

MENDED HEARTS VISITORS: VOLUNTEER WORK AND WELL-BEING



The Attitude is Gratitude.
THE POWER of GIVING BACK!

Conducted by:

Professor Peggy A. Thoits
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Bloomington, IN 47405

In Collaboration with:

Mended Hearts, Inc.



The Mended Hearts, Inc.

National Office

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**Dedicated to inspiring hope in
heart disease patients and families**

February, 2011

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Dear Mended Hearts Visitor,

It is my pleasure to introduce you to an exciting research project that Mended Hearts, Inc. is collaborating with fellow member, Peggy Thoits, PhD, chapter 78, Indianapolis, Indiana and Professor of Sociology, Indiana University. This study will be valuable support in documenting the satisfactions gained by Visitors and the unique kinds of help provided by Mended Hearts Visitors to heart patients and their families in the hospital.

This research will involve questionnaires and interviews with a random sampling of Mended Hearts chapters and Accredited Visitors across the country to determine quality of life issues related to the MHI Visitor's volunteer work.

The MHI national Board of Directors unanimously supports MHI involvement in this research. On behalf of the Board, please provide your cooperation in responding confidentially to the research questions. The results of this collaborative Indiana University research will be published in future peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Thanks for all your visiting support to heart patients provided by your Visiting program in your community and hospital.

Heartfully,

Marcia E. Baker, M.S. Education
Director of Field Services
Mended Hearts, Inc.
National Office
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Phone: 214.390.6233



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR SURVEY RESEARCH

Dear Mended Hearts Visitor,

I am delighted to be working collaboratively with MHI on this important study. To meet the goals that Marcia Baker describes in her letter, we will use survey questionnaires and follow-up interviews.

We have selected a random sample of 80 Mended Hearts chapters and are contacting all persons who visit for those chapters. We ask how important Mended Hearts visiting is to you, how you rate your health in general, and how satisfied you are with your life overall, among other questions.

Results from the survey will be used to understand how volunteer work, especially Mended Hearts visiting, affects people's well-being. Health researchers believe volunteer work can be beneficial, but they are not sure whether this is so, or whether some groups benefit more from volunteering than others: Do men benefit more than women? Do retired persons gain more than employed persons? Greater understanding of these issues may help Mended Hearts chapters recruit and encourage new members to become involved in visiting and other group activities.

Your answers will be kept completely confidential and will be reported only as summaries so no one person's answers can be identified. Each questionnaire is assigned a number and your name will never be connected to your answers in any way. Your chapter number and location will not be revealed in any reports.

Completing this survey is voluntary. However, you can help us greatly by taking about 15 minutes of your time to share your experiences as a Mended Hearts visitor.

If you have questions or comments about this study, please feel free to call me (toll-free) at 1-800-352-0564, write to me at the address on this letter, or email me at MHstudy@indiana.edu.

With heartfelt thanks for your help,

Peggy A. Thoits
Professor and Study Director
Member Circle City/Indianapolis Chapter #78

P.S. The last page of the questionnaire invites you to take part in a follow-up telephone interview. We are especially interested in your reasons for visiting and your thoughts about how the support you give to patients and families is similar to or differs from the support of people who have NOT had a heart event. If you are willing to talk with us, simply provide contact information before returning this survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. Many thanks.

Please mark your answers in the boxes using a pen or a pencil. Examples: or

1 We know that you have many important roles such as husband/wife, parent, employee, church member, and friend. Among your various roles, how important to you is being a Mended Hearts Visitor?

Not at all important

Extremely important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2 How well does being a Mended Hearts Visitor describe who you are?

This does not describe me at all

This describes me extremely well

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3 How likely is it that you would mention your role as a Mended Hearts Visitor to someone you met for the first time?

Not at all likely

Extremely likely

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4 How committed do you feel to being a volunteer Visitor?

I am not at all committed to being this

I am very committed to being this

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5 How much time do you spend being a volunteer Visitor?

I spend almost no time being this

I spend most of my time being this

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6 Summing up all your good points and bad points as a Mended Hearts Visitor, how good or successful a Visitor would you say you are?

