuncheon.heart.org for more details.

National Wear Red Day®
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2016



American
Heart
Association®
life is why™



Go Red For Women is nationally sponsored by



Dr. Gabor Bagameri and Dr. Zachary Gertz

Discover the newest generation of non-surgical heart valve replacement.

And meet the team who helps patients discover new hope.

Thanks to the pioneering efforts of researchers at VCU Health Pauley Heart Center, we're bringing new hope to patients suffering from advanced heart valve disease. Dr. Zachary Gertz helped pave the way for transcatheter aortic heart valve replacement (TAVR), enabling patients with severe aortic stenosis to live longer, fuller lives. With conscious sedation we can offer this life-saving treatment to more fragile and elderly patients who are not good candidates for general anesthesia or heart surgery. This is one more way VCU Health is advancing health and improving lives.

To learn if you may be a candidate for transcatheter aortic valve replacement, call (804) 828-VALVE (8258) or visit valve.vcu.edu.

