



Rickey's Roundtable:

In Memoriam

Brandon Scott Hess

**January 27, 1991 – February 9,
2020**



It is with a very heavy heart that I write the March Edition for Rickey's Round-Table. As many of you know, we lost one of our founding Administrators for the Facebook Group and our Website, on Sunday, February 9, 2020. I am dedicating this column in memory of Brandon.

I had been in the hospital to have an LVAD implanted in me. Prior to having the surgery, I had joined a group for people with an LVAD.

Rickey's Roundtable Cont:

On day 3 after my surgery I received a private message from Brandon asking me if I was able to talk, and if so how did surgery go. I was not wanting to talk, but I was so touched by his love and care for me, a person he never met, that I gave him my cell number and told him I would love to hear from him. That began a conversation which ended on February 9, 2020. Brandon was there every step of the way with me letting me know of what to expect, what to keep an eye out for, you name it he covered it. At that time Brandon told me he was in Hospice, and I was stunned to know that someone in Hospice would take the energy to reach out to me. I later found out that this was Brandon.

After I was released from the hospital, the conversation with Brandon continued, sometimes 4 or 5 times a day, he would call me or I would call him, and those nights when I could not get to sleep, he was there to talk with me, and share stories about our

lives. Brandon came up with the idea, through these conversations that we should start a facebook group that was different from the others, one that would be positive, supportive and full of love and care. We did not and would not tolerate any type of negativity or bullying. We also decided we would not under any circumstances permit current or past politics to be a part of the group.

Brandon and I initially thought we would have maybe 25-30 people join and we were under no illusions of grandeur, we knew that it would be a process for people to hear of us and ask to join. We also decided we would build a website of the same name as the facebook group and that this website would provide information through links, videos, etc. to help those with a VAD lead a more mobile and positive life. We NEVER EXPECTED what happened next, before we knew it we were up to 125 people within 2 weeks! Both Brandon and I knew that in order for us to be able to continue with this, we would need help.

Rickey's Roundtable Cont:

I reached out to Carrie, who is like a sister to me, and asked her if she would help us and be an administrator. Carrie and her husband Tom visited me in the hospital while recuperating from my VAD surgery and had a glimpse of what things would be like for me. Both of them also had previous experience as caregivers for Carrie's father who also had heart issues, among other things. Brandon and I knew both Carrie & Tom would be a perfect fit; before you knew it Brandon and I had brought on board not only Carrie and Tom, but Pastor Carroll Glasscock to help with anyone looking for solice, prayers or counseling.

Brandon & I's little group mushroomed to over 330 people in no time, and the dream he had to help others through a website and a facebook page, he was able to realize prior to leaving us. Perhaps the best legacy Brandon left behind was helping to create LVAD And You Facebook Group and Website as both of these have

accomplished our goals, to help assist, and improve the quality of life for those with a VAD.

I was blessed to have spent time visiting him at his house. He and Chris would always welcome Sean and I with open arms. Chris and Sean would go off on their shopping trips while Brandon and I would spend hours talking and enjoying each other. It always ended with me cooking dinner for everyone, and what wonderful times we had with our "dinners."

Having to say "goodbye" is the most difficult thing we have to do in life. Some of us may not realize we are saying "goodbye" but in all actuality we are and we must never lose sight of the fact that no matter how much we want to have a loved one here with us, when God decides he needs another angel, nothing will stop our loved one from transitioning from this life to the next as an angel. I have to think of Brandon with this though in my mind and heart, I have to constantly tell myself that Brandon is up there now, watching over all of us in this amazing group.

Rickey's Roundtable Cont:

LVAD And You has our own angel up there, taking care of all of us!

To his life partner Chris, thank you for all of the love and care you provided to Brandon, not just during his battle with the LVAD but, the decade you both spent together. Thank you Chris for sharing with Sean and I the memorial service and thank you Chris for being there for so many others, when you had your hands full.

R.E.



Prayer Tuesday

Psalms 133:1

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

Weight Loss Warriors:

Hello Warriors, We have so much to be excited about! Spring being just around the corner and the growth of our group family. Strength in numbers you know. Warriors Strong!!! We are here for each and everyone to celebrate victories and assist you through the rough times also. I will be making a lot more videos and of course sharing food finds. Warriors, help us to properly help you. Chime in and let us know what you want and you need. Everyday is a new beginning so let's make March a month full of good healthy choices and sharing. Love You All.

Patti Goers

From The Chef's Kitchen



Winter Squash Soup

After the heavy snow of weeks past, it's time for some warm soup made with winter squash, like Butternut or Hubbard. Whether you still have some in storage in your basement or recently purchased from the supermarket, let's make some soup. In less than an hour you'll have a very tasty soup not from a can. You can make a large tossed salad and pick up a fresh Italian bread or your favorite crusty bread to eat with this soup. A glass of wine and some smooth jazz and your evening is off to a great start.

