

## THE ELEANOR AND ANNA ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

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Description: In this segment, ER discusses efforts to fight heart disease with Louise Baer, vice chairman of New York Heart Campaign.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Louise Baer

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[ER:] Thank you, Anna. Our guest this morning is Mrs. Louise Baer, the wife of the widely read newspaper columnist and humorist Bugs Baer. Mrs. Baer herself is engaged in an extremely serious work. She's Vice Chairman of the New York Heart Campaign, and on the board of the American Heart Association. Mrs. Baer, it seems that you've certainly won a host of friends and influenced an army of people to volunteer their time and talents to aid the fight against heart disease. I wonder if you'd care to tell us how you originally became interested in this wonderful work.

[Louise Baer:] Uh, Mrs. Roosevelt, I have rheumatic fever. I've had it since I was four years old, with multiple reoccurrences. In the past nine years, I suppose I've been in the hospital as much as I've been out of it. In the past three years it has probably increased. It was exactly three years ago that I sat in a lonely hospital room with my doctor trying to reassure me, tell me that I would be alright and that I would be out again, would continue to live a normal life. At that same time, he told me uh that something wonderful was happening, that in New York City, an organization that would be known as the New York Heart Association, was being organized. The money that this small group of doctors and laypeople were trying to get together for this fund to fight heart disease uh would be the beginning of help and cure. Uh Mrs. Roosevelt, it wasn't very reassuring that night. I thought that everything that could be done had been done. And it was one of those nights that I made a pact with myself and my god, that if I lived that I would work the rest of my life to help other people who have suffered from diseases of the heart. (2:10)

[ER:] That was really a wonderful decision. What is the program of the New York Heart Association?

[Louise Baer:] It is a threefold program: research, service, and public education. They are all terribly important, and should go hand in hand. But somehow I feel that making people understand the nature of a problem is a logical first step because when people have a better understanding the rest of the program can move ahead faster and more effectively.

[ER:] Suppose you give the people listening in some idea of the nature of heart disease?

[Louise Baer:] Actually, Mrs. Roosevelt, there is no such thing as heart disease. There are twenty-one varieties of heart trouