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Uniontown Hospital Media

Release

Hospital honors McClellandtown woman with ‘Heart Story of the Year’



Uniontown Hospital will honor Gerry Canistra of McClellandtown Saturday night at the 21st Annual Fayette County Heart Ball as the hospital’s recipient of the 2017 Heart Story of the Year.

The award, created as part of the annual celebration surrounding the American Heart Association’s Heart Ball, was established to recognize one “story” each year that encapsulates the mission of the hospital through a heart-related health event.

For Canistra, that event came last summer when she began experiencing symptoms she knew all too well after suffering a heart attack more than two decades earlier.

“I knew what the symptoms were and I knew that last time Uniontown Hospital saved me and I was confident that they would again,” Canistra said. She went to the Emergency Department where it was discovered that she nearly had a complete blockage of her right coronary artery. She was then taken for a catheterization and thanks to that rapid intervention; she avoided a second heart attack and continues to lead a healthy, productive life.

“We are committed to making a healthy difference in every life we touch and we are so thankful to have made a difference for Gerry,” Uniontown Hospital CEO Steve Handy said. “This award and stories like Gerry’s capture our mission through the work of our hospital staff, our physicians, our EMS partners. It gives us a chance to reflect on a life saved.”

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Because of the advanced capabilities of the hospital's Cardiology Department, stories like Canistra's are part of everyday occurrences at Uniontown Hospital.

The Cath Lab has been recognized annually by the AHA as a top performer in emergent care of heart attack patients, earning gold status in 2016. Additionally, the hospital has earned the same gold standard in stroke care from the AHA, a gold award through partnership with Fayette EMS for emergency cardiac care, and a corporate award recognizing their organizational commitment.

These accomplishments, coupled with a commitment to providing for the continuum of care for heart patients with the newly launched Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, are just a few reasons the Cardiology Department is able to make the ultimate healthy difference in the lives of area residents. "We are saving lives, day in and day out, and we are giving people a chance to survive catastrophic events and go on to lead the lives they might not have had the chance to otherwise," Executive Director of Critical Care Services Sandy Thorpe said. "I could not be prouder of our entire team and all that they do for the hearts of Fayette County. "

The annual Heart Ball, will be held Saturday evening at Nemaacolin Woodlands Resort in Farmington, and Handy is serving as the chair of the event.

The ball, one of two major fundraisers for the AHA held each year, is an opportunity to "celebrate the AHA work and mission, donors and volunteers and the lives saved and improved because of the efforts of the community." Handy said that the heart ball and the award are just additional ways the hospital can help educate the community about cardiovascular health and recognize the commitment being made locally to better heart health.

Heart Story of the Year

“This year our theme is ‘Creating a Community of Lifesavers’ through the education of area residents to help them in times of a cardiac emergency and to help them make heart healthy lifestyle choices. It is our mission, in partnership with the American Heart Association, to build a healthy community that has the ability to impact and save lives.”