Extremely poor/unsuccessful

Extremely good/successful

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7 How much do you agree or disagree with these statements about your membership in Mended Hearts?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Overall, my membership in Mended Hearts has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>							
Belonging to Mended Hearts is an important reflection of who I am.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>							
Belonging to Mended Hearts is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>							
In general, belonging to Mended Hearts is an important part of my self-image.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8 Now, thinking about your relationships with other people:

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot
	▼	▼	▼	▼
How much do other people depend upon you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>				
How interested are others in what you have to say?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>				
How much do others pay attention to you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>				
How important are you to others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>				
How much would you be missed if you moved away?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9 How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements about your life in general?

	Strongly disagree ▼	Moderately disagree ▼	Slightly disagree ▼	Slightly agree ▼	Moderately agree ▼	Strongly agree ▼
I feel good when I think of what I've done in the past and what I hope to do in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I tend to focus on the present, because the future nearly always brings me problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a sense of direction and purpose in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I used to set goals for myself, but that now seems like a waste of time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My aims in life have been more a source of satisfaction than frustration to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find it satisfying to think about what I have accomplished in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In the final analysis, I'm not so sure that my life adds up to much.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10 **How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your friends?**
(Friends can include relatives, but please do not include your husband/wife/partner when you answer.)

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I have a friend I can really talk to about things that are important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a friend I can tell just about anything to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a friend I can count on for understanding and advice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have a friend I can rely on for practical things, such as lending me something or doing me a favor if I ask.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certain friends come to me when they have problems or need advice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certain friends come to me for emotional support.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My friends seek me out for companionship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My friends can rely on me for practical things, such as lending something or doing a favor if I'm asked.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11 **How satisfied are you with the support you get from your friends?**

- Very dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Very satisfied

12 How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements about yourself?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I can do just about anything I really set my mind to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometimes I feel that I'm being pushed around in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have little control over the things that happen to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that I'm a person of worth, or at least on an equal plane with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All in all, I'm inclined to feel like a failure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I certainly feel useless at times.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
At times, I think I am no good at all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The next section is about your health and well-being.

13 How would you rate your health in general?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

14 Compared to other people your age, how would you rate your health in general?

- Better than most people my age
- About the same as most people my age
- Worse than most people my age

15 How often does your health get in the way of what you want to do?

- Very often
- Fairly often
- Once in a while
- Never

16 How satisfied are you with the current state of your health?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

17 When you consider everything about your present life, how would you describe yourself?

- Very happy
- Somewhat happy
- Neither happy nor unhappy
- Somewhat unhappy
- Very unhappy

18 Thinking about your present life, how satisfied are you with your life in general?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

19 In the past month, including today, how much were you distressed by:

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Nervousness or shakiness inside	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Suddenly scared for no reason	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Feeling fearful or afraid	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Feeling tense or keyed up	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Spells of terror or panic	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Feeling so restless you couldn't sit still	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Feelings of worthlessness	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Thoughts of death or dying	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Feeling lonely	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Feeling blue	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Thoughts of ending your life	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Feeling no interest in things	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Feeling hopeless about the future	<input type="checkbox"/>				

The next few questions are about your religious views.

20 What is your religious preference?

- Catholic
- Protestant, specific denomination:
- Other Christian, specific denomination:
- Jewish
- Some other religion, please specify:
- No religious preference

21 Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

- The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral teachings recorded by man.
- The Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything should be taken literally, word for word.
- The Bible is the actual word of God and it is to be taken literally, word for word.

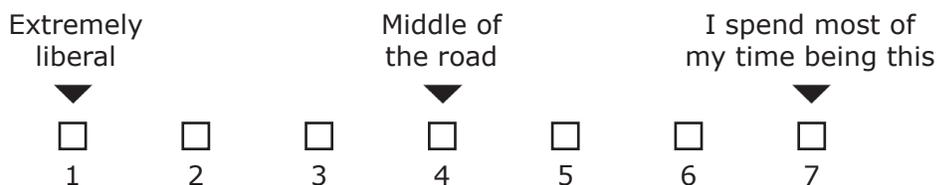
22 How often do you attend religious services?

- Every day
- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Two or three times a month
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Once a year or less
- Never attend

23 Would you describe yourself as:

- Very religious
- Moderately religious
- Slightly religious
- Not religious at all

24 How would you classify your political views? Please indicate your position on the scale below.



These next questions are about your general background.

