



Strengthening the Heart of Georgia

Become a *WomenHeart Champion*

**Empower Women in Your Community
To Take Charge of Their Heart Health!**

Are you a woman living with heart disease? Would you like to learn more about heart disease and educate women in your community about heart health? Would you like to connect with and support other women heart patients? Then apply today for this exciting new training program and become a *WomenHeart Champion*. It is one of the most meaningful things you can do for yourself and others in your community.

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

Founded in 1999 by three female heart attack survivors, WomenHeart educates women about prevention, early detection, accurate diagnosis, and proper treatment of heart disease.

Since 2002, WomenHeart has trained 564 *WomenHeart Champions*, who are telling their stories, sharing vital heart health information, and saving the lives of women across the country.

WomenHeart Champions are also leading 61 WomenHeart Support Networks for female heart patients nationwide, with 30 new groups scheduled to start in winter 2011. These are the only peer led support networks for women living with heart disease in the country!

Strengthening the Heart of Georgia

Join with 40 women heart disease survivors from Georgia to participate in a three-day **WomenHeart Science & Leadership Symposium in Atlanta, February 17-20, 2012**. This Symposium is based on WomenHeart's nationally recognized education and training program, which was developed in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic.

You will learn about the medical aspects of heart disease, how to educate women in your community, and how to lead a patient support network. You will also learn how to tell your personal story to inspire and empower other women to take charge of their heart health. You will meet and bond with other women living with heart disease, and learn from the nation's and Georgia's leading health care professionals, cardiologists, experts in women's health, and communications professionals.

Strengthening the Heart of Georgia will be implemented in 10 communities: Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, John's Creek, Macon, Marietta, Savannah, and Valdosta.

WomenHeart will select four women from each community to participate in the program. These women can plan and conduct activities together and form a WomenHeart Support Network in their community. This new program is made possible through the generous support of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia Foundation.

As a *WomenHeart Champion* you can decide what role you would like to play: conduct community outreach to educate women about heart health, lead a patient support network, or both! WomenHeart provides the training, tools, and assistance to help you successfully serve as a *WomenHeart Champion*.

The role of a *WomenHeart Champion*

WomenHeart Champions are the “boots on the ground” in the fight against heart disease. They are women with heart disease who have been trained to share their stories and important messages about heart health to empower women to take charge of their heart health. They often partner with local organizations such as hospitals, worksites, places of worship, and other local organizations to distribute educational materials, give presentations, conduct special events, or encourage the media to cover heart health stories.

WomenHeart Champions can also participate in Sister Match which connects newly diagnosed women with volunteers who provide peer support via phone, e-mail or in-person; and in HeartScarves, in which handmade red scarves and heart health information are delivered to women who have suffered a heart event and/or are hospitalized after a heart procedure.

What are WomenHeart Support Networks?

Some *WomenHeart Champions* also lead patient support network in their communities. Support for a woman with heart disease is crucial to her recovery and wellbeing, and that of her family. These networks meet monthly at hospitals or other convenient locations, and provide valuable health information about how to live with heart disease, along with essential emotional and social support.

WomenHeart provides materials for Support Network Coordinators, including program modules to guide group discussion on 11 heart topics and continuing education videos, along with opportunities to seek advice from experienced WomenHeart Support Network Coordinators.

What is expected of me if I want to become a *WomenHeart Champion*?

1. Attend the WomenHeart Science and Leadership Symposium: from Friday, February 17 at 6:00 p.m. to Monday, February 20 at 1:00 p.m. at the Emory Conference Center Hotel in Atlanta. The faculty features experts in cardiology, women’s health, community outreach, and public speaking. WomenHeart covers the cost of tuition, hotel room (double occupancy with another heart sister), and meals for the Symposium.

2. Become an active *WomenHeart Champion* in your community. After you’ve been trained, you can choose to do one or both of the following:

- a. Educate women in your community.** WomenHeart will help you schedule events in your area such as presentations, health fairs, and media outreach to educate women in your community. To support your efforts, WomenHeart will also provide a

Community Action Kit and materials. Each *WomenHeart Champion* is expected to organize or participate in at least five activities or events from March-June 2012. Beginning in July, *WomenHeart Champions* should plan to organize or participate in activities at least once per month, on average.

b. Lead a WomenHeart Support Network in your community. Our goal is that *WomenHeart Champions* will create at least one new WomenHeart Support Network in each community. Meeting on a monthly basis, these groups help women heart patients learn how to live with heart disease and maintain their health, along with providing social support. *(If you are interested in starting a WomenHeart Support Network, you will need to answer a few additional questions on the application).*

3. Who may apply?

Women diagnosed with heart disease that live in or nearby one of the 10 selected communities -- Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, John's Creek, Macon, Marietta, Savannah, and Valdosta. WomenHeart is committed to a diverse membership, and encourages women of all ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, native languages, and income and education levels, to apply.

