



2021 Canadian Women's Heart Health Summit

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Marion Martell

Women @ Heart Ambassador
Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre
Division of Prevention and Wellness
University of Ottawa Heart Institute
Ottawa, ON

Biography

I have been involved with working with the public my entire career. My focus has been in areas of health, management, business development, sales, coaching, training, communications, and charity work. Currently I am the sole proprietor of my own coaching company. The main focus of the company is business coaching and helping others to achieve their goals.

In 2007, I became involved with fund raising for the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. I served as co-chair to a charity fund raising event called the Jeanne Fuller Red Dress Golf Classic. This all-female golf charity tournament's focus is to raise awareness of heart disease in women. The funds from this charity tournament go to the University of Ottawa Heart Institute's Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre and in the 13 years since this charity event has been taking place, over \$1,000,000 has been raised. I am pleased to say this charity event is spreading the word about women's heart health but we still have some work to do to continue to raise awareness.

I am also a heart patient survivor. In 2008, while in my 50's, I developed Sudden Onset Complete Heart Block. Having Complete Heart Block required a permanent pacemaker. With no previous warning signs this was quite a shock to me. Was there something I could have done to prevent this? Could my healthcare provider have forewarned me? I had many questions. The following year I had genetic testing done at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute and discovered that the diagnosis for my Complete Heart Block was idiopathic.

Needless to say, I am grateful to the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. This gratitude has inspired me to focus my efforts on giving back as well to further raise awareness of heart disease in women. There were and are many facts of women's heart health that I was not aware of and I assumed other women might be in the same situation.

In 2013, I was invited to be part of the Women@Heart Champion Advisory Committee for the Heart Institute's Prevention and Wellness Centre. With the launch of the Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre, one of the centre initiatives was the Women@Heart Peer Support Program.

In 2014, I took the training to become a Women@Heart Peer Support Leader. I have been delivering this program since it was launched in January, 2015. Currently I am a Women@Heart Program Ambassador and a member on the Patient Alumni Board of Directors at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute with a mandate of women's heart health.