



Mended  
**Little**  
Hearts

MENDED *LITTLE* HEARTS KICKS OFF

# Congenital Heart Disease: **Life With An Open Heart**

In conjunction with the Mended Hearts' effort to get moving in 2014, Mended *Little* Hearts will be getting into action in the New Year, as well.



**February 7-14 is Congenital Heart Defects (CHD) Awareness Week.**

Mended *Little* Hearts is planning several events for Congenital Heart Defect (CHD) Awareness Week (February 7-14), all as part of our “Congenital Heart Disease: Life With An Open Heart” campaign. Three of the main events are our first-ever virtual Roar ‘N’ Run event, our Rock Your Scar contest and events we have planned around the nation.

## Roar 'N' Run

### Raise Awareness and Get In Shape

The theme of this issue of *Heartbeat* magazine is “Get in Shape.” So, what better time for us all to exercise than while raising awareness of CHD and supporting Mended *Little* Hearts? No matter what your age, you and your loved ones can get involved in this fun event and help educate others about CHD.

You can take part in the first annual “virtual” Roar 'N' Run 13.1 (half marathon) or a 1-mile Roar 'N' Fun Run to raise money and public awareness. The way this virtual event works is people register (open now) and then complete the event during CHD Awareness Week. Participants can walk, jog or run, and they can complete it anywhere they choose — and they have a whole week to do it.

Jodi Lemacks, National Program Director, said, “This event even appeals to people like me who are scared by the thought of doing a whole half marathon at once, but are excited about the thought of setting a goal to get it done over the course of a week. I feel like this will motivate me to get in better shape so I am ready when February 7 comes.”

You can **walk, jog or run** every day, every other day, or all in one day — and you have a whole week to get it done — February 7-14. You can do it outside, on a treadmill, at your gym, on an indoor track, in your neighborhood or any other location you choose. Raise awareness of congenital heart defects, exercise during American Heart Month and help MLH all at the same time.

Kids 5 years and over (including big kids of any age who are not into a 13.1-mile run) can take part in the 1-mile “Roar 'N' Fun Run.” It can be done the same way as the Roar 'N' Run 13.1 — anywhere and any way you wish over the course of CHD Awareness Week, February 7-14.



## Register at

[www.active.com/dallas-tx/running/races/roar-n-run-13-1-2014](http://www.active.com/dallas-tx/running/races/roar-n-run-13-1-2014)

Roar 'N' Run 13.1 registration is \$25

Roar 'N' Fun Run (1 mile) registration is \$20



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# CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE:

## “Rock Your Scar” Instagram Contest January 15–February 13



Join actress, singer and dancer Valerie Azlynn — an adult CHD survivor — in raising awareness of congenital heart defects and showing off our “badges of courage” by rocking your scar — virtual or real — on the Instagram photo-sharing service.

We’re looking for the best photo submissions from CHD Heroes that reflect a “Rock Star” theme! Submissions will be judged based on overall photo quality and creativity within our theme.

While not all people with CHD have physical scars, we all share the scars left from the CHD fight. Unfortunately, a lot of people with CHD have been bullied, ridiculed or just simply don’t feel good about themselves as a result of their scar. Some of us wear it proudly as a badge of courage, others cover it up and some have no scar to show how brave they truly are. So, while the name of the contest is “Rock Your Scar,” the goal is that all children and adults with CHD view themselves in a positive light and see other survivors just like them. We want to invite all survivors to join us in rockin’ their scars and feeling good about themselves, despite the stripes they have earned in the hard-fought battle that is CHD.

This is our opportunity to educate the public that while some of our children do not have a physical scar, their fight was no less than a child who does.

The prizes are still being finalized, but will include age-appropriate prizes that range from Babies “R” Us gift cards and additional items to signed pictures of our lovely national spokesperson, Valerie Azlynn. Valerie is passionately committed to increasing awareness of CHD. She had open-heart surgery to repair an atrial septal defect at age 13. Her many acting credits include more than four dozen movies and TV shows, such as her regular role as Melanie Sutton on the comedy *Sullivan & Son*.

### How to enter “Rock Your Scar”:

- Simply upload a photo to Instagram @ mendedlittlehearts using #RockYourScar.
- Scars do not have to be visible, and, if they are, they should be shown in good taste.
- Contest period is January 15-February 13, 2014. The winners will be notified via email or phone.
- There will be one winner per age group. The age groups will be 0-3 years, 4-8, 9-12, 13-17, and 18+.
- Winners will be notified by email or phone.

Valerie is particularly interested in helping CHD children learn to cope with their physical scars and related psychological scars associated with congenital heart defects. That is one of the reasons she is happy to stand with other CHD kids to “rock your scar.”

We anticipate great participation since this contest is open to all CHD Heroes, not just MLH members. We will share this information with our partners through the consortium to increase our reach as much as possible.

### Helping Raise Awareness

Most Mended *Little* Hearts groups and many other CHD organizations take part in events to raise awareness of CHD during the month of February — Heart Month. MLH has materials and information to help you raise awareness where you are. Together, let’s make an impact.

If you can’t take part in “Rock Your Scar” or the “Roar ‘N’ Run” contests, you can still help the public learn more about congenital heart defects by educating others about CHD.

Help raise awareness about CHD and MLH among your family, friends, coworkers, neighbors and acquaintances.

# LIFE WITH AN OPEN HEART



## Do they know that:

- CHD is the most common birth defect in the U.S., affecting about 40,000 babies, or 1 in every 110, each year?
- 25 percent of children born with a CHD will need heart surgery or other interventions to survive?
- Most heart defects occur due to an unknown cause. Only 15-20 percent of all CHDs are related to known genetic conditions?
- Approximately 2 to 3 million individuals are thought to be living in the United States with CHDs. Because there is no U.S. system to track CHDs beyond early childhood, more precise estimates are not available?

Share these and other facts about CHD with others. (For other reliable facts, visit [www.chphc.org](http://www.chphc.org) for full fact sheets.)

There are also other things you can do to raise CHD awareness during Heart Month. You can wear MLH or CHD merchandise, which can spark questions about their meaning. If possible, make presentations to children or groups about CHD. (MLH has a PowerPoint presentation on our website geared towards children.) You can also request proclamations for your state, city or county declaring February 7-14 CHD Awareness Week. (For more information on proclamations, visit [www.tchin.org](http://www.tchin.org) under CHD Awareness.)

Finally, you can work with other organizations and participate in any Heart Month event to educate others about CHD and the “littlest heart patients of all.” ❤️

TV star Valerie Azlynn is Mended *Little Hearts'* national spokesperson.



## Help launch CHD Awareness Week, February 7-14.

Join us for a Twitter party  
to help kick off the week.  
Friday, February 7, at 1 p.m. EST  
Use #CHDAware and #Iam1in110