



Harry and Judy's Story

“Harry went to work today, thank God. That figures to be a miracle, because seven weeks ago, he suffered a heart attack on the racquetball court...”

Judy – Southern Maine

Harry went to work today. So what's the big deal? Millions of people go to work every day. He hasn't been to work in thirty-eight days. So? So on March 10, my 59-year old husband, who never smoked, never drank, is a vegetarian and exercises regularly, dropped without any warning on the racquetball court in cardiac arrest.

The fact that he went to work today is a miracle. Within seconds, 911 was called. Three people at the club began CPR immediately. The Topsham police cruiser arrived in three to five minutes, with an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) that shocked his heart back into a normal rhythm.

Rescue workers took him to Parkview Adventist Medical Center, where he was stabilized, placed on a ventilator and transported to Maine Medical Center. Skilled doctors and hospital personnel devised a plan and repaired Harry's heart. So Harry went to work today.

Some 350,000 people die of sudden cardiac arrest in America each year, and research shows in most communities, only five percent of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests survive. In Maine, the percentage is closer to two percent.

I am writing this because I believe God performed a series of miracles, and He used people, circumstances and places to do it. I see it like this:

- CPR saves lives. It's relatively easy to learn and courses are readily available through the American Heart Association, American Red Cross, medical facilities and Emergency Medical Services, schools, and now Maine HeartSafe Communities. Make it a point to take a CPR course this year.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration reports that of 1,216 workplace cardiac arrests in 2001 and 2002, sixty percent would have survived if an AED had been immediately available at the scene. They cost as little as \$800 each, and if they save your loved one, they are priceless.
- I've always been appreciative of our small community hospitals. They provide a vital link for critical cases, too unstable to immediately make the longer trip to larger level-one facilities. If Parkview had been any farther away, or not had the necessary technology and staff, the outcome could have been very different.
- We are privileged to have one of the twenty-five top cardiac hospitals in America right in Maine. Up to eight open-heart surgeries are performed daily at Maine Medical Center. The cardiology team and cardio-thoracic surgeons are among the best to be had.

So I am a grateful woman. I still have a husband. The kids still have a father. We can enjoy our grandchild together. And Harry went to work today.