



After viewing this website, receiving your invite from a friend, or hearing about this wonderful event, you might ask yourself, “How did this all come about?”

A telling story is the one that event sponsor Gwen Webber-McLeod has to share with the many supporters that will be sure to enjoy an evening focused on increasing awareness about heart disease amongst women and men in Cayuga County.

In December of 2003, Terri, Gwen’s sister, died suddenly due to an arrhythmic episode to her heart at the age of 45 years old. She resided in Marietta, Georgia, was a Speech Language Pathologist in the Marietta City School system, and was a respected community leader and educator. Prior to her death, she appeared to be perfectly healthy. She’d recently lost 22 pounds, had seen her physician, and was taking cholesterol medicine. She was doing all the right things. Then her heart just stopped beating. She left behind a husband and two children.

Terri’s death was life changing for Gwen. It inspired her to become involved in the “Go Red for Women” movement of the American Heart Association. Go Red is a nationwide campaign that celebrates the energy, passion and power of women banding together to eliminate heart disease. She decided to turn her grief into work that could prevent other women and men from such a traumatic event.

“To lose my sister to heart death was traumatizing. When she died, I decided to live my life full out. I saw Dr. Godishala to make sure my own heart was healthy. I began working out at the Auburn YMCA with a personal trainer and now teach a class there. In addition, I became involved with the Go Red For Women Campaign as a committee member and speaker to raise young women's awareness. If women learn about heart disease and how to prevent it earlier, we can change the fact that heart disease is the number one killer of American women.

“The Heart and Soul event started as a way to honor my beautiful sister. Now I want it to be a public awareness campaign that speaks to women in Cayuga County about the importance of being conscious of the condition of their hearts. As I thought about the event, I knew my big-hearted sister Terri would do the same if she was in my shoes. It is my pleasure and honor to host this event with four amazing young women leaders and to share important information and a party with a purpose with my community.

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