Ingredients:

- 2 Tablespoons of Olive Oil
- 1 Medium Sweet Onion Chopped
- 1 Clove of Garlic Chopped
- 1 Tablespoon of fresh Ginger Chopped
- 1 Small Red Chilli Pepper, seeded and finely Chopped
- 1 Tablespoon of parsley finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon of chives finely chopped
- 1 Bay Leaf
- 8 cups of peeled and chopped squash
- 2 and ½ cups of vegetable broth
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- Sour Cream to garnish

From The Chef's Kitchen Cont.

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a large sauce pan over medium heat, Add you onions and garlic and cook until soft (4-5 Minutes). Add you ginger, peppers, Bay Leaf, chives, parsley, and squash. Cook for 5 minutes stirring well to coat the squash.
2. Pour in the vegetable broth and broth and bring to a boil. If foam should form remove it with a slotted spoon. Reduce the heat to simmer and stir occasionally until the squash is tender and soft (about 25 minutes). Remove from heat. Remove the Bay Leaf. Let soup cool
3. You can use an electric hand blender or immersion blender to whip into a nice smooth soup or you can use a blender as necessary. Return to pot and and add Salt and Pepper to taste.
4. Reheat gently until hot to the touch and serve in warm bowls. Garnish with a spoon of sour cream, a bit of chopped chives or parsley, and serve.
5. Optional* While you soup is cooking, peel a medium potato and a couple carrots. Chop these into small 1 inch pieces and boil until tender. When your squash has been cooked and pureed, drain the potato and carrots well and add to to the soup for a bit more body and flavor to the soup. Mix well and allow to reheat gently with the squash mixture and serve.



Facebook Give-Away Winners Are:

November 2019 - Wendy Connick
Lake Helen, FL

December 2019 - Becky Rierson
Rose Hill, KS

January 2020 - C.J. Fisher
Bemidji, MN

February 2020 - Martin Goers
Michigan

**Be sure to register each month to
be entered into the drawing*

Member's Story

Hi my name is Ruben Sud I'm 31 years old, I live in Brooklyn, New York. Here is my story... my journey... my testimony.

Growing up I was a good handball player., teaching those a lesson in then in the courts, now I can't even hold my balance., I love baseball and is my favorite sport., I remember going out early morning with my Ball n glove to go play catch with my friends, I had a good arm never the less., I don't even know if I'll ever be able to stand at a stance. Out of most of the talents god gave me drawing was my absolute favorite.,, it was a way to express the way I felt., I went off to learn how to airbrush which always expressed my feelings and made me a little cash on the side and everyone knew me for that talent., Now I can't even hold a pencil or pen to write my name due to Stroke on 3/2/18 over taking my left side completely.,,my mind says I can do it but when I try to put it to the test I'm stuck as if I was in cement.,,What a way to show the way I feel it's difficult and heartbroken to know all the things you were good at you no longer good at all.,,

Member's Story Cont.

I guess that's just a way of God showing us he can clean you And literally make you brand new with new talents. Also give you a new look and a new style with new friends a renewed mind and a humbled heart. He is literally taking the heart of stone that I once had and giving me one of flesh. in the beginning of 2017 I reconciled with the Lord and gave my life to him. I am not a man of God a believer in Jesus Christ. In November of 2017 I prayed to God and told him I wasn't giving him enough time working 2 jobs 7 days a week., yeah the bank was loaded but there was no time to enjoy it., so I left my weekend job in Faith that I was going to land a better one., throughout this process I was not being obedient to God still had a cigarette in my mouth and occasionally drinking a beer which led to another which led to a pint of cognac and next thing you know I was coming home drunk, despite all of those things God was faithful to me and I landed a job that I was hoping and praying for. I landed this job in December 2017 making triple my salary but only working Monday through Friday from 8 to 5.,, sweet. I was already two months into a new career I really liked it, it was pretty decent making good

money and around the beginning of February I started experiencing shortness of breath. I had asthma all my life but it really wasn't something that took a toll on me the way that it did this time around I didn't pay much mind to it. I ended up going to the emergency room, they prescribe me an asthma pump and prednisone I'll come home for about a week and noticed that the symptoms began to worsen so I consulted with my wife and told her I should go to another hospital because my legs are started to swell up and I was not breathing correctly. I began to cough up blood so I went to Brooklyn Hospital that's where they found out I had blood clots in my lungs. But they couldn't find out why I wasn't breathing normally so they ended up doing a ECO CARDIOLOGY EXAM that's when my EF was only at 15% my heart was failing. I was admitted I remember the day clear. It was Valentine's Day the day of the heart. There was something that was just not right, I wasn't living righteous for the Lord., I guess this was just a way of him showing me rather than taking me out. Depression kicked in and as anyone would feel I was torn. I ended up staying two weeks in the hospital. The goal was to control the blood clotting so that I won't get other blood clots.

