

Healthy **you**



192
POUNDS
LOST

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**Found
Frozen**

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10
Free
Events

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Free Wi-Fi is now available at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hazleton, the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton and at Lehigh Valley Physician Group–Alliance Drive. It's easy to use.

When you're inside one of these locations, use your laptop or mobile device to activate your Wi-Fi settings and to enroll in the guest open network. Once enrolled you'll receive credentials (a username and password). Your account will be valid for use for five days, after which reenrollment is necessary. There is no charge and no limit to the number of times you can register.

Community Events

Free! **What Every Person Should Know About Stroke**

Learn about the signs, symptoms, treatment and rehabilitation available. Call 570-501-4600 to register or for more information.
Jan. 6 and Feb. 3: 2-3 p.m.
LVH–Hazleton, sixth floor, Gunderson Center for Inpatient Rehabilitation

Free! **Foot/Ankle Pain – Community Program**

Learn about the underlying causes, as well as treatment options. Call 570-501-6204 to register or for more information. Guest speaker: Brittany Portonova, DPM, podiatric surgeon, Lehigh Valley Physician Group Orthopedics
Jan. 6: 5:30-6:30 p.m., Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton, lower level

Free! **Hip Pain – Community Program**

Learn about the underlying causes, as well as treatment options. Call 570-501-6204 to register or for more information. Guest speaker: Peter Kozicky, MD, orthopedic surgeon Lehigh Valley Physician Group Orthopedics
Feb. 3: 5:30-6:30 p.m., Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton, lower level

Free! **Bariatric/Weight-Loss Management Information Session**

Learn about surgical and non-surgical weight-loss options. Call 570-501-6322 to register or for more information.
Jan. 4, Jan. 28, Feb. 8 and Feb. 18: 4:30-6 p.m., LVH–Hazleton, Business and Education Center, first floor conference room

Free! **Miller Keystone Blood Drive**

Call 570-501-6204 to register for a donation time. Please bring personal identification card.
Feb. 17: noon-5 p.m., LVH–Hazleton, first floor lobby conference room

Health Screenings

Free! **Blood Pressure Screening**

Jan. 8 and Feb. 5: 8-9 a.m. with Laurel Mall Walkers, Laurel Mall, Hazleton
Jan. 20 and Feb. 17: 11 a.m.-noon, Hazleton Active Adult Center, 24 E. Broad St., Hazleton

Infants and Children

Free! **Infant Care/Breastfeeding Class**

Call 570-501-4200 to register.
Jan. 20: 7-9 p.m., LVH–Hazleton Family Birthing Center

Infant/Child CPR Class

Free if enrolled in prenatal class series. Fee is \$25 per couple if not enrolled in prenatal class series or \$25 per additional person for registered couples. Call 570-501-4200 to register.
Jan. 27: 7-9 p.m., LVH–Hazleton Family Birthing Center

Free! **Car Seat Check**

Schedule your personal car seat check with our certified technician. Remember to bring your car seat. Appointment required. Call 570-501-4200.

Labor and Delivery Class Series

Call 570-501-4200 to register. \$40 per couple delivering at LVH–Hazleton; \$50 for non-LVH–Hazleton deliveries
Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27: 7 p.m., LVH–Hazleton Family Birthing Center

Support Groups

(New members always welcome)

Free! **Bariatric Support Group**

Call 570-501-6322 for more information.
Jan. 20 and Feb. 17: 7-8 p.m. LVH–Hazleton, Business and Education Center, first floor conference room

Free! **Stroke Support Group**

New members welcome. Call 570-501-4632 for more information. **The group will not meet January and February.**

'I Won't Let Parkinson's Dominate Me'

REHAB PROGRAM HELPS JOSEPH KUBERT KEEP MOVING AND SPEAKING

When Joseph Kubert (above) was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 16 years ago, he worked hard to maintain his sense of humor and stay active. With the help of medications and deep brain stimulation surgery, the Tamaqua man continued working in his vegetable garden, cooking, writing and enjoying his family. "I consider myself a positive person," says Kubert, 71, a retired industrial chemist.

Parkinson's is a nervous system disorder that affects movement, causing stiffness, tremors, balance difficulties and speech changes. And as the disease progressed, Kubert found it harder to stay active and communicate.

