Because of you, stroke has fallen from the No. 4 to the No. 5 cause of death in the U.S.
You Make Magic Happen

Stroke Association initiatives, and also to tell the stories of fellow Cor Vitae Society members across the nation who share your passion for building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

As a Cor Vitae Society member, your extraordinary generosity makes it possible for the American Heart Association to continue taking bold steps forward in every aspect of our mission. You are the inspiration behind new, ground-breaking initiatives like the Cardiovascular Genome-Phenome Study (CVGPS), which recently announced its first eight grant recipients, and our Strategically Focused Research Network platform, which is now in its second year and includes networks for health disparities, heart failure, hypertension, prevention, and women’s cardiovascular health.

Your commitment also allows us to train more people each day in CPR and other emergency cardiovascular care skills; bring our quality of care and systems of care platforms to more hospitals and communities; advocate for improved public health legislation; raise awareness of stroke symptoms and risk factors; and much more.

Above all, The Heart of Life is a way to express our appreciation for all you do on our behalf by shining a light on the many ways that you are making a difference. I hope you enjoy our Spring 2015 issue, and we look forward to your comments and suggestions you have for future issues. Thank you again.

Nancy A. Brown, CEO
American Heart Association

I
did you know that you lose about 2 million brain cells a minute when you have a stroke?
This is why it is critical to know the F.A.S.T. acronym (see right).

Immediate medical treatment may minimize the long-term effects of a stroke and prevent death. To reduce the risk of having a stroke, adopt a healthy lifestyle and get your blood pressure checked regularly.

Our collective power is making huge strides in the efforts to Prevent, Treat, and Beat Stroke!

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new building, everyone looks up and marvels at the shiny structure. The reality is, this overnight sensation was years in the making. It took time to draw up the plans, raise the money and then to actually build it, from the framework to screwing in every lightbulb.
A comparison can be made to the downward trend of stroke deaths. After generations of efforts, stroke dropped to the No. 5 leading cause of death in the U.S.
For those of us who’ve devoted our careers to battling this disease, this news is incredibly exciting. The best part? We know we can still do better.

We know we can prevent even more strokes.
We know we can effectively treat stroke, improving the quality of life for survivors. We also know we can’t do it alone.

So is fixing things when they go wrong. Following this formula can help a car make it past 100,000 miles without major problems. Eventually a car’s age will catch up to it, but by then, it can have traveled a lot of miles.

Like the hoses and belts of a car, a person’s blood vessels wear out over time. Yet, the less strain and the better care you provide, the better they can be when they sign. There’s an accumulative effect of risk factors over time. So everyone should take stroke risk factors seriously.

Our contract power is making huge strides in the efforts to Prevent, Treat, and Beat Stroke!

As a society, we need to reduce risk factors. Systems changes such as anti-smoking laws and getting food companies to reduce sodium in their products are important steps. People also need to make changes in their own lives, and their doctors need to treat their underlying conditions.

Let’s use a new analogy: a car. The best way to make it last is by taking care of it. Routine maintenance is important.

When we do have effective treatments such as tPA and devices to open up occluded blood vessels and medications and devices to fix ruptured brain aneurysms and blood vessels.

May is American Stroke Month

The next layer in our progress against this disease is improving recovery by finding more and better ways to help people who have substantial brain injury from stroke.
I often say the future of stroke research is how we can enhance stroke recovery. Many people fear the consequences of living with stroke more than dying from a stroke—the loss of a career, the inability to drive, needing others to provide basic daily care for you. The physical and emotional cost is immeasurable, the financial burden is rough, too.

So, to me, the news about stroke dropping to the No. 5 cause of death in the U.S. is exciting, yet not quite worthy of a ribbon-cutting ceremony. It feels more like halfway point in construction.

What we’ve done so far looks great—it’s a demonstration that success is possible. But there’s still more work to be done by all of us.

Joseph Broderick, M.D. is director of the University of Cincinnati Stroke Center and chief of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Stroke Council.