25 You are:

- Male
- Female

26 In what year were you born?

27 Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No
- Yes

28 What racial group or groups best describe you? (Please check all that apply.)

- White/Caucasian
- Black/African American
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian/Asian American
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Other group:

29 What is your current marital status?

- Married
- Living with a partner
- Widowed
- Separated
- Divorced
- Never married

30 How many children do you have?

31 Do you have any grandchildren?

- Yes
- No

32 What is the highest grade of school or educational degree you have completed?

- No school
- Grades 1 through 11
- High school diploma or GED
- Vocational or technical school beyond high school
- Some college but no degree
- Associate or community college degree (AA or AS)
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Medical degree, law degree, or other doctorate degree

33 At the present time, how much difficulty do you have in paying your bills?

- A great deal
- Some
- Only a little
- None at all

34 At the end of the month, do you end up with:

- Some money left over
- Just enough to make ends meet
- Not enough money to make ends meet

35 Overall, how satisfied are you with your financial situation?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

36 Are you retired?

- Yes (Please go to Question 37.)
- No (Please go to Question 40.)

37 If you are currently retired: What was the title of your main job?

38 If you are currently retired: What type of work did you do (your main duties)?

39 If you are currently retired: Did you retire mainly because of your health or for other reasons?

- Mainly because of my health
- Mainly for other reasons

40 Are you currently working for pay?

- Yes, working full-time (Please go to Question 41.)
- Yes, working part-time (Please go to Question 41.)
- On leave (Please go to Question 41.)
- No, laid off, looking for work (Please go to Question 43.)
- No, going to school (Please go to Question 43.)
- No, keeping house (Please go to Question 43.)
- No, am retired (Please go to Question 43.)

41 If you are currently employed or on leave: What is your job title?

42 If you are currently employed or on leave: What type of work do you do (your main duties)?

These final questions are about your Mended Hearts membership and other volunteer activities.

43 To which Mended Hearts Chapter do you belong?

Chapter Number:

City:

State:

44 How long have you been a member of Mended Hearts?

Years:

or

Months:

45 **In your role as Visitor, are you the heart patient?**

- No
 Yes ↓

If Yes, when was your first heart event?

Years ago: Months ago:

or

46 **In your role as Visitor, are you the caregiver?**

- No
 Yes ↓

If Yes, when was your family member's first heart event?

Years ago: Months ago:

or

47 **About how many hours each week do you spend visiting, on average?**

Hours per week:

48 **How would you describe the location of the hospital where you visit most often?**

- In a rural area
 In a small town
 In a suburb of a big city
 In a big city or urban area
 I do not visit in a hospital

49 **How many other organizations or clubs do you belong to (not counting Mended Hearts)?**

50 **For how many of these organizations or clubs do you do volunteer work (again not counting Mended Hearts)?**

That's all of our questions. Thank you!

On the next page, we invite you to be interviewed about your experiences as a Mended Hearts visitor. If you are willing to talk with us, please fill in your telephone information.

If you prefer not to be interviewed, simply check here: and leave the next page blank.

A pre-paid, addressed envelope is enclosed for you to return this questionnaire.

If you have questions or comments about this study, please contact the Study Director: Professor Peggy A. Thoits, (toll-free) 1-800-352-0564, or MHstudy@indiana.edu.

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AN INVITATION TO BE INTERVIEWED BY PHONE

We would like to interview you about your reasons for visiting and your experiences in giving support to patients and families. We are especially interested in your thoughts about how the support YOU give to patients and families is similar to or different from the support given by people who have NOT had a heart event. If you are willing to be interviewed, we will phone you at a time that is convenient for you.

We will be calling from **May 12th through July 3rd.**

1 **TIME ZONE:** Please mark your time zone.

- Eastern
- Central
- Mountain
- Pacific

2 **WHEN WE CAN CALL YOU:** Please mark all times that you are generally free.

- | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morning | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evening | | <input type="checkbox"/> Evening |

3 **THREE BEST TIMES TO CALL:** Please write in from the list above the three best times for us to call.

- 1 Day of the week: and Time of day:
- 2 Day of the week: and Time of day:
- 3 Day of the week: and Time of day:

4 **PHONE NUMBER (INCLUDING AREA CODE):**

() -

5 **Dates that that you will NOT be available**

6 **Is there anything else we should know (such as: Don't call before 10 AM, or don't call after 8 PM)?**

Printed name

Signature

/ /
Day Month Year

