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Pictured: Mary Kay Jellison at Mystique Community Ice Center
A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Kay Takes, President

Fortunately, Dubuque and surrounding communities have wonderfully rich sports traditions. I grew up watching the Reds play baseball at Cascade’s Legion Park and Al Marshall-coached basketball teams at Aquin and then Cascade High School. I had the pleasure of watching my husband play a lot of great baseball, especially for the Bernard Indians semi-pro team. Our sons, Regan and Haris, played on high school basketball teams that made it all the way to the state tournament and both played college ball right here in Dubuque, at Loras College and Clarke University (where Haris is currently a junior.) As a University of Iowa alumnus, I’m a die-hard Hawkeye fan and, of course, I love the Chicago Cubs. Needless to say, sports teams have been a pretty big part of my life and are a big part of our local culture.

There are literally thousands of books about what makes teams great, and most apply not only in sports, but in organizations as well. If you’ve been on a winning team (and most of us have), you can probably describe why it was successful. Some of the characteristics that resonate with me include a crystal clear vision, excellent communication, great leadership and the right people. Team chemistry comes from a shared commitment to achieving the goal regardless of the sacrifice. It is an attitude that we are in this together and that we have each other’s back. Members on great teams can often anticipate each other’s every move and are totally in sync with one another. Mike Krzyzewski, longtime men’s basketball coach at Duke University, said, “To me, teamwork is the beauty of our sport, where you have five acting as one. You become selfless.”

At Mercy, our team of almost 1,400 colleagues, 270 physicians/providers, and our volunteers work together as one to carry out our compelling mission to transform the health of the communities we serve. Teamwork is visible everywhere at Mercy. In care delivery, we boast a collaborative practice model where each member of the team values the expertise and insights of the other, understanding that patients and families are better served by and safer because of our collective (versus individual) efforts. Our caregivers ‘act as one’ with teammates who are behind the scenes but no less essential if we are to achieve our vision.

Excellent outcomes are driven by excellent teamwork and, at Mercy, we are very intentional about keeping our team spirit front and center. We embrace a We Are Mercy motto which promotes the contributions of every single employee through recognition, education and giving back to the community so that all colleagues are energized in making Mercy a great place to give and receive care.

Phil Jackson said, “The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team”, which sums it up pretty well. We are blessed to live in a community that values teamwork in sports and in life, and you can count on the Mercy team to be there for you when you need us.
10 CHANGES for BETTER HEART HEALTH

Can you check off all the items on this list? If not, here are some heart healthy goals to focus on.

» Eat **fruit** for a snack or dessert
» Eat **omega-3-rich fish** (like salmon) 1–2 times per week
» Put away the **salt** shaker
» **Exercise** for 30 minutes every day
» Sit quietly and relax for 15 minutes every day
» Skip the elevator; **take the stairs**
» **Quit smoking**
» Eat a healthy **breakfast** that includes protein
» Get regular **health screenings**
» **Reduce saturated fats**
Mary Kay Jellison followed a heart-healthy diet and always checked labels. She was active and enjoyed walking for exercise. She was doing everything right and felt healthy.

On a day this past November, however, she suddenly didn’t feel right.

“I was getting ready to go to a friend’s party,” she recalls. “I was doing my hair, and my left arm started to feel heavy. I wondered if I did something to it. It didn’t hurt; it just felt heavy. I thought it would go away. And then all of a sudden, the pain started going down my arm and the heaviness went to my chest. And I thought, ‘No, it can’t be. I can’t be having a heart attack.’”

Mary Kay called out to her husband and daughter for help. They arrived at Mercy’s emergency department within 20 minutes of the pain starting.

In the ER, an EKG did not indicate any major blockages. But further workup showed Mary Kay’s enzymes were elevated, and the decision was made to proceed to the cath lab. Cardiologist Dr. Rami Eltibi, MD, of Medical Associates Clinic, performed a heart catheterization. The cath did not show any blockages in the main arteries but did locate a blockage in a small branch of the distal obtuse marginal artery.

“The location and size of the affected artery can help determine the treatment,” Dr. Eltibi explains. “Mary Kay’s blocked artery was too small for a stent, and her heart attack did not affect a large part of her heart muscle, so we were able to treat her with medication therapy. Other than the one blockage, her arteries were pristine.”

Mary Kay spent two nights at Mercy before returning home. A week later, she began cardiac rehabilitation, an education and exercise program for those who have experienced a heart event.

“Cardiac rehab is great,” Mary Kay says. “I was pretty overwhelmed after the heart attack and felt defeated. But the people who are in cardiac rehab with you have gone through the same thing. It’s a time to talk and...”
**Cardiac rehab is great.** I was pretty overwhelmed after the heart attack and felt defeated. But the people who are in cardiac rehab with you have gone through the same thing. It’s a time to talk and hear other people’s stories, and you realize you’re not the only one.”

— Mary Kay Jellison

Dr. Eltibi says not all heart attacks are due to buildup of plaque inside the arteries (atherosclerosis). Although more rare, heart attacks can also be caused by an artery spasm, a spontaneous tear of the artery wall, or inflammation of blood vessels.

