My Heart Story, Some History and Information
December 2025

Hello Family and Friends,

I am privileged to be the honorary member who will help make a difference this year along with our state leaders, members, and everyone who steps up to support our Heart Fund. Thank you, Sister Teri, Worthy Grand Matron, and Brother Will, Worthy Grand Patron, for choosing the Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Association (HCMA), which means so much to me and to all who are affected by this condition that thickens the heart muscle, making it difficult for the heart to fill with enough blood to pump to the rest of the body.

In 1983, when I was 20 and in Nursing School, we were all learning how to take EKG's and practicing on each other. Little did I know that this is where my Heart Story would begin. I knew then that something was not right, and our Nurse Professor confirmed it, kicking off rounds of doctor visits. At that time, little was understood about Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM), so there were misdiagnoses that sent me to various medical professionals and specialists. Finally, in 1988, I was given my first pacemaker as a "trial procedure" and told that there was a 75% chance it would succeed. I was lucky because it did. I also was told that I might live to age 35 or 40, and a possible transplant was in my future. Seven devices later plus five surgeries, including my last big one, "The Open Heart," I am still here. I fully believe that God has a reason for this. He is not done with me yet!

The HCMA was founded in 1996 as a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Lisa Salberg, Founder and CEO, began a journey to educate, advocate, and support other patients based on her experience with HCM. This included medical errors that nearly cost her life. Lisa and I are sisters together in this. There are no words to describe what a wonderful thing she has done. HCMA provides support, advocacy, and education to patients, families, the medical community, and the public about hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. The organization also supports and assists with the development of "Centers of Excellence," one of which is Stanford Medical Center. The organization has grown over the years, and so much more is understood. For more information, you can visit their website at https://www.4hcm.org

Recently, one of our high school football players collapsed on the field during a game. My sports med students and I called 911, and he is doing okay. I have taught my students to look for some of the signs; this has become my focus. As a past swimmer, I suffered through many of these symptoms and was never diagnosed correctly. Now that we know more about this disease, we can help catch it earlier.

HCM affects every age, gender, and ethnicity. Some individuals have no initial symptoms, while others experience fatigue, palpitations, shortness of breath, exercise intolerance, fainting, and even sudden cardiac death. These varying symptoms make HCM difficult to diagnose and often result in misdiagnosis. Effective testing is an important first step in identifying HCM.

Please consider giving to this worthy cause by clicking on "Donate Now" in the information directly below this story on our Eastern Star website.

Also, please consider adding your voice to the "Children's Cardiac Safety Act" at https://ujoin.co/campaigns/1453/actions/public

I appreciate each of you and your contribution to this worthy organization,
Michele Jawad-Luy
Alameda Oakleaf Chapter No. 8 and Orinda Star No. 128