

Lora Henderson keeps the faith, needs help for double lung transplant

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Donations encouraged in the Lora Henderson Fund Account which is open at South Carolina Bank and Trust in Walterboro

Lora Henderson was living a relatively healthy life up until the birth of her second child. She had a bout with asthma, but was very physically active maintaining a full daily schedule of family, work, and social experiences. Her health suddenly took a surprising turn which resulted in an increasing decline in her ability to carryout her most basic task; like walking to the car or lifting groceries. She also had developed an uncontrollable cough.

After consultation, Dr. Michael Hawkins, a physician with the Colleton Medical Center, ran several tests and soon discovered that Henderson had contracted sarcoidosis. He referred Henderson to Dr. Robert Thomas, who has South Carolina's first state of the art in house rehabilitation facility, through a contract with Meridian Health Services. Thomas was able to connect Henderson with Barbara Franklin, who is a certified respiratory therapist hired by Meridian to manage the pulmonary rehab program, under Thomas with his guidance. Franklin and Henderson seem to have developed an inseparable bond akin to a mother and child.

According to Franklin, Thomas and Franklin worked with Henderson for several months to provide her with the optimal care only to realize that her condition was growing worse. Thomas referred Henderson to Chapel Hill, North Carolina for further observation and treatment, only to be informed that they his office had been providing Henderson with services commensurate with the acclaimed medical facility.

As Henderson returned to the pulmonary rehab program at Dr. Thomas's office, Thomas, Franklin, and Henderson began working diligently to prepare Henderson for a double lung transplant, which all indicators still reflect the 35 year old female will need. Pursed lip breathing, diaphragmatic breathing, and regular sustained physical exercise are only fragments of what the team has instituted to prepare Henderson for the transplant.

Henderson admitted being stubborn in the beginning.

"I said I am too young to be on this (referring to oxygen), but he was like, "Lora" (calling her name with encouragement) and one day I accepted the oxygen," she said. It has helped me. It's just being young and healthy and having to submit to this, yeah, it was really tough."

Henderson said her family has been very supportive. Her husband is Larry Henderson, her sons are Raheem and Larry Jr., and her mom is Florrie Belle Behling. She also said her employer; Eaton of Charleston has been very supportive. She said was grateful that Epsom donated oxygen and special tanks for her to commute to Charleston and perform a