Building Healthier Lives Free of Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke
American Heart Association CorVitae Society
Members Donate Millions for Research

David & Stevie Spina

Longtime American Heart Association supporters David and Stevie Spina are donating $2.5 million to support research that would personalize ways to treat and prevent heart disease and stroke, the world’s top two killers.

The donation, announced in early March, supports the Cardiovascular Genome-Phenome Study (CVGPS), which uses data from major studies to examine topics like cardiovascular aging and death in diverse populations, interactions between genes and diet in blood vessel problems, and genetic signatures of tobacco exposure.

David Spina has served in a variety of volunteer leadership positions and currently serves on the AHA’s national board of directors. In 2003, after a heart attack and bypass surgery, his involvement became personal. “Having a heart attack and observing the procedures to stabilize and restore my health allowed me to have a clearer understanding and appreciation of the knowledge and skill used by the medical team helping me,” he said. “Today’s knowledge is vastly more effective than the information available only 40 years ago, and the death rates from heart attack and stroke are much lower as a result.”

Spina said he faced two kinds of challenges after his heart attack and bypass surgery – physical and emotional. He wrestled with diet and lifestyle changes while learning to keep up with doctors’ appointments and prescriptions. His sense of independence also took a hit.

“When my heart attack and bypass surgery, I felt a profound sense of dependency,” Spina said. “I needed every bit of help I could get from the medical staff who cared for me. My personal challenge was to restore my sense of self-confidence to enable me to be confident about my future.”

Spina’s ordeal increased his desire to give back after “the help, skill and compassion that helped me when I needed it so much.”

In total, the Spinas have donated more than $6 million to the AHA. In 2008, they helped the association fund centers that research ways to improve outcomes for heart disease and stroke patients. The centers trained more than 20 post doctoral fellows in outcomes research, 15 of whom have moved into faculty positions. More than 300 studies were published based on the centers’ research.

The new donation adds to the Spinas’ “already powerful legacy of philanthropy, which has benefited the American Heart Association mission in many important ways,” said organization CEO Nancy Brown. “All of us are inspired by their commitment to knowledge advancement and the discovery of unprecedented approaches to preventing and treating cardiovascular diseases and stroke.”

CVGPS researchers are accessing massive volumes of data from multiple studies, including the Framingham Heart Study, which has tracked cardiovascular disease in three generations of New Englanders, and the Jackson Heart Study, which focuses on cardiovascular diseases’ impact on African-Americans. Spina believes CVGPS will make cardiovascular research even more effective in the future.

“I’ve learned the pivotal role the American Heart Association plays in translating scientific learning into daily use by doctors and hospitals, and the extensive work it does educating the public about heart health,” he said. “My work let me develop a sense of confidence in the organization and its effectiveness in pursuing its mission. I hope my investment in CVGPS will encourage others to invest in the AHA too.”

“During my heart attack and bypass surgery, I felt a profound sense of dependency,” Spina said. “I needed every bit of help I could get from the medical staff who cared for me. My personal challenge was to restore my sense of self-confidence to enable me to be confident about my future.”

Spina’s ordeal increased his desire to give back after “the help, skill and compassion that helped me when I needed it so much.”

In total, the Spinas have donated more than $6 million to the AHA. In 2008, they helped the association fund centers that research ways to improve outcomes for heart disease and stroke patients. The centers trained more than 20 post doctoral fellows in outcomes research, 15 of whom have moved into faculty positions. More than 300 studies were published based on the centers’ research.

The new donation adds to the Spinas’ “already powerful legacy of philanthropy, which has benefited the American Heart Association mission in many important ways,” said organization CEO Nancy Brown. “All of us are inspired by their commitment to knowledge advancement and the discovery of unprecedented approaches to preventing and treating cardiovascular diseases and stroke.”

CVGPS researchers are accessing massive volumes of data from multiple studies, including the Framingham Heart Study, which has tracked cardiovascular disease in three generations of New Englanders, and the Jackson Heart Study, which focuses on cardiovascular diseases’ impact on African-Americans. Spina believes CVGPS will make cardiovascular research even more effective in the future.

