



UPBEAT
Mended Hearts Newsletter
Chapter # 130 – April 2026
Olympia, WA

**It's Great
To Be Alive
And
To Help
Others**

Meeting Notice

Program: Heart Exercises

Date/Time: Thursday, April 9, 2pm

**Location: MyMedSupplies
6149 Martin Way East
Lacey, WA**

Upcoming Dates

Apr 2-Board Meeting

Apr 9-Chapter Meeting

Happy Easter!

President's Message
Michael Blonden

If you missed the last member meeting, jackets for those who purchased them were distributed. Please pick up your jacket at the April meeting. Thank you to everyone who made a purchase.

We have launched a new email campaign to share updates about our Chapter and National Organization activities. Please mark emails from mendedheartsthurstoncounty.org as safe so they don't go to junk or trash folder. These emails include speaker information and newsletter links. In recent months, we have expanded our efforts in reaching more heart patients.

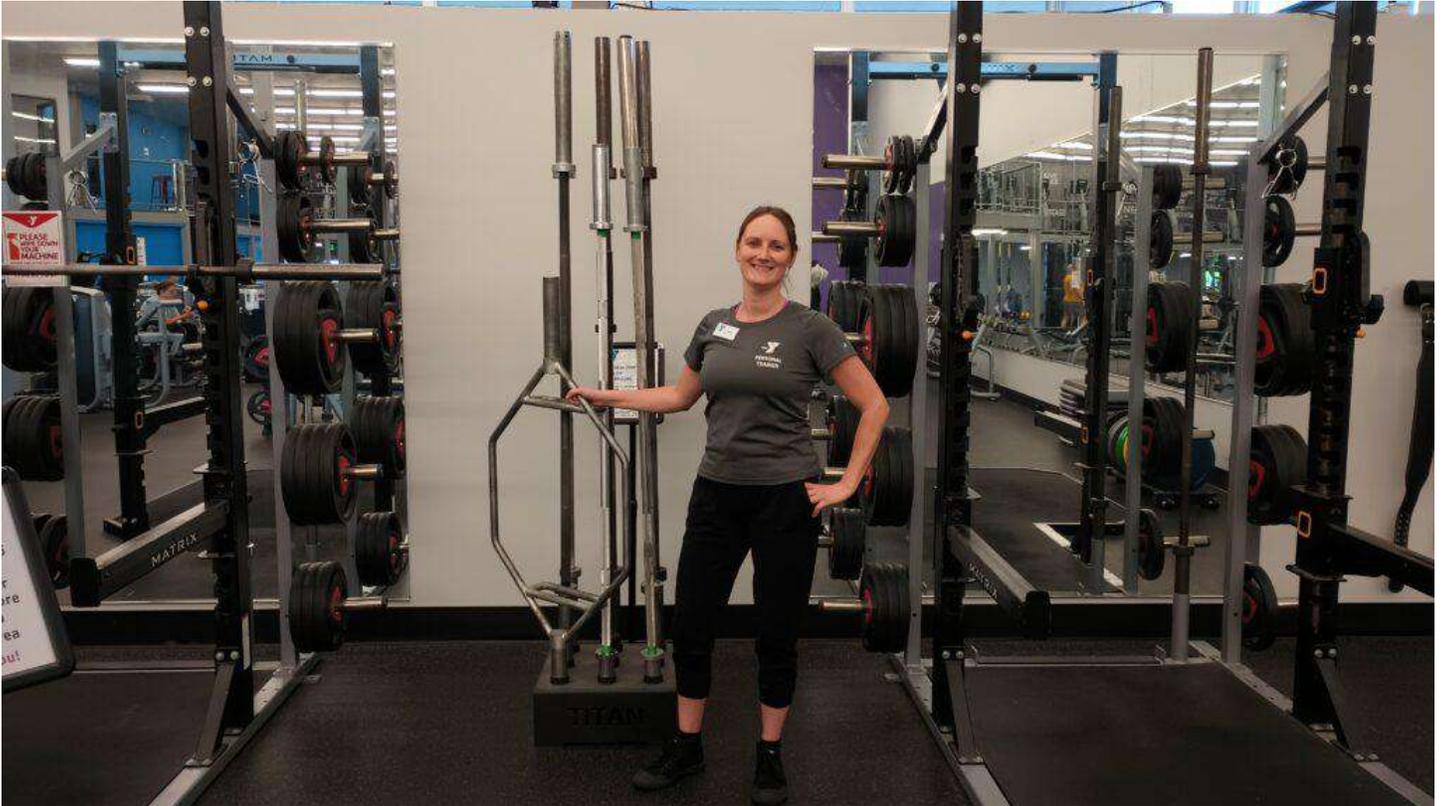
As previously mentioned, heart patient discharge paperwork will now include a brief description of our chapter. Mended Hearts visitors visit with heart patients at the hospital. The cardiac surgery clinic passes out information about Mended Hearts. We meet regularly again with Cardiac Rehab patients. Recently the clinic performing outpatient heart procedures, such as TAVRs, Watchman, and Pacemakers will also start handling out our information to patients as well. We are attempting to reach out to all heart patients with our message of support, and education.

