

#GivingTuesday Story: MEDTRONIC



A Diagnosis Didn't End The Run: Medtronic Global Heroes Represent a Return to "Full Life"

Medtronic

Medtronic Philanthropy devotes the majority of its resources to expand access to quality chronic disease care, helping address unmet health needs in underserved communities worldwide. By aligning our philanthropy around Medtronic's health-focused mission and vision, we believe we can multiply our social impact around the world, especially in the area of chronic conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

PHOTOS: (Left) Nicola, Adam and Bella Derryberry Maurer. (Right) The 2015 Global Heroes Team.

People take up running to be healthy. But Nicola Derryberry Maurer took up running after becoming tragically unhealthy.

"Running came about mainly as a way to cope with the emotional side effects or the emotional struggles that come with having a chronic illness," she said.

Shortly after the birth of her daughter, Nicola was diagnosed with Gastroparesis, a rare condition in which paralysis of the stomach makes digesting most food difficult. That was eight years ago.

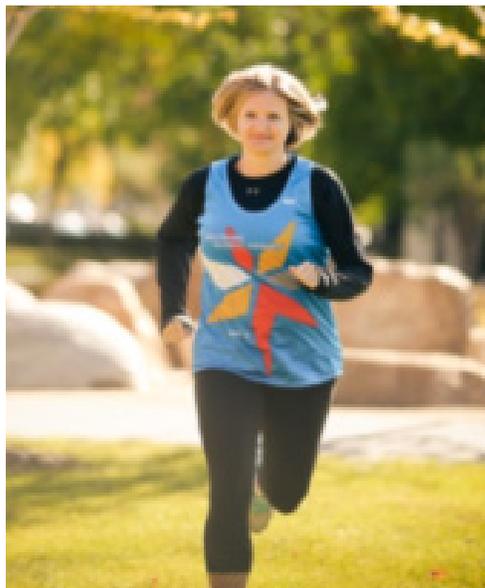
The diagnosis turned her family's life upside down. "Gastroparesis, for me, is pretty much invisible. I can go through my life and people wouldn't know looking at me from the outside," Nicola said. "The greatest thing that ever happened to me also brought something that's brought the biggest struggles that I've ever had."

Today, a special diet and an implanted medical device help Nicola keep food down. But despite medication, nausea remains an unrelenting companion. She found running helped her cope.

"The more that I ran the more that I started feeling like a real person again. Not really physically, because I still felt sick," she explained. "But I started feeling like I could do things and live life the way that I want to."

This October, Nicola ran as a [Medtronic Global Hero](#), joining two dozen other runners representing six continents and 16 countries on the 10th anniversary Global Heroes team. All of them are everyday people who have an implanted medical device to treat conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, spinal and neurological disorders, chronic pain and gastroenterology disorders like Nicola's.

They are not alone. Worldwide, millions of people are living with chronic and



degenerative diseases...and each day, more than 100,000 people die from one of these diseases...with limited access to the healthcare they need.

For Medtronic, the global leader in medical technology, services and solutions, there is a core belief that access to quality healthcare is fundamental for all people around the world. And a belief that people living with chronic diseases play a crucial role in improving healthcare access by sharing their stories and experiences with others, and advocating for change.

That's where the Medtronic Global Heroes come in.

"Global Heroes helps to remind people that a chronic illness diagnosis is not the end of their lives," said Jacob A. Gayle, Ph.D., Vice President of Medtronic Philanthropy. "Medical technology helps them come back to the goals that they have to enjoy; celebrate life and living; and encourage other people to do the same."

Nicola says her experience as a Global Hero has given her special perspective on the word 'hero.'

"I think I am a hero," she said. "I think a hero is somebody who is faced with challenges and difficulties but chooses to persevere and endure them anyway instead of back down and not do things the way they normally would."

BECOMING A GLOBAL HERO

Every year since 2006, Medtronic has searched the globe to find members for the Global Heroes team. These "running ambassadors" represent their country and medical condition in the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon or Medtronic TC 10 Mile race, which are held each October in Minnesota in the United States.

These extraordinary runners have conditions ranging from heart disease, diabetes and chronic pain to spinal, neurological, gastroenterological and urological disorders. By sharing and celebrating their stories of "full life" with millions of people all over the world, they motivate others to take action.

In 10 years, 234 runners have run the beautiful course that winds through the lakes and neighborhoods of Minneapolis and St. Paul. They've represented 34 different countries, a myriad of health conditions, and various device manufacturers (you don't have to have a Medtronic therapy to be eligible).

If you, or someone you know, would be interested in joining the 2016 Medtronic Global Heroes team, learn more and sign up [to be notified](#) when applications are opened Spring 2016.