"I kept losing my balance and once fell into my patio table, shattering the glass," he says. He also had trouble stepping sideways into a church pew and developed an embarrassing stutter that made talking difficult. "My nephew once said I scared him when I talked," he says.

REHAB RESCUE

Kubert tried physical and speech therapy, but relapsed because he didn't continue the exercises. Yet he decided to try again after learning about the high-intensity Parkinson's Rehab Program at the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton. It offers

specialized speech therapy and a physical therapy team certified in LSVT BIG, an evidence-based exercise treatment approach developed from the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment program.

"Treatments that protect your brain, such as exercise, can slow the course of Parkinson's," says physical therapist Shai Post with the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton. Likewise, speech therapy helps Parkinson's patients speak better and stay socially connected.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

During the four-week program, Post, physical therapist assistant Rebecca Hunsinger and his rehab team helped Kubert improve his range of motion, strength and balance. He learned specific exercises to continue at home that help him walk backward, kneel, stand and step sideways. "He worked on slowing down and planning his next move," Post says. "He also increased the bigness of his movements, which become smaller and slower with Parkinson's."

Speech-language pathologist Jennifer Hoats with the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton taught Kubert breathing techniques and enunciation strategies to decrease his stuttering. "He practiced taking a breath and easing into words so they are clearer and more fluid," Hoats says.



Rebecca Hunsinger
Physical therapy



Shai Post
Physical therapy



Jennifer Hoats
Speech therapy

Next Step

LEARN MORE about the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton. Visit LVHN.org/hazleton/HWC.

For Kubert, rehab was a lifesaver. "It opened my eyes to the necessity of daily exercises," he says. "There's no cure for Parkinson's, but my therapists' positive attitude and encouragement taught me to make the most of what I have. I refuse to let Parkinson's dominate me."

—Sidney Stevens

FROM 414 TO 222



"I feel like
I'm 25 again."

-BOB FERRARI (AFTER SURGERY)

Next Step

LEARN MORE about the Northeast Bariatric Center. Visit LVHN.org/hazleton/bariatrics.



WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY GIVES BOB FERRARI HIS LIFE BACK

The moment of truth for Bob Ferrari came in the form of a number – 414.

“That was my highest weight,” says Ferrari, 48, of Sheppton. “I tried different diets all my life and couldn’t stay with them. I had high blood pressure and diabetes. I worried about becoming a liability to my family.”

So Ferrari attended a weight-loss surgery program at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hazleton. Yet he still wasn’t ready for surgery. “I tried another diet instead,” he says.

When that didn’t work, he scheduled an appointment with Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hazleton’s Northeast Bariatric Center.

Ferrari’s initial hesitancy is typical. Often people don’t make the decision to have weight-loss surgery until they are hurting physically and emotionally from the extra weight.

A THREE-MONTH JOURNEY

Once Ferrari was ready, he began a three-month process similar to what all patients at the Northeast Bariatric Center experience. He underwent a health evaluation and became better educated about diet, obesity and the surgery.

Ferrari lost 80 pounds prior to his procedure. “I walked religiously and ate a high-fiber, low-fat diet,” Ferrari says. “I did so well I thought about skipping the surgery. But with my diet history, I decided to go for it.”

On July 30, 2014, Ferrari underwent gastric sleeve surgery. His stomach was surgically reduced into a smaller “sleeve” with staples. Gas-

tric sleeve helps people feel full more quickly when eating and have less of an appetite overall due to the removal of the hunger-producing hormone ghrelin. It’s one of the newer and most popular options in weight-loss surgery.

A NEW WAY OF EATING

Ferrari followed the post-surgery diet program for about eight months after his surgery. Some days he didn’t want to eat at all. “If I would overeat, I couldn’t keep it down,” he says. “But you still have to eat properly while your body adapts. By the time I felt completely comfortable, I was used to eating healthier and enjoyed it.”

Today, Ferrari is nearly 200 pounds lighter than prior to surgery, weighing in at 222 pounds. His wife, Liz, sons Ryan, 18, and John, 11, and niece, Rory, 23, who lives with the family, all see a major difference in his daily demeanor. Even Ferrari’s co-workers at the commercial printing company where he works marvel at the change.

“I feel like I’m 25 again,” Ferrari says. “I have so much more self-confidence. My body physically feels healthier to me. I can actually sense it.” He shows his appreciation by speaking to prospective surgery candidates.

