

John Leigh comes back to say thank you to the staff of Memorial Hermann Hospital



Katy's

Miracle Man

After 43 Attempts, John Leigh is Miraculously Brought Back to Life

In the middle of the night, Katy resident John Leigh awoke with a terrible pain in his chest. He remembers asking his wife to drive him to the hospital, telling her to head west to avoid the morning traffic on I-10. He remembers the hospital security guard helping them find the Emergency Department at Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital because it was still dark. But, that is all he remembers about that day.

A Massive Heart Attack

John Leigh arrived in the Memorial Hermann Katy ER at 6:35 a.m. At 7:10 a.m., he had a massive heart attack which caused his heart to stop. But, everything was working in his favor that morning. Because it was shift change, there were two shifts of doctors, nurses, and techs on-site, and two EMT students who began chest compressions with such effort that it made everyone's chest hurt. The staff worked feverishly to revive him. They intubated him, gave him appropriate medications, shocked him, did chest compressions, and were finally able to bring him back... for a few minutes anyway. Then Leigh went into ventricular fibrillation. The staff gave him more medication, shocked him again, did more compressions and, once again, brought him back. This scenario was repeated again and again. For 3 long hard hours, the staff repeated their lifesaving efforts until Life Flight arrived, loaded him on a stretcher and took him down the route headed to the helicopter. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief and hoped for the best.

And then staff got the call. Life Flight had never loaded John Leigh onto the helicopter. He coded again and the Life Flight crew returned him to the ER for stabilization. The weary staff began their efforts all over again. They gave him medications. They shocked him. They performed chest compressions and when it looked like all hope was gone they got him back. Life Flight called for a second helicopter . . . a larger one. And for the next hour, the staff continued their fight to stabilize Leigh.

Fighting for His Life

When the 2nd Life Flight Team arrived, they began the transfer process to Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center's Heart and Vascular Institute. Every staff person in the ER knew that Memorial Hermann Memorial City's nationally recognized heart program was Leigh's only chance, his only hope. They stood outside the ER and watched until Life Flight lifted off and they could no longer see the helicopter. Leigh wasn't coming back this time. They'd gotten him this far. Now it was up to the staff at their sister hospital.

In total, John Leigh was shocked in the Memorial Hermann – Katy ER 43 times; they gave him 23 amps of epinephrine . . . typically 1/2 to 1 amp is sufficient to restart the heart. And he received enough medication to empty out a crash cart. For two weeks after that fateful morning, John Leigh remained intubated and in the intensive care unit at Memorial Hermann Hospital. The prognosis was grim.

Hugs, Tears, and Thank You

And then it happened . . . the miracle. Four weeks after he first walked into the ER at Memorial Hermann Katy, John and Eileen Leigh walked back into the hospital's ER. He was 20 pounds lighter, slightly pale, his voice a little raspy, and his chest was still sore from the cracked ribs . . . but he was alive. He wanted to meet the people who had worked so hard to stabilize him that morning and thank them personally for saving his life. His wife thanked the team for never giving up on her husband and for giving her husband back to her. There were hugs and a few tears that morning between this Katy couple and the ER staff, which included Dr. Jose Medina; RNs Sharon Baker Justice, Tanya Thompson, Jennifer Ramirez, Karianne Byargeon, Paula Jackson, Scott Shaver, and Linda Hickman; Anne Ellis, Paramedic; Breeon Aguste, PCA III; and EMT students from Cintas.

Everyone agreed that in all their years of medicine, they had never seen anyone survive the level of trauma that John Leigh had endured. They were amazed that he was alive. **KM**

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