“I’ve learned the pivotal role the American Heart Association plays in translating scientific learning into daily use by doctors and hospitals, and the extensive work it does educating the public about heart health,” he said. “My work let me develop a sense of confidence in the organization and its effectiveness in pursuing its mission. I hope my investment in CVGPS will encourage others to invest in the AHA too.”

life is why™

Faces of Cor Vitae - Profiles of passion & Commitment
Compassion is why - Maria Lamas Shojaee

My mother was diagnosed with aortic stenosis in 2012 and on January 8, 2015 had a TAVR-Trans catheter Aortic Valve Replacement. Dr. Mauricio Cohen and the outstanding cardiovascular team at the University of Miami Hospital performed the minimally invasive procedure, a procedure that was approved by the FDA just a few years ago. It was a total success. My mother is doing great! Our dollars help make an impact on the AHA’s mission of being at the forefront on cardiovascular medical discoveries and solutions. The continued commitment to building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke is truly exceptional.

Commitment is why - John Calipari

John Calipari came to Lexington, Kentucky to do more than coach the University of Kentucky men’s basketball team to a National Championship. He also works with the community to build a legacy that extends beyond basketball.

Coach Calipari’s support for the American Heart Association began in 2012 when former UK coach, Joe B. Hall, was honored at the Central Kentucky Heart Ball. Since that time, Calipari has learned more about the mission of the AHA, including the millions of dollars in cardiovascular research being funded at the University of Kentucky.

Calipari’s engagement with our mission continues to grow every year. He provides one-of-a-kind live auction experiences that would be any basketball fan’s dream and on multiple occasions stepped on the Heart Ball stage to help raise funds. We thank Coach Calipari and the University of Kentucky for their continued support of our mission.

My Family & Yours is why - Bob Kinder

This past December, we celebrated seven years post-transplant for my son Ty and in February, we celebrated Ty’s 24th Birthday. Ty would likely not be with us today if not for the funding American Heart Association has provided to researchers and doctors over the many years.

Ty’s journey isn’t over. He still has much to look forward to in life. He will also likely have to undergo another heart transplant at some point down the road. The research and development that the AHA supports could be vital to Ty’s future, to our family’s future, to the future of millions of other families out there.
Faces of Cor Vitae - Profiles of Passion & Commitment

Joy is why - Dan & Susan Kane

For more than 20 years, Dan and Susan Kane have been very special part of our Heart Family. Their number one priority is taking care of their family and loved ones - and that means investing in the American Heart Association's work to build healthier lives free of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

“We support the American Heart Association because it brings us joy,” said Dan and Susan Kane. “The Association saves and changes lives with their expert advice for a healthy heart. We are proud supporters.”

The Kanes have taught their three beautiful children to live healthy lifestyles by setting a great example.

They exercise and eat a healthy diet full of fish and vegetables while limiting their intake of white flour and sugar.

Their dedication to the mission of the American Heart Association is truly inspirational. We are so thankful for Dan and Susan and the lives they have saved with their generous support.

Dylan Keller
Honored Heart Survivor
Fishers, Indiana

Dying a routine check up for our 3-month old son, our doctor heard a heart murmur. After a few short tests, we were told our son, Dylan, was born with aortic valve stenosis. The weight of our new reality quickly mounted as we were told we would monitor his situation until it became “bad enough” to require surgery.

We knew what the issue was and knew it needed to be fixed. Why wait? The answer was simple, the surgery would be invasive and extensive. We would also learn that waiting actually improved his chances of better long-term results.

Based on appearances and just sheer energy, you never would’ve known Dylan’s heart wasn’t healthy. But in January 2013, he began to show signs. In June of that same year, he had life saving open-heart surgery. Thanks to critical heart research, like the research performed by the AHA, our son is alive and thriving. We want to continue that gift for families everywhere by supporting the AHA.

A Healthy Lifestyle is why - Tamara Millikin

Tamara often shares that her passion for life and reason for supporting the American Heart Association comes from a personal need to support a healthy lifestyle that leads to a healthy heart! Tamara and her husband of twenty years, Keith, have been involved with the Greater Charlotte AHA since 2007, and employees of AHA corporate sponsor Deloitte for 18 years. Early in 2007, Tamara saw her health gradually deteriorating and after a discussion with her physician, they developed a plan for improvement.

