



# **Alton Memorial Hospital's 14th Annual Heart Fair is Feb. 25 Bethalto Couple to Speak on Lifesaving Benefits of CPR**

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ALTON, IL -- A Bethalto couple is telling anyone who will listen to learn CPR.

Steve and Nancy Bivens found out first-hand in December what quick action can do in a medical emergency when Steve's heart stopped one morning while sitting in front of his computer. Nancy began pumping his chest while calling 911. Thanks to her quick thinking, and fast-responding paramedics from the Bethalto Volunteer Fire Department and Alton Memorial Hospital, Steve survived the emergency and believes it was for a reason.

“We lived a miracle,” Steve Bivens says. “God wasn’t ready for me yet. We need to tell people more about CPR.”

Nancy Bivens is the sales manager at WBGZ Radio (1570 AM in Alton) and Steve fills in on-air from time to time while also working at KEZK-FM in St. Louis. They will be telling their story in a presentation at Alton Memorial Hospital’s 14th annual Heart Fair on Saturday, Feb. 25. The fair is from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at hospital and is free to attend. Call 800-392-0936 to register.

The Bivenses will be speaking in the cafeteria meeting rooms at 11:30 a.m. After their talk, AMH educator Lisa Wilson and EMS coordinator Debbie Woelfel will be presenting more information about the benefits of CPR.

Steve says that, having lived to tell the story, he and Nancy want to encourage people to step up and act when there is an emergency.

“Take the time now, if you can, to be trained in what to do,” he says. “Nancy had not had any formal training. What’s important is don’t just stand there and do nothing. She was able to channel her focus and start compressing my chest because you only have a short period of time before brain damage starts to set in. If you don’t have any attention in the first 3-4 minutes, things will start to go crazy.”

After responding to Nancy’s call, paramedics were kept busy for 28 minutes until Steve started breathing again on his own and his heart restarted. Steve's heart was shocked multiple times before he finally arrived at Alton Memorial Hospital and then was later transported to Christian Hospital for further treatment. He says he had an otherwise healthy heart, but doctors found it was an electrical problem and he now has a small device implanted in his chest to assist him if such an event happens again.

CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and first aid classes are offered on a regular basis through Alton Memorial and through the American Red Cross.

Alton Memorial’s Heart Fair is designed to help area residents assess their heart health and learn about prevention and treatment of heart disease, the top health problem in the United States. Call 1-800-392-0936 to register.

Alton Memorial Hospital heart experts will be on hand to address the impact of exercise, smoking, diabetes, sleep disorders, nutrition, medications and stress on the heart. A variety of informational booths will provide details on such topics as heart attack, congestive heart failure, emergency care, angioplasty, peripheral artery disease, depression, stress management, diet and nutrition.

The Heart Fair will again offer a variety of health screenings, including cholesterol (fasting is required), blood pressure and breast screenings. That screening package is free and requires an appointment by calling 1-800-392-0936. Visitors can register for the screening package when they call to register for the fair itself.

A body composition measure by Nautilus will also be available free of charge and without an appointment in the lobby.

Free boxed lunches from Quizno’s will be served beginning at 10:30 a.m. in the cafeteria. You must register in advance for the fair to assure yourself a free meal. Everyone who pre-registers will get a green lunch ticket at the registration table and will be served first. Walk-ins will be served only if there are enough meals left.

Visitors should enter the fair via the hospital's Duncan Wing entrance and proceed down the corridor toward the Beeby Wing, where the registration table will be located.

Cardiovascular disease claims more than a million lives each year in the United States, according to the American Heart Association. The prevalence of the disease is attributed to lifestyle and diet choices and, in some cases, heredity. Uncontrolled cholesterol, high blood pressure, blood clots and narrowing blood vessels set the stage for heart attack, the leading cause of death associated with heart disease. Routine monitoring of blood pressure and cholesterol levels, as well as regular checkups with a doctor, can help individuals maintain a healthier heart.

## **COURTESY PHOTO**

**Nancy and Steve Bivens will tell their story about cardiopulmonary resuscitation saving Steve's life at Alton Memorial Hospital's 14<sup>th</sup> annual Heart Fair on Saturday, Feb. 25.**