



Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke



Heidi Kingston

November 2023

Dear Reader,

If you passed Heidi Kingston on the street, you would see a warm and friendly young woman who brightens the day of everyone she meets. What you wouldn't see is all of the pain that she has been through on her journey to make it to where she is today. A journey made possible by the support of people like you.

Today, I feel honoured to share Heidi's story with you - a story of **how your generosity can change lives.**

Having moved to Galway for her studies, Heidi and her husband Peter were looking forward to spending Christmas with her family in New Jersey. But soon after their arrival, Heidi began to experience a tingling sensation all along the right side of her body, along with a headache and darkened vision in her right eye.

Heidi's mum rushed her to the emergency room, where they discovered that at **32 years old, Heidi had suffered a life-altering stroke.**

Over the course of the following year, Croí was crucial for Heidi's recovery. All of our programmes and services that help people like Heidi are funded by our generous supporters who participate in events like our annual Golden Ticket Raffle. **When you read Heidi's story, you'll see why we need you - now more than ever - to join us in our lifesaving mission and participate in this year's Golden Ticket Raffle.**

The weeks and months following her stroke were the most difficult of Heidi's entire life. The stroke took a massive physical and emotional toll, forcing Heidi to take an indefinite leave of absence from her PhD and bringing to light her biggest fear - that she might not be able to get pregnant and start the family she had always dreamed of.

Heidi learned that the first year after a stroke is key for recovery. But because her stroke had happened in another country, she didn't know where to turn for support. In her desperate search for information, Heidi found Croí Connects, Croí's telephone helpline that connects callers with one of our Cardiac Nurse Specialists who can offer advice and resources.

Our Golden Ticket Raffle helps make services like Croí Connects possible. Please buy as many tickets as you can to sell, gift - or keep for yourself! Each ticket costs just €5, and there are lots of fantastic cash prizes to be won, with a cash fund of €5,000!

When Heidi picked up the phone to call Croí Connects, she was at an all-time low. On the other end of the line, she found Croí's nurse Maeve. *"Maeve was the most gentle, kind voice," Heidi remembers. "She completely confirmed everything I was feeling and let me know that what I was experiencing was normal."*

By the time she got off the phone with Maeve, Heidi was feeling something she hadn't felt for quite some time - hope. **Hope that was only made possible thanks to the generous support of people like you.**

Please turn over

As we approach the end of 2023, the challenges facing people living with heart disease and stroke are greater than any that have come before. <<Firstname>>, **I hope that I can depend on your generosity to make this year's Golden Ticket Raffle a success.** Tickets make fantastic gifts, and it's easy to sell tickets to friends, family, neighbours or colleagues. You can even buy or sell tickets online by going to www.croi.ie/raffle and entering your unique ID#: <<Cons.ID>> to purchase tickets.

The raffle will take place on 20th December 2023, and the more tickets you buy, the more chances you have to win amazing cash prizes - and the greater the impact that you have. Every ticket sold helps to provide online and in-person education and lifestyle programmes and resources, vital services, and a comforting place to stay in Croí's Courtyard Apartments for families dealing with fear and stress when a loved one is receiving treatment.

After their phone call, Maeve sent Heidi a parcel in the post with helpful pamphlets and referred her to a stroke rehab programme. She even reached out to Heidi's husband Peter



Heidi and Peter Kingston

to make sure that he had the support he needed.

Determined to do all she could to support her recovery, Heidi began attending Croí's online webinars and taking part in our exercise and yoga classes. Here, she learned information and skills that will continue to support her for the rest of her life. Heidi also joined an in-person support group at Croí, finding huge comfort in the experience of connecting with other people who could understand what she had been through.

"I really want people to know how valuable information and connection is after a stroke or heart event," Heidi says. "Both for the survivor and their families - to know that the person is being looked after and is able to get the help that they need. That support is so important."

That's why Croí is here — and that's how your support can change lives. By participating in our Golden Ticket Raffle, you help to ensure that thousands of people like Heidi can access the services they need.

Like Heidi, we have all experienced moments in life when it felt like the rug was pulled out from beneath us. And we all know how life-changing it is to know that, when tragedy strikes, there's someone out there who cares.

Will you be that person for those who will need Croí this Christmas?

This Christmas will be a very different one for Heidi and Peter. Heidi still experiences many physical and emotional challenges resulting from her stroke. But today she is living a life that, before finding Croí, she had feared would never be possible. As we were preparing this letter, we received the wonderful news that Heidi's biggest dream has come true. On October 14th, she and Peter welcomed baby Aisling into the world. We're delighted to report that everyone is doing brilliantly. As Heidi put it - "We're sleeping a little and learning a lot and the love is incredible."

I hope that you will join us in the fight against heart disease and stroke and support the Golden Ticket Raffle this year - please sell as many tickets as you can and return the funds in the enclosed envelope. Every ticket makes a big difference!

With heartfelt thanks,

Christine Flanagan
Director of Fundraising

P.S. When you support the Golden Ticket Raffle today, you will make it possible for Croí to provide lifesaving services for people all over Ireland when they need us most. Thank you for your continued support. Visit www.croi.ie/raffle to purchase your tickets today! Visit www.croi.ie/raffle to purchase your tickets today!

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