She soon joined a gym, hired a personal trainer and focused on nutrition. While it has not been an easy change, she has reaped the benefits.

Tamara has run four marathons including the Marine Corps Marathon and Myrtle Beach Marathon and hopes to run the Dopey Challenge at Walt Disney World in 2016. She looks forward to meeting other AHA supporters when she runs the Chicago Marathon later this year!

Together We Build A Culture of Health

You Change the Culture by Changing the Conversation

By sharing your why, your story helps build a sustainable culture of health that energizes and inspires others to get involved with our cause. Together, we can make a difference so that all Americans live in environments that support healthy behaviors, timely and quality care and well-being.

Small conversations can lead to big changes in every community.

The American Heart Association’s 2020 Impact Goal

By 2020, to improve the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20% while reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20%.

2014–2017 HEALTH IMPACT PRIORITIES

- Reduce Tobacco Usage
- Reduce Sodium Consumption
- Increase Fruit/Vegetable Consumption
- Decrease Sugar Sweetened Beverage Consumption
- Increase Physical Activity
- Increase High Blood Pressure Control
- Improve Acute Systems of Care
- Increase Cardiac Rehab Completion
Excess levels of sodium/salt may cause:

- **Increased water retention**, leading to:
  - Puffiness
  - Bloating
  - Weight gain

Excess levels of sodium/salt may put you at risk for:

- Stroke
- Heart failure
- Osteoporosis
- Stomach cancer
- Kidney disease
- Kidney stones
- Enlarged heart
- Muscle
- Headaches

**9 out of 10** Americans consume too much sodium.

**WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?**

- **65%** supermarket, convenience store
- **25%** restaurants
- **10%** other sources

**3,400 milligrams** the amount of sodium the average American consumes in a day

**1,500 milligrams or less** recommended daily allowance of sodium

**HEALTH**

- Excess levels of sodium/salt may put you at RISK for:
  - Stroke
  - Heart failure
  - Osteoporosis
  - Stomach cancer
  - Kidney disease
  - Kidney stones
  - Enlarged heart
  - Muscle
  - Headaches

**APPEARANCE**

- Excess levels of sodium/salt may cause:
  - Increased water retention, leading to:
    - Puffiness
    - Bloating
    - Weight gain

Learn more at StrokeAssociation.org/prevent

**Boost fruit and vegetable consumption worldwide may reduce the global impact of stroke.**

The average adult should eat 4-5 servings of both fruits and vegetables per day based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

- **Eat 4-5 servings**
- **Get important nutrients**
- **Prevent stroke**
- **Improve health**

**1. Eat 4-5 servings**

- **The average adult should eat 4-5 servings** of both fruits and vegetables per day based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

**2. Get important nutrients**

- **Diet rich in a variety of colors and different fruits and vegetables can help you get nutrients that are good for your heart and brain health.**

**3. Improve health**

- **Increased fruit and vegetable consumption may decrease stroke risk by lowering blood pressure and improving small vessel function.**

**4. Prevent stroke**

- **Boosting fruit and vegetable consumption worldwide may reduce the global impact of stroke.**

**HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**

- **is a leading risk factor for death in WOMEN in the United States, contributing to nearly 200,000 female deaths each year.**

- **77.9 million American ADULTS have high blood pressure.**

- **KIDS who have a high-sodium diet are twice as likely to develop high blood pressure as kids who have low-sodium diets.**

**WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

- **Stiff neck**
- **Blurred vision**
- **Confusion**
- **Numbness or weakness**
- **Tingling in fingers or toes**
- **Sweating**
- **Headache**
- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Vision changes**
- **Loss of balance or coordination**

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE HAS A STROKE?**

1. **Call 9-1-1** immediately.
2. **Tell first responders** you think someone is having a stroke.
3. **Limit what the person eats and drinks.**
4. **Tell doctors at the hospital what happened before the stroke.**