Members are encouraged to join the local Walk with a Doc program. Exercise was a key lifestyle identified by our group in peer-support exercises before recent meetings (two to one compared to other lifestyle behaviors). Details about Walk with a Doc are available on our website. The Walking Guide specifically highlights how walking reduces stress, improves mood and sleep, and supports healthy lifestyle behaviors. See you at the Walk with a Doc at Rainer Vista Park.

At our April meeting, Heather Sundean will be showing us how to exercise our heart and create endurance. Hope to see you at our April meeting

April Program

“Exercises that are going to best strengthen our hearts and create endurance.”



Heather Sundeau is an ACE-certified personal trainer and has worked for the South Sound YMCA for four years. Her goal is to support clients in building an enjoyable, rewarding, and long-lasting relationship with exercise. She specializes in resistance training for bone health and enjoys helping clients feel comfortable, confident, and to feel like they belong in athletic settings. When Heather isn't at the Y, she can be found in her home music studio, attending heavy metal concerts, or reading novels and cuddling with her cat, Buster Kitten.

New Location



Dr Haroon Yousaf (Cardiologist) has moved to Olympia Heart and Vascular Institute, 3621 Ensign Rd. NE Olympia, WA. Telephone number is 360-884-0052.

Did You Know (DYK)

The Heart: A Tireless Little Marvel



The Heart: A Tireless Little Marvel The human heart is a remarkable worker. Day and night, through every season of life, it quietly keeps the rhythm that sustains us. For those of us paying closer attention to heart health, it is amazing to realize just how early and how faithfully that rhythm begins.

Inside the heart are special pacemaker cells. These tiny conductors act like the leader of an orchestra, sending electrical signals that tell the heart when to contract and relax. Thanks to these cells, the heart keeps its steady “lub-dub” rhythm without us ever needing to think about it. Every beat moves oxygen and nutrients throughout the body, keeping muscles, organs, and even our brains happily supplied.

Here is a truly astonishing fact: before a baby is even born, the heart is already hard at work. By the time a human fetus is ready for delivery, that tiny heart has already beaten about 50 million times. Imagine that! A lifetime of dedication begins long before the first cry in the delivery room.

The history of heart care is just as inspiring. In 1893, pioneering African American cardiologist/surgeon Daniel Hale Williams performed one of the first successful open-heart surgeries. At a time when heart surgery seemed almost impossible, his courage and skill helped open the door to the lifesaving cardiac treatments we benefit from today. While Dr. Williams focused on the fluid-filled sack called the pericardium repair, about sixty years later, a cardiologist named Dwight Harken took open-heart surgery one step further by actually putting his fingers inside a beating heart to remove shrapnel from wounded soldiers. He also noticed his patients vastly improved when they were encouraged to visit regularly with other ‘mended’ patients. He promoted this interaction and, thus, Mended Hearts was born!

For those of us living with heart conditions or recovering from procedures, these facts are reminders of how resilient the heart can be. With healthy habits such as regular walking, heart-smart foods, good sleep, and staying connected with friends and family, we help our hearts continue their remarkable work.