“I’m proud of myself in that I’m not even tempted to visit the bakery section at the supermarket,” he says. “I can pick up the peanuts, milk and protein products I need and leave. That’s quite a triumph for me. I’m happy to share that with others.”

—Ted Williams

'I Consider Myself a *Miracle*'

FOUND UNCONSCIOUS AND
FROZEN IN THE SNOW, **JUSTIN SMITH**
MAKES AN AMAZING RECOVERY



Justin Smith (center) and his family returned to the scene of where he was found last February, his story coming full circle one year later.

Next Step

Watch! WATCH JUSTIN'S STORY on video. Visit LVHN.org/healthyyou.

Justin Smith doesn't remember much of his survival story, but his family, friends and doctors do, and they're still amazed it's not an obituary.

Justin, 25, looked frozen solid the morning of Feb. 21, 2015, when his father found him near Tresckow Road, in Tresckow. Don Smith believed his only son was dead.

Justin was lying unconscious in a foot of snow, his blue eyes open and empty, his face purple, his body rigid. He likely had been there overnight as the temperatures plunged to a frigid -4 degrees F. He had no pulse and wasn't breathing; he showed no signs of life.

"I held him and sobbed, 'Justin, don't leave me,'" Don Smith says. "Then I called his mother and told her, 'Justin's dead.'"

HOW HE GOT THERE

An avid golfer and sports fan, Justin had been in the snow for some nine hours, coatless, after leaving a fire hall in Tresckow. He drank beer with his buddies, remembering his best friend who had died 10 years ago in an auto accident that Justin had survived.

A paramedic on scene called Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Hazleton's emergency department for guidance from emergency medicine physician Gerald Coleman, DO. He expected Coleman to tell him resuscitation efforts would be futile.

That's when Justin's luck changed: Coleman ordered the first responders to begin CPR and rush him to the hospital. "You're not dead until you're warm and dead," Coleman says.

Hours earlier he was quite alive. Justin recalls having a few beers, then leaving the fire hall around 9:30 p.m. He blacked out on his walk homeward, two miles away. Or was he headed to the spot where the fatal car crash had occurred in 2005? Regardless, he didn't get far from the fire hall.

HOURS OF CPR

In LVH-Hazleton's emergency room (ER), Coleman assessed Justin, unable to get a body temperature because he was so cold. Fifteen ER colleagues took turns doing two hours of CPR, performing emergency life support, slowly rewarming his body and providing exhausting lifesaving measures. Then Justin took an 18-minute flight via a MedEvac helicopter to LVH-Cedar Crest. Don Smith said a tearful goodbye to his son, telling him, "I'll see you down there. I love you."

Tim Hickey, RN, flight nurse, recalls thinking during the trip, "People in this situation don't survive." Throughout the flight, he and paramedic Mark Hopwood performed 100 chest compressions per minute, then ventilations, to keep blood flowing to Justin's brain. Still they saw no sign of life.

Continued on next page

"I held him and sobbed,
'Justin, don't leave me.'
Then I called his mother and told her,
'Justin's dead.'"

-DON SMITH



Shortly after MedEvac landed at LVH–Cedar Crest, cardiothoracic surgeon James Wu, MD, connected Justin to a machine that would warm and oxygenate his blood. Called extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), this technology normally is used as a last-ditch effort to save patients whose lungs and heart are damaged by the flu or a heart attack.

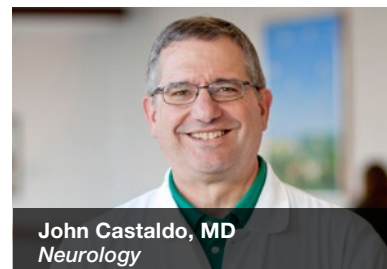
A 50-50 CHANCE

Wu knew this was Justin’s sole chance for survival, but he wasn’t overly optimistic. “I gave him a 50-50 chance for recovery,” Wu says. He told Justin’s family to be prepared for the worst. However, in 90 minutes, Justin’s body was warming, and soon his heart was beating on its own.

Neurologist John Castaldo, MD, examined Justin and found no signs of brain activity. He was being kept alive by machines and medicines, and he was in a coma. “There was little hope for functional survival,” he says.

