

“I have every reason to live” – Cardiac arrest survivor able to return to her husband of 53 years

Joy Jones has always put others before herself. Following her husband’s stroke, about a decade ago, she became his primary caretaker. She had always been a healthy person, and focused her attention on him, who she called “the love of her life forever.” They have been together since they were teenagers.

“When there’s a crisis, we stand together,” she said.

Joy experienced a health crisis of her own earlier this year when she experienced sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). SCA claims the lives of 350,000 Americans each year, but Joy survived because she was prescribed the LifeVest® wearable cardioverter defibrillator.

After her husband broke his foot in January, he was admitted to the hospital. Joy stayed with him in his hospital room for several days and found herself feeling weak, nauseated, and sweaty. She went to the hospital’s emergency room, where they did bloodwork and ran some tests. She was immediately taken to a different hospital – St. Vincent Mercy – where they were more equipped to deal with her cardiac emergency.



Joy is pictured here with granddaughter Ashley.

Joy had had a heart attack and required an emergency heart catheterization, after which she was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU). Dr. Moaaz Baghal warned that, due to her weakened heart function, Joy was at risk for SCA, and he prescribed LifeVest for protection during Joy’s cardiac recovery.

Unlike a heart attack, SCA happens without warning. SCA occurs when a failure of the heart’s electrical system triggers a dangerously fast heartbeat – so fast that it causes the heart to quiver or shake instead of pumping blood to the body and brain. This causes the individual to suddenly lose consciousness. The most effective treatment for SCA is an electrical shock, called defibrillation. Without treatment, death from SCA can occur within minutes.

LifeVest is designed to continuously monitor a patient’s heart, detect life-threatening rapid heart rhythms, and automatically deliver a defibrillation treatment to restore normal heart rhythm and save a patient’s life. Joy was told to wear LifeVest under her clothes day and night, only taking it off for a short shower.

As Joy started her recovery, her husband was living in a skilled nursing facility. She and her granddaughter, Ashley, were visiting him when he experienced a health emergency and had to be rushed to the hospital. As Joy waited in the ER while he was taken for a CT scan, she suddenly lost consciousness. She was experiencing SCA. LifeVest delivered a treatment shock that restored Joy’s normal heart rhythm and saved her life.

Joy was readmitted to the ICU, and the following morning, she was treated again by LifeVest.

“It saved my life,” Joy said.

She is still wearing the device as her heart function continues to improve. “LifeVest has become my security blanket. I feel really confident when I have it on.”

She is looking forward to bringing her husband home so she can resume caring for him as she has done over their 53 years of marriage. “I have every reason to live.”