After all, your heart has already beaten billions of times for you. Treat it kindly and it will keep the music playing for years to come.

Stress Awareness Month (April)

Are your symptoms stress-related?

Stress isn't just about your emotions -- it affects your physical wellbeing, too, with physical symptoms and potential health consequences that can manifest before you're even ready to acknowledge how stressed-out you really are.

Our body's natural stress response -- the fight-or-flight instinct -- helps us manage stressful situations. But according to the Cleveland Clinic, our stress response can wreak havoc on our bodies if we're struggling with chronic long-term stress, such as high-pressure jobs, long-term illness or financial hardship.

Some of the symptoms of chronic stress include:

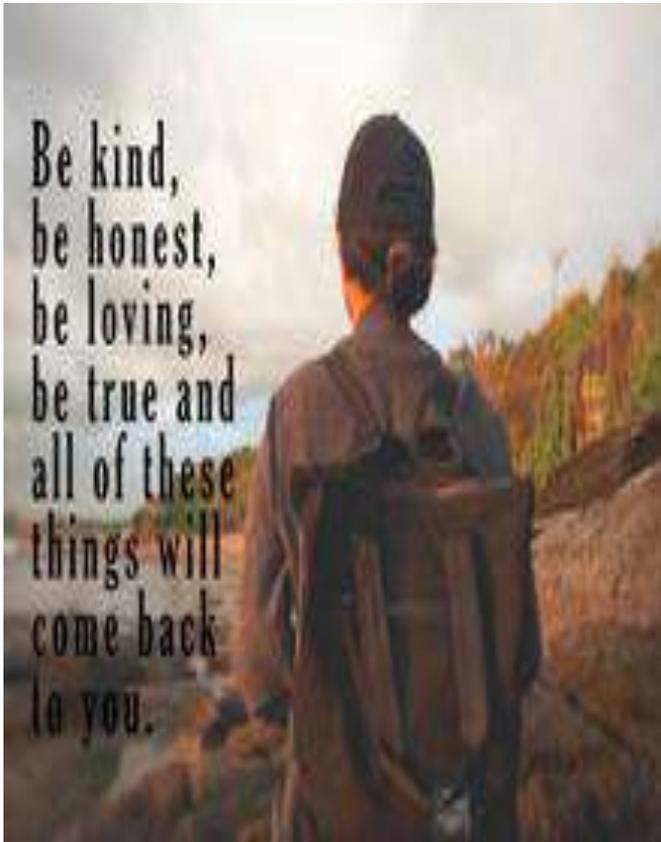
- * Body aches and pains
- * Problems with sleep, such as extreme fatigue or insomnia
- * Chest pain or a racing pulse
- * Elevated blood pressure
- * Headaches, dizziness, shaking
- * More frequent illness from a weakened immune system
- * Hives
- * Psychological symptoms like anxiety, depression, or panic attacks
- * Substance abuse
- * Excessive gambling, shopping, or other compulsive behaviors

Chronic stress can also contribute to long-term problems with your immune, digestive, cardiovascular, and reproductive systems.

There are things you can do to manage stress and protect your health. Daily physical activity, positive thinking, and taking the time to set achievable goals can all help you manage day-to-day stress. Your doctor or a therapist can also evaluate your symptoms and determine whether medication or talk therapy might be appropriate for you.

Remember that stress happens in life. While you can't always control the sources of your stress, you can control how you respond to it.

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Chapter 130 Website:
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<https://mendedhearts.org/>

**To Make Suggestions, go to
Suggestion link below:**

[Suggestion Box](#)

Facebook Webpage Address:
<https://www.facebook.com/mendedheartsthurstoncounty>

Our Board members are currently meeting via ZOOM. If you are interested in attending, contact Michael Blonden at mblonden@msn.com for a Zoom link.

If you are feeling great and would like to help others, why not make a donation to our Chapter (Mended Hearts of Thurston County). Mail Donation to:

**Mended Hearts Chapter 130
PO Box 5551
Olympia, WA 98509-5551**

Every Dollar Helps, Thanks!!