A few days later, tests, scans and exams surprised Castaldo and his team, showing that Justin’s brain was normal. “We were jubilant,” Castaldo recalls. “We believed there was a miracle unfolding in front of us.”

Still, they wondered how far Justin would recover. Castaldo monitored him daily, thinking Justin might stay in a vegetative state because of the long time without oxygen. “At first, he had no awareness of his surroundings,” he says.



A GLIMMER OF HOPE

Justin continued improving physically. Family and friends kept a vigil at his bedside. A month passed, and one day Castaldo looked into Justin’s eyes for signs of brain function. “His eyes followed me; they tracked my face,” he says. This gave Castaldo hope his patient’s brain was recovering.

He needed care because neither his kidneys nor his lungs were working, and his toes and pinkies had to be amputated due to gangrene – all from the cold. But slowly his happy-go-lucky personality reemerged, and awareness

and some memory returned. He was on an unmapped road to recovery.

Justin had to relearn to use his hands and walk with his toeless feet, his new normal. After months of recovery, he was playing golf, rooting on the Phillies and planning to return to college to finish his degree in psychology, perhaps to help others who suffered accidents like him.

The mysteries of Justin’s long night out may be frozen in his brain forever, Castaldo says. But he’s alive to hear his tale of miraculous survival – leaving others to fill in the blanks – and to warn people to beware of the extreme cold.

–Rob Stevens

How a New Treatment Can Help AFib Patients

OUR EXPERTS DISCUSS HOW WATCHMAN™ HELPS PREVENT STROKES



Babak Bozorgnia, MD
Cardiology

Watch his video at LVHN.org/Bozorgnia.



Nainesh Patel, MD
Cardiology

Watch his video at LVHN.org/NPatel.

OUR EXPERTS

CARDIOLOGISTS BABAK BOZORGNIA, MD, AND NAINESH PATEL, MD, WITH LVPG CARDIOLOGY-1250 CEDAR CREST

Q WHAT IS WATCHMAN?

A: This new FDA-approved device reduces stroke risk for patients with difficult-to-treat AFib (atrial fibrillation), the most common type of heart arrhythmia. When the heart beats abnormally, blood may pool and clot in a section called the left atrial appendage (LAA). Clots can dislodge and travel to the brain, causing a stroke. AFib patients are five times more likely to suffer a stroke.

Blood-thinning medications are typically used to prevent clots. These include warfarin (Coumadin) and new oral anticoagulants such as Xarelto and Pradaxa. The WATCHMAN is an alternative to taking daily medications.

This umbrella-like device prevents clotting by permanently sealing off the LAA (a part of the body you can live without). It is implanted in the heart with a catheter inserted through a small incision in the groin. Afterward, tissue grows over the device and holds it in place. Lehigh Valley Health Network

(LVHN) is among a handful of centers nationwide – and the only one in the Lehigh Valley – to offer this procedure.

Q CAN WATCHMAN BENEFIT ALL AFIB PATIENTS?

A: The device is only approved for people with nonvalvular AFib (not related to heart valve disease). Initially, LVHN will offer the WATCHMAN to patients who don't tolerate blood thinners well or have a high risk for bleeding, such as people with gastrointestinal bleeding from ulcers or other conditions. Later, it may be offered to other AFib patients, including those at high risk for bleeding injuries, such as firefighters and fitness buffs (bicyclists, mountain climbers, etc.).

Q WHAT CAN I EXPECT DURING AND AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

A: Implanting WATCHMAN is an hour-long outpatient procedure. You stay overnight and leave in the morning. For the first 45 days, you take Coumadin (even if you were on another blood thinner before). Then you continue on aspirin and the blood thinner Plavix until the six-month mark, when healing is complete. Afterward, you are off blood thinners permanently and only take a daily aspirin.


Q ARE THERE RISKS?

A: Any surgical procedure carries risk, but studies show the WATCHMAN is extremely safe to implant. Once you heal, the risks virtually disappear, and you can safely enjoy your favorite activities.

