It was the summer of 2011, and I could sense something was off. I noticed some labored breathing. I was an active 29-year-old, going to the gym, playing sports and working full-time as an environmental engineer. “It must be some sort of lung infection,” I thought. I went to a doctor and told him my symptoms. He took some chest x-rays and sent me on my way, prescribing an inhaler, telling me it should improve my symptoms. It did not. After a CT scan and a trip to the local urgent care, it was discovered that I had an enlarged heart and needed to get to the hospital immediately. I met my cardiologist, Dr. Joseph Battaglia, in the emergency room at Crouse Medical Center in Syracuse, New York and was given a diagnosis of dilated cardiomyopathy. The cause was likely some sort of virus that attacked my heart. The virus was already out of my system, but once the damage was done, it was done. During my hospital stay, I had abnormally fast heart rhythms, known as ventricular tachycardia (VT). When I left the hospital, I was given a life vest to wear (which can deliver a life-saving shock in the early hours of the morning while I was asleep). I was taken to the hospital by ambulance and implanted with an internal implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) later that day.

In April 2012, my daughter Ella was born, which gave me new meaning and perspective. From that point on, I managed to live with my condition without too much trouble. In April 2014, Sara and I welcomed our second daughter Eva. In September 2014, I was shocked to be diagnosed with a fever and a hacking cough. One of New England’s premier heart transplant centers, Tufts Medical Center in Boston, MA

In mid-November, two days before I planned to return to work, I was readmitted to Tufts Medical Center because of blood clot concerns. I spent Thanksgiving in the hospital. December arrived and I was preparing to settle in for the long haul in my hospital room. Encouragement came when I was notified I was the “backup” for a donor heart. Then, on December 10, a little after midnight, I was awoken by a group of the wonderful nurses. They said, “Kyle, we have a heart for you.”

How is Life Post-transplant?

December 10, 2014 is the beginning of a new story for me, one that I am still writing. I look at life a little differently now. How could I not? I’ve been given a great gift and consider myself very lucky. I take time to thank my donor and family every single day. The support of my beautiful wife along with the rest of my family, friends and co-workers and medical staff was overwhelming. Beyond that, getting to know members of Team HeartBrothers and talking to people who have been through it all before made such a difference in my perspective. We all share a common bond. It is at the heart of all we do.

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Heart failure. Two words that sound devastatingly hopeless. So imagine being one of the 6.5 million people living in North America facing this potentially fatal condition. Where do you turn for help? How can you get support? Who can offer you hope?

We Are The HeartBrothers Foundation

Established in 2014 by Pat Sullivan and Bob Romer, two heart failure survivors and now best friends, The HeartBrothers Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation that serves as a beacon of help and hope for patients and their loved ones trying to navigate the complex world of heart failure (HF), ventricular assist devices (VADs) and heart transplantation. With more than 30 years of combined experience living with the overwhelming challenges of heart failure, Bob and Pat have a unique perspective on the condition and a deep understanding of what patients and their loved ones go through every single day. As survivors, they decided the best way to pay it forward was to give back. A true sense of gratitude and an opportunity to fulfill a need for HF patients and their families inspired Bob, Pat, and their wives to create The HeartBrothers Foundation.

Almost 13.5 million people globally suffer from heart failure.

HeartBrothers Programs

Launched in Boston, at a renowned medical center for cardiovascular care and heart transplant surgery, our assistance programs currently serve patients throughout New England, upstate New York and beyond. We coordinate with hospitals to help fill the financial gaps that exist between a patient’s medical insurance and comprehensive, compassionate hospital care. We assist families in covering costs that exist in that “gap” including transportation, parking, lodging and meals associated with long-term medical stays.

Types of Programs Include:

- Heart of Survival: Providing gap assistance and tools for patients and families enduring long-term hospitalization.
- Angel Transport: Assisting patients with medical/ambulance transportation costs (and other services) not typically covered by medical insurance agencies.
- Support Blog: Bringing those in the heart failure community together.
- Team HeartBrothers: A volunteer team of heart transplant survivors and LVAD recipients providing face-to-face interaction with patients and families, along with assisting in fundraising and organ donation awareness.
- Organ Donation Awareness: Increasing awareness about the services offered by various organ donation organizations through Team HeartBrothers.

Our Sole Mission

“We bring resources together to help HF patients and their loved ones survive a life with heart failure and all its challenges.”

Through grass roots fundraising efforts and generous donations from individuals and corporations, we’ve been able to continuously expand our efforts to help HF families in need. Essential support includes medical insurance assistance programs, informative stress-coping resources and connections with the global HF community. What’s more, we’ve been able to increase awareness about heart failure and the progress being made today to offer more people the promise of more tomorrows.

Submit a “Heart Prayer”

If you know someone struggling with heart failure, or anything else for that matter, The HeartBrothers Foundation welcomes you to submit a “Heart Prayer” on his or her behalf. Simply go to heartbrothersfoundation.org and click on the “Submit a Heart Prayer” link.

Failing Hearts Need Helping Hands

No matter how big or how small, your donation can give someone living with heart failure today the promise of more tomorrows. Please consider donating. Your generosity is truly appreciated. For more information or to make a donation please visit our website at heartbrothers.org and click on the DONATE tab. To donate by check, make a check payable to: “The HeartBrothers Foundation” and mail to:

The HeartBrothers Foundation
225 Cedar Hill Road, Suite 200
Marlborough, MA 01752

To contact us directly, please call (800) 262-0431 or email us at us@heartbrothers.org.

An average of 600,000 new HF cases are diagnosed each year. 50% will die in five years.

20% of Americans will develop heart failure in their lifetime.