

# OZIEL GRAND CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



Issue 008

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February is the month of love and the perfect time to give your heart some extra attention. Between Valentine's Day cards, sweet treats, and romantic dinners, it's easy to forget that your real heart deserves love too. Since February is also Heart Health Month, it's a great excuse to turn healthy choices into acts of affection. Think heart healthy meals, a walk with someone special, stress less, and laugh more. This February, celebrate love in all its forms by keeping your heart happy, strong, and ready for many more Valentine's Days to come.

## **Spotlight: Sis. Erika Bennett – Caring For Your Heart**

In 2010, I moved back to New Jersey to care for family. Finding the right doctors became frustrating, so I stopped trying. By 2013, I started feeling "off", episodes of weakness that I brushed aside. One February morning, with temperatures around 15–20 degrees, I began sweating on my way to work. I ignored that too.

By chance, I walked past a cardiologist's office and made an appointment. I skipped the first one but kept the second. So I casually mentioned symptoms I was experiencing. A stress test led to a cardiac catheterization, which led to stents.

While being taken to recovery, I said I needed to use the bathroom and that I had heartburn. The staff told me to lie down. I kept saying I was uncomfortable. The doctor ordered an EKG, and when he ordered medication, being a nurse I knew exactly what was happening. All I could do was start crying. The last thing I remembered him saying was, "Don't cry, I got you." I woke up in the ICU and blessed.

It wasn't experiencing heartburn, I was having a heart attack. Here I am in my early 40s and never would have believed it. Had this happened outside of a hospital setting, I would have ignored it, and likely wouldn't be here today.

Living heart-compliant hasn't been easy. I still want chips, crack chicken (if you know, you know), and foods I shouldn't have. I've learned to give myself grace. This is a journey, and I stumble sometimes.

I'm sharing this for anyone as stubborn or hard-headed as I am/was: listen to your body. Make time for your health. It can save your life.

## **We'd Love to Hear From You!**

Any member of the Oziel Grand Chapter is welcome to contribute tips, personal experiences, advice, or other topics for inclusion in the monthly newsletter. Submissions may remain anonymous if desired. **Please send your submissions to Sis. Erika Bennett at [healthfirst@ogcoespha.org](mailto:healthfirst@ogcoespha.org).** Let's continue to support & inspire one another on the journey of health and wellness.