-Sidney Stevens



Next Step

 **WATCH A VIDEO** that shows how WATCHMAN works. Visit LVHN.org/healthyyou.

Two Victories Over Heart Disease

LOCAL PEOPLE SHARE THEIR SURPRISING STORIES

You know heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women and men. Yet when the symptoms come – shortness of breath, palpitations, a rapid heartbeat, weakness, nausea or sweating – are you ready to act? Learn from two area residents who discovered the importance of paying attention to their symptoms:

'I KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON, AND I KNEW IT WASN'T GOOD'

Nurse anesthetist Linda Rocanelli, 59, of Mountain Top, works as an advanced practice nurse and knows about heart disease. Yet when she noticed a chronic cough, she assumed it was from her allergies. The swelling in her ankles? It was normal for someone who stood all day at work, she thought. Her shortness of breath? She figured it was another consequence of her allergies.

When she found a lump in her breast, however, Rocanelli took immediate action. A mammogram and biopsy revealed breast cancer, so Rocanelli underwent routine preoperative testing to make sure she was healthy enough to undergo surgery. That's when an electrocardiogram (EKG) revealed an abnormal heart rhythm. Her primary



Linda Rocanelli has returned to a favorite activity - canning - now that she's recovered.

care physician then sent her to the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton for additional cardiac testing.

"We got her right in," says Mary Alimecco, RN, director of cardiac services, Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hazleton. "She had a life-threatening problem with her heart, which turned out to be worse than her breast cancer."

The chambers of Rocanelli's heart were enlarged, preventing her heart from beating normally. If her problem had remained undiagnosed and untreated, Rocanelli could have suffered sudden cardiac death. "Getting breast cancer probably saved my life," she says.

Rocanelli was prescribed medication to improve her heart rhythm and allow her to withstand surgery. After her mastectomy, her doctors in Hazleton coordinated with doctors at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest in Allentown. She had a dual-chamber pacemaker with an internal cardiac defibrillator implanted in Allentown. She then underwent cardiac rehabilitation back home at the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton, working with a team of exercise physiologists, dietitians and nurses to regain her fitness.

Now less than a year later, Rocanelli is improving as she continues her at-

Fishing helps
Chris Chyko to relax.



home exercise regimen. She enjoys cooking, canning, reading and jigsaw puzzles. More important: She does not require a heart transplant at this time.

"The experience was wonderful," Rocanelli says. "Even though Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hazleton is a small place, we have excellent doctors. If it weren't for everyone here, I probably wouldn't be alive."

'IT FELT LIKE AN ELEPHANT WAS ON MY CHEST'

Christopher Chyko's annual physical exam offered no surprises. So when the 58-year-old Weston man began

coughing and feeling short of breath, he assumed he had a bad chest cold.

Even when he began coughing up blood, he never suspected a heart problem. Figuring he had pneumonia, he made an appointment with his family physician.

"He put the stethoscope on me and told me I had a problem with one of my heart valves," Chyko says. When testing revealed a tear in one of Chyko's valves, "I thought, 'You have the wrong person. These are someone else's test results.'"

After recovering from open-heart surgery, Chyko went to cardiac reha-



Mary Alimecco, RN
Cardiology



Corinne Stone
Exercise physiology

Next Step

LEARN MORE about the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton. Visit LVHN.org/hazleton/HWC.

bilitation at the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton, where exercise physiologist Corinne Stone helped him slowly regain his fitness.

"Not only does exercise help patients recover from surgery, it helps them reduce stress, maintain a healthy body weight and regulate their blood pressure, blood cholesterol and blood sugar, which are all important in maintaining a strong heart," Stone says. Because he never missed an appointment and diligently stuck to his fitness program, Chyko was named the HHWC's cardiac rehab male patient of the year in 2014.

With the help from cardiac rehab, Chyko lost 20 pounds, gave up fast food, reduced his sodium intake, and began walking with his wife and daughter. "Rehabilitation made me feel normal again," he says. "I looked forward to going."


Now one-and-a-half years later, "There are times I don't even think about what happened to me," he says.

—Alisa Bowman

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A PASSION FOR BETTER MEDICINE

We've just shortened the road to recovery.

For nearly 40 years, Lehigh Valley Health Network has been delivering the highest level of cancer care in our region. Now, we've brought it even closer to home. The new cancer center in Hazleton gives patients access to leading oncologists and the most advanced treatment options without leaving town. And it provides access to the strength and resources of Lehigh Valley Health Network's full cancer team. To learn more about the new cancer center in Hazleton, **visit LVHN.org/hazleton-cancer**.

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