“There are a lot of factors that can increase your risk of heart disease,” he says. “Some can be controlled, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, tobacco use, obesity, stress, unhealthy diet, and lack of physical activity. There are also factors that we cannot control. Family history plays a big role, as does age and gender.”

Mary Kay didn’t know for sure that she was having a heart attack, but she definitely knew that something was wrong and that she needed help.

“They say a lot of people don’t recognize the symptoms of a heart attack, or they ignore them. I couldn’t ignore that pain. I knew something was wrong. If you’re experiencing something out of the ordinary, go to the emergency room. It can’t hurt to get it checked. Don’t ignore the symptoms. It can really happen to anybody.”

(Above) Mary Kay Jellison remains active, even just weeks after her heart attack. In the winter months, she enjoys walking at Mystique Community Ice Center for exercise.
Q: Does heart failure literally mean that the heart is failing?

The words “heart failure” can sound scary, but heart failure does not mean your heart has failed or has stopped working. Heart failure means that your heart is not pumping as well, and the right amounts of blood, nutrients, and oxygen are not being carried to your body. When this happens, you may experience:

» weight gain
» increased shortness of breath
» increased swelling, dry cough
» increased weakness or tiredness
» lightheadedness
» poor appetite, feeling full sensation, or abdominal tenderness
» chest pain

Heart failure is common. Over 5 million Americans are living with heart failure today, and it’s the number one reason a person age 65 or older is admitted to the hospital. Successful living with heart failure is possible by actively managing it every day. When you have heart failure, it is important for you to check yourself daily for signs and symptoms of heart failure and to let your health care provider know of any changes.

Connie Wessels, MSN, ARNP, congestive heart failure coordinator

HEALTHY VARIETY MEALS

Your favorite frozen meals are now even more convenient. In addition to the Mercy café, you can now purchase Healthy Variety meals at Mercy Family Pharmacy on Elm Street.

The meals are heart healthy, low in sodium, and diabetic friendly, and provide an easy meal solution for anyone with congestive heart failure, diabetes, heart disease, or those following a weight reduction diet. Healthy Variety meals range from $4–$5.

PHONE CHARGING STATIONS

We know how important it is to stay connected with friends and family when a loved one is in the hospital. That’s why we’ve recently installed free charging stations in our surgery and intensive care waiting rooms. With multiple adapters to charge a variety of devices, the stations have been a welcome addition for our guests. Additional charging stations are scheduled to be installed in other areas of the hospital soon.

MERCY GIFT SHOP

Shop gifts and home decor at the Mercy Gift Shop. All proceeds support programs and services for children in Mercy’s care. As always, there is no sales tax.

Monday, Thursday, and Friday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Tuesday and Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
WARNING SIGNS of Heart Attack

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, like you see in the movies. Most, however, are more subtle with varying symptoms, and you might not even be sure what’s occurring. **That’s why it’s important that you are aware of the warning signs, so that you can recognize the symptoms and seek care.**

**Heart attack symptoms can vary for each person, but the most common symptoms include:**

- **Chest pain**—Most heart attacks involve pain or discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. This is the most common symptom.

- **Discomfort or pain in other areas of your upper body,** such as your jaw, neck, back, or arm

- **Shortness of breath**

- **Cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness**

If you are experiencing any of these heart attack symptoms, call 9-1-1 and get to Mercy’s emergency department. Calling 9-1-1 is almost always the fastest way to obtain lifesaving treatment. Even if you aren’t sure it’s a heart attack, call anyway. Too many people wait to see if the symptoms subside, and then it may be too late. **Every minute matters.**

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**DARK CHOCOLATE BARK**

**MAKES 36 SERVINGS**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 2 cups 60% dark chocolate chips
- ½ cup pistachios, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup salted pretzel pieces

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil. Take care to avoid wrinkles.
2. Place chocolate in a medium microwave-safe bowl; microwave on MEDIUM for 1 minute. Stir, then continue microwaving on MEDIUM, stirring every 20 seconds, until melted. Alternatively, place in the top of a double boiler over hot, but not boiling, water. Stir until melted.
3. Combine pistachios, cranberries, and pretzels in a small bowl. Stir half of the mixture into the melted chocolate. Scrape the chocolate onto the foil and spread it into a 9-inch square. Sprinkle with the remaining trail mix, pressing any large bits in. Refrigerate until set, about 30 minutes.
4. Transfer the bark and foil to a cutting board. Use a sharp knife to cut into 1½-inch pieces.

**Make Ahead Tip:** Refrigerate airtight for up to 2 weeks.
Celebrating 40 years of heart.

MERCY. DUBUQUE'S HEART HOSPITAL.
» mercydubuque.com/heart

DARK CHOCOLATE BARK

Chocolate received a lot of attention recently as it’s believed it helps protect your heart; the reason being that the cocoa bean is rich in flavonoids. Flavonoids protect plants from environmental toxins and repair damage. When we eat foods rich in flavonoids, it appears we also benefit from this “antioxidant” power. Do note, there is currently no established serving size of chocolate to help reap the heart benefits it may offer. For now, enjoy moderate portions (e.g., 1 ounce) a few times per week.”

— Stacy Barton, RD, LD

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:
69 calories, 4g fat, 2g saturated fat, 5mg sodium, 7g carbohydrates, 1g fiber, 1g protein