

'Saving sweethearts' goal of association programs

The American Heart Association is urging Oregonians to "save their sweethearts" during Heart Month in February and throughout the year.

This year's Heart Month theme, "Save a Sweetheart," focuses on the many children in Oregon who have been saved by advances in heart research and encourages Oregonians to save their sweethearts by adopting heart-healthy lifestyles for their families.

Katy Fackler, an active, healthy 11-year-old from The Dalles who had heart surgery at 6, is the Oregon affiliate's "sweetheart" during Heart Month. Her problem, a hole between the upper chambers of the heart, was diagnosed and repaired within 30 days.

Eight months later, Katy was back on the ski slopes with her family. "There are children all over Oregon who have had heart surgery and are now leading healthy normal lives," said Dr. T. David Lee, president of the American Heart Association in Oregon.

The association will fund about \$400,000 in heart research projects in Oregon this fiscal year.

The American Heart Association in Oregon is dedicated to fighting Oregon's and the nation's number one killer — heart disease, said Lee. Almost 10,000 Oregonians will die this year from heart-related diseases — about half of all the deaths in the state this year.

The American Heart Association urges people to join thousands of Oregonians who donate to the association in its fight to save

sweethearts throughout Oregon, said Lee. Between Feb. 14 and 28, about 4,000 volunteers in the metropolitan area and Lane County will walk their blocks asking neighbors to contribute to association programs. Oregonians also can contribute to the association in Oregon by calling 1-800-452-9445 or 226-2575 in Portland, or by writing AHA/Oregon, 1500 S.W. 12th St., Portland, 97201.

Lee also said good heart-health habits can help Oregonians to "save their sweethearts." "Though the chances of getting heart disease increase if there is a history of it in the family, adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle may help delay or prevent the triggering of heart disease," he said.

Lee noted that this means "reducing cholesterol, fats and excessive salt in the diet; quitting or avoiding smoking; controlling high blood pressure; maintaining ideal body weight through exercise and diet; and keeping diabetes under control."

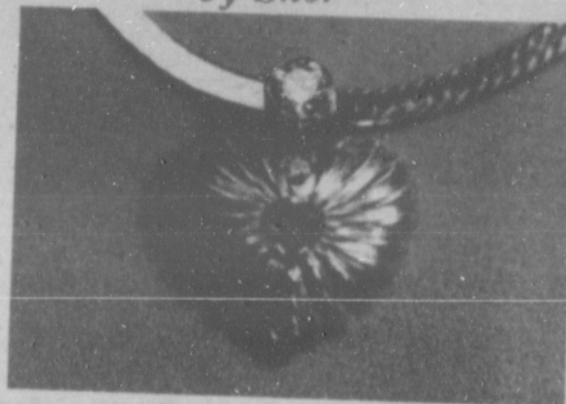
"Young people form lifetime eating habits based on what they eat at home, what other kids eat and what advertising teaches them," Lee said. "That means that parents may only be able to influence their children's eating habits at home."

The American Heart Association urges Oregonians to "save their sweethearts" during Heart Month and throughout the year by donating to the research efforts of the Heart Association and by encouraging heart health in their families, Lee said.

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