

## Heart Failure Survivor Inspiring Others Through National Contest

(NAPSA)—In the past five years, Jessica Rogers has fished in Alaska, camped with friends, and held her newborn nephew. She also became engaged to the love of her life, and together, they bought and remodeled a home in the area north of Seattle where she lives.

It seems like Jessica has accomplished a lot in five years, even for an active 28-year-old. But what she's achieved is even more impressive when you consider that she has lived these years with heart failure.

In her words, Jessica has been able to “live out loud” during that time “thanks to an LVAD,” a phrase of gratitude and also the name of a national video contest that recently selected Jessica as its first-place winner. An LVAD, or “left ventricular assist device,” is a mechanical heart pump that circulates blood throughout the body when the heart is too weak to pump blood adequately on its own.

“In response to the contest call for entries, we were gratified to receive more than 250 video submissions from heart failure survivors sharing their personal LVAD stories,” said Michele Packard-Milam, CAE and executive director of Mended Hearts, the patient advocacy group that launched the “Thanks to an LVAD...” contest with support from St. Jude Medical. “These videos are helping inspire Americans with heart failure and raising awareness of LVAD therapy, an important treatment option that, often, is frustratingly overlooked.”

Advanced heart failure cardiologist Susan Joseph, M.D., who served as one of the contest's judges, says she regularly hears of patients who've been told they're out of options, when, in fact, they are not. Dr. Joseph adds that LVADs are helping many people not only survive, but thrive.



**Despite heart failure, Jessica Rogers is living a full life and encouraging others, thanks to her LVAD heart device.**

“The ‘Thanks to an LVAD...’ videos showed people enjoying life,” she said. “Many mentioned a renewed life, new engagements, new trips, being able to witness new births; reviewing these videos was very rewarding.”

While there are risks associated with any open-heart procedure, including LVAD surgery, the American Heart Association estimates up to 100,000 advanced heart failure patients could benefit from an LVAD. However, there are approximately 2,000 heart transplants and 2,500 patients receiving LVADs in the U.S. each year, so the gap between the number who could potentially benefit and those who actually receive LVADs suggests a need for awareness, which Jessica hopes her video will help address.

“When I learned about my heart failure, it helped to know there were others who understood how I felt,” said Jessica. “So now I try to be an example for others to encourage them that they can do this.”

To view the contest's winning videos and learn more about LVADs, visit [www.ThanksLVAD.com](http://www.ThanksLVAD.com).