Member's Story Cont.

I ended up catching a cerebellum stroke on 3/2/18 Which effected my left side. I remember that day clearly I had woke up in the middle of the night I try sitting up and I couldn't I had the nurses bell pressed for about 30 minutes and no one came to my rescue, I screamed and shouted and no one heard me, I looked at the door and it was shut on me by the nurses on the floor because they thought that I was a troublesome patient that was trying to make their life havoc.,reaching for my phone I called my wife to tell her something happened and I wasn't well, the sound of her voice put me to sleep. She rushed being the first person i could see in the morning., Her exact words were you don't look the same I had a glycerin shine in my eyes and my voice begin to slur. I stayed in bed for about 2 days after, just extremely tired and not wanting to be bothered due to the pain I had in my chest. Everything was working against me. I was laying on my deathbed, it was finally time for me to stand and get out of bed so that I can walk out of this hospital and go home. I put my 1st foot on the floor and then second and I tried to stand and I couldn't I tried to walk and I couldn't I was completely handicapped. I was

transferred to Mount Sinai hospital in Manhattan where they specialize in heart failure and cardiomyopathy. I ended up staying there for about a month. They were trying to find a diagnosis which to this day they have not found one. By this time my faith was beginning to dampen out, im glad I had a support system with me all steps of the way to lift me up. At this hospital I was told I would need a heart transplant and I will be sent home on a life vest temporarily. A life vest is a vest that you put on that monitors your heart in case there is an irregular heartbeat or it feels it needs to shock you. I was then transferred to NYU Lutheran in Brooklyn where I began physical therapy to get myself strong I began to stand with a walker and take baby steps. The hospital stay with another 30 days.I thought that was my breakthrough that the nightmare was over and I was able to get back to my normal life. It was then that I received a call that I no longer have employment. I was falling deeper into depression, I didn't know where my finances were going to come in from but thank God for he always supplies. The first couple of days that I was home were the best although I couldn't lay down in my own bed I slept on the recliner for about six days with pillows

Member's Story Cont.

surrounding me and again my wife by my side. Not knowing the symptoms of cardiomyopathy and heart failure I was still eating and drinking the way I was prior to this whole thing and I begin to feel worse, my symptoms began to worsen and I knew it was time for me to go back in to find out what was really going on. This time I went to NYU Langone a sister hospital in Manhattan. This is where I was told I was sent home with a life vest and a death certificate. With no hope I stood for 31 days I regain strength I was put on milrinone drip a medicine that makes my heart pump stronger. I was able to lose about 30 pounds which was all water weight. I had less strain on my heart making my heart work less hard. I was put through many test, 40 tubes of blood and being evaluated to be place on heart transplant list. I was placed status 4. It could take from 3 to 5 years to find me a heart but I know God is going to make a way. Meantime An ICD defibrillator was placed and was told I need to get an LVAD. I didn't know how to feel angry, anxious, excited, depressed. I was sent home yet again for 23 days on a drip and a decision that was going to change my life. I was getting admitted on

July 2 with a surgery date of July 5 to get this open heart surgery complete. I really didn't want to have the surgery but I know it was the only way for me to stay alive for my family. Surgery was a success and was discharged in seven days the fastest discharge I was told. 7/2018 I walked in a broken man physically and mentally but walk out victorious and under construction., I walked out without a without a walker I began using a cane able to do things for myself that I wasn't able to do 2 months ago. Although my chest was cut open, in my heart the love I have for my family and friends will never change. Fast forward to 3/2/19 the same day I had my stroke I was gifted a blessing from God.,my daughter Autumn Reign, I did bariatric surgery in March 15, 2019 and have lost 60 pounds to land me in better placement for a new heart. It's now January 2020 and I'm still on the road to recovery. Walking about a 1/2 a mile a day, starting cardiac rehab, and breathing much better. Ejection fraction is now at 40% All glory belongs to God. There is much more to my story... my journey... my testimony you can see it on YouTube - <https://youtu.be/GJ2ZsoOL9RM>

Carrie's Corner

Spring is upon us and on March 8th we will be “springing” our clocks forward 1 hour in observance of daylight savings.

March 17th is St.Patrick's Day. Be sure to wear your green.
C.F.

Member Comments Q&A

If you have a comment to make or have a specific question please send us an email from our Contact Us page on our website.