

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Mended Hearts Announces Winners of National Video Contest Created to Educate and Inspire Americans Suffering From Heart Failure

- 28-year-old Jessica Rogers is first-place winner of contest helping to raise awareness of lesser known but potentially life-saving treatment option –
- "I've been able to fish in Alaska, walk my first 5K, hold my nephew in my arms, meet the love of my life, and get engaged" –

DALLAS, June 28, 2016 – Mended Hearts, the largest heart-patient support network in the world, announced today the winners of the organization's national "Thanks to an LVAD ..." Video Contest (<a href="www.ThanksLVAD.com">www.ThanksLVAD.com</a>). Mended Hearts launched the contest in February 2016 with support from St. Jude Medical to provide education and encouragement to the millions of Americans living with heart failure – as well as their friends and families – through the personal stories of advanced heart-failure survivors.

In less than two months, Mended Hearts received more than 250 video entries from individuals with left ventricular assist devices (LVADs) sharing why an LVAD has been important in their lives. An LVAD is a mechanical device that circulates blood throughout the body when the heart is too weak to pump blood adequately on its own. While studies have shown that LVADs can help extend the lives of heart-failure patients and improve their quality of life, there is limited awareness about these devices among patients and physicians.

A diverse panel of judges, which included a cardiologist and two heart-failure survivors, evaluated the contest entries based on their ability to educate and inspire, and selected five winning videos. The LVAD recipients featured in these videos include a former appellate court judge and a former chiropractor. The contest's first-place national winner, 28-year-old Jessica Rogers of Sedro Woolley, Washington, highlights in her video how an LVAD helped extend her life, giving her the opportunity to experience a number of major, memorable events and life milestones such as the birth of a nephew, completing a 5K and becoming engaged.

"The response to this contest was incredibly gratifying and we are very grateful to the many heart-failure survivors who were willing to share their personal LVAD stories with us," said Michele Packard-Milam, CAE, executive director of Mended Hearts. "Their videos will go a long way to helping us achieve our objectives to educate and inspire the many Americans who are currently living with heart failure and to raise awareness of an important treatment option that is frustratingly overlooked."

According to the American Heart Association (AHA) and the Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA), more than five million Americans are currently living with heart failure. The AHA estimates that 50,000 to 100,000 advanced heart failure patients in the United States today could benefit from an LVAD, without which most would have poor prospects for survival and significantly limited lifestyles. Recent statistics suggest that approximately 2,500 Americans receive LVADs each year. The significant gap between the number of patients who might benefit from an LVAD and those who actually receive them suggests a substantial lack of awareness.

"I see and hear about heart-failure patients every day who have been told that they that are out of options – when in fact they are not," said Susan M. Joseph, M.D., advanced heart failure cardiologist and "Thanks to an LVAD ..." contest judge. "The personal stories I had the privilege to hear as I viewed contest entrants' videos made me even more determined to help change this situation. I'm honored and inspired to be included in Mended Hearts' education efforts."

In addition to Jessica Rogers' video, the four other "Thanks to an LVAD ..." winning videos featured Jack Cozort of Raleigh, NC; John Miller of Houston, TX; Salvatore Ragusa of Winston-Salem, NC; and Terry Wellmaker, Phil Porter and Fred Washington from the Dallas, TX area. To view all of the "Thanks to an LVAD ..." winning videos and honorable mentions, learn more about heart failure or LVADs, or share contest information with others, please visit <a href="www.ThanksLVAD.com">www.ThanksLVAD.com</a>. To join the conversation on social media, please use #ThanksLVAD.

## **About Heart Failure**

Heart failure is a widespread, chronic condition that develops when the heart muscle weakens and is unable to pump a sufficient amount of blood throughout the body. Heart failure worsens over time and is typically caused by persistent high blood pressure, heart attack, valve disease and other forms of heart disease or birth defects. Left untreated, the lack of adequate blood flow causes the body's organs to progressively fail, resulting in numerous medical complications that deteriorate a person's quality of life and often lead to death. According to the AHA, an estimated 670,000 Americans are newly diagnosed with heart failure each year and 250,000 die from the condition – more than double the number of annual deaths recorded just 25 years ago.

## **About LVADs**

A left ventricular assist device or "LVAD" (sometimes called a "VAD" or "heart pump") is a mechanical device that is designed to restore blood flow throughout the body when the heart is too weak to pump blood adequately on its own. Restoring blood flow to heart failure patients can result in improved breathing, reduced fatigue, and improved organ function, and many LVAD patients report that they can resume their normal activities. An LVAD can be used as a permanent solution for patients who are not eligible for heart transplantation, or to support patients and improve their quality of life while awaiting a donor heart.

## About the "Thanks To An LVAD ..." Video Contest

The "Thanks To An LVAD ..." Video Contest is a nationwide video contest launched in February 2016. The contest invited LVAD recipients to submit a short video (30-45 seconds) featuring themselves and, if they chose, friends and loved ones, describing the best thing about the recipient having received an LVAD. St. Jude Medical committed to donate \$100 per video submission and \$1,000 in honor of each of

the five winning videos to Mended Hearts, Inc. Given the contest response, St. Jude Medical will provide \$25,000 in donations and grants to Mended Hearts.

## **About Mended Hearts**

Mended Hearts is the largest heart patient support network in the world, with 20,000 members and 300 chapters. Recognized for its role in facilitating a positive patient-care experience, Mended Hearts partners with hospitals and cardiac rehab clinics to offer support through trained peer visitors, group meetings and educational forums. Mended Hearts inspires hope and improves quality of life for heart patients and their families through ongoing peer-to-peer support. For more information or to locate a local chapter, please visit www.mendedhearts.org, call 888-HEART-99 or email Mended Hearts at <a href="mailto:info@mendedhearts.org">info@mendedhearts.org</a>

## **About St. Jude Medical**

St. Jude Medical is a leading global medical device manufacturer and is dedicated to transforming the treatment of some of the world's most expensive epidemic diseases. The company does this by developing cost-effective medical technologies that save and improve lives of patients around the world. Headquartered in St. Paul, Minn., St. Jude Medical has five major areas of focus that include heart failure, atrial fibrillation, neuromodulation, traditional cardiac rhythm management, and cardiovascular diseases. For more information, please visit <a href="major.com">sjm.com</a> or follow us on Twitter <a href="major.com">@StJudeMedical</a>.

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