Applicants must agree to the following:

- Participate in the entire three-day WomenHeart Science & Leadership Symposium, February 17-20, 2012. (Participants will share a room. If you want to upgrade to a single room, you will do so at your own expense. Participants are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to and from the conference. A limited number of travel scholarships are available for women with financial needs. Please see application for more information).
- Commit to being a community educator and/or to leading a WomenHeart Support Network.
- If you will be a community educator, participate in at least five (5) community outreach activities from March – June 2012. Remain an active *WomenHeart Champion* beyond your initial months of service by participating in or leading an average of at least one event/activity per month.
- If you commit to leading a WomenHeart Support Network, you will hold at least eight meetings per year.
- Participate in a telephone phone interview.
- Participate in three, one-hour video seminars on an Introduction to Heart Disease, Diagnosing Heart Disease in Women, and Drugs and Devices for Women with Heart Disease
- Review course materials prior to the Symposium.
- Maintain and check a working e-mail address at least once a week.
- Submit timely monthly reports on all volunteer activities and participate in an evaluation of the program.

How to apply:

The application consists of:

1. A completed application form (attached),
2. Written responses to questions, and
3. Recommendation letters.

Please send all materials via e-mail, mail, or fax.

Email:

heartofgeorgia@womenheart.org

Subject line: WomenHeart Science & Leadership Symposium.

Mail:

WomenHeart
Attn: Heart of Georgia Program
818 18th Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20006

Fax:

888-343-0764

Application Process: You will receive an e-mail or phone call to confirm that we received your application. You will be notified by mid to end of January if you have been selected to participate in the Symposium.

Who is selected?

Participants are selected based on the strength of their application, including relevant life experiences, volunteer history, and recommendations. Racial and ethnic diversity and geographic location are also considered.

Health caution:

Due to its physical and emotional intensity, the symposium is not recommended for women who have been hospitalized or experienced severe cardiac symptoms during the past six months.

Questions: Contact WomenHeart at heartofgeorgia@womenheart.org or Chinenye Anyanwu at 202-464-8744 or Susan Gilbert at 202-464-8737.

Do you have a computer with internet access at home or work? YES NO

If NO, can you access a computer at another location? YES NO

How much education have you completed? (Please circle)

1. Some elementary 2. Elementary 3. Some high school 4. High school grad

5. Some college 6. College graduate 7. Post-college/graduate school

C. What do you hope to gain by participating in the WomenHeart Science & Leadership Symposium? Please select the topics of greatest interest to you:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding heart disease | <input type="checkbox"/> Public speaking: telling your story |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining your mental and emotional health | <input type="checkbox"/> Building patient support networks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bonding with other female heart patients | <input type="checkbox"/> Community outreach and education |

Other (please describe): _____

D. Choose your role(s):

As a WomenHeart Champion, please indicate what role(s) you think you would like to play in your community:

- Community educator/outreach
- Leader of a WomenHeart Support Network
- Both community educator and leader of a WomenHeart Support Network
- Don't know/undecided at this time

E. Leadership/Volunteer experience

1. List any civic, volunteer, or faith-based organizations you are a member of (for example, church group, women's organization, Rotary Club). Please describe how you are involved – the type of activities and how often you're involved (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

2. List any heart organizations you are currently involved with and describe your role (for example, Mended Hearts, American Heart Association)

3. Have you ever attended a cardiac or other type of support group? Yes No
If yes, where, when, and how was it conducted?

4. Do you have any public speaking experience? Yes No
If yes, please describe:

5. How did you find out about this program?

6. Have you ever organized or led discussions with groups of people?
If so, please describe?

F. Your written responses to questions

On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following **questions**. Return your answers with the completed Application Form (Please limit responses to a maximum of one page per question).

1. Describe your experience with heart disease and your current health status. Also discuss the care and support you are currently receiving for your heart condition.

2. In your opinion, what are the three most important messages about heart disease or the importance of heart health that you think should be shared with other women? What type of activities or events would you conduct in your community?
3. What unique life, educational, volunteer and/or employment experiences make you a good candidate for this program? How will these experiences help you be an effective *WomenHeart Champion*?
4. *If you are applying to lead a WomenHeart Support Network*, please describe why forming a support network in your community is important to you.
5. *If you are applying to lead a WomenHeart Support Network*, you will need to find an organization, such as a hospital or community based group, to serve as your partner. Please describe the support you have secured in your community. (This support could include meeting space donated by an organization; assistance with marketing your group to female heart patients, and a health care provider to participate in the monthly meetings).

G. Letters of recommendation

Two letters of recommendation are required for consideration. If you would like to lead a patient support network, one additional letter is needed. Other letters will be accepted, but are not necessary. Letters should include the recommender's contact information and should be sent with the application form and essay responses.

1. A letter from your cardiologist or cardiac nurse approving your health status for travel and participation in the Symposium, and describing why you would be an effective *WomenHeart Champion* and/or leader of a WomenHeart Support Network.
2. A letter from a coworker, community leader or volunteer colleague explaining what makes you an ideal candidate to attend the Symposium and become a *WomenHeart Champion* and/or leader of a WomenHeart Support Network.
3. *Note: if you are applying to lead a WomenHeart Support Network*, you will need to secure a letter of commitment from a provider (or organization), in which they agree to help you establish and run a patient support network. The letter should state their agreement to provide a meeting space, assist with marketing, and include a health care provider in the monthly meetings.

H. Travel scholarship

A limited number of travel scholarships are available for women in special financial circumstances.

- NO, I am not requesting a travel scholarship
- YES, I am requesting a travel scholarship in order to attend the symposium. (We will contact you to discuss the process).

Strengthening the Heart of Georgia is made possible through the generous support of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Georgia Foundation.