

March 2010

It came out of the blue

... from a routine heart stress test 3 weeks ago... I did fine, the technicians told me – I ran faster and longer than many 40 year olds can. Then, as I waited for sign-out, a cardiologist brought me the news that the x-rays of my stress test showed serious heart blockage. I was shocked. I've never had any chest pains or even discomfort...

A few days later I was at the Lahey Clinic for an angioplasty, where they threaded a wire into my chest with two stents to open up the blockage. The same procedure President Clinton had just 24 hours later. Lucky I had that routine stress test; otherwise I'll be facing a massive heart attack.

I'm back to my school visitations and weekend PBS show 'Our Great Kids', encouraging our Jr. Scholars in their good deeds. The news coming to me from our Leadership Schools (116 of them) show just how much goodness teachers and their students are spreading from our program. I so hope they'll carry on with their positive impact on the lives of others long after I'm gone.

My 13th annual \$1 million spring campaign to fight hunger is just underway. May it continue to bring in more money this year for our participating agencies as it has each of the past years. We have a tough figure to beat this spring – the \$197 million it raised last year.

Our Feinstein Jr. Scholar School in Kenya is on track to open this spring. Our school in Nicaragua continues strong.

One of our board members, Ofir Katz, and his wife have done a wonderful job with our national challenge helping needy children both here and in Israel. So I'm also continuing a separate \$50,000 challenge with them that I started last fall that brought in \$16 million. With that kind of return it's worth it.

I've arranged with the manager of Carousel Village in Roger Williams Park for free rides and popcorn for all our Jr. Scholars and their friends, whenever they want, for the next 5 years.

The post office is considering recommending us for donations in their annual national canned food drive. I haven't done any soliciting for donations but I certainly wouldn't turn down any that may come to us.

The new president of the University of Rhode Island came to meet me and seems interested in increasing the impact of the URI Feinstein downtown college as well as possibly having URI play a more active role in our national hunger campaign.

Johnson & Wales has promised to send us each year the names of our Johnson & Wales scholarship recipients and will forward to them a 'make their acquaintance' letter I write for J&W to distribute to them. This is the best we can hope for with J&W as their rules prevent them from giving us the addresses of these scholarship recipients so we can write to them directly. And unlike URI, where all our scholarship recipients at our downtown college write us about their activities as a prerequisite to the continuation of our scholarship, J&W can't do that either. Meanwhile, we are trying to get our scholarship program at Rhode Island College back on track, as it use to be, sending us letters from our scholarship recipients there every year prior to the renewal of their Feinstein Scholarships, as with URI. We also have scholarships at Providence College, Salve Regina, Roger Williams University and New England Tech Institute.

Please remind all your Jr. Scholars to keep their Feinstein cards and, when applying to any of these colleges some day, to be sure to put on their application that they are one of our Jr. Scholars. That won't guarantee them a scholarship, as we have no control over who gets them – the colleges decide that – but making that fact known will certainly give them priority consideration for the scholarship money we put there for them.

Best wishes,
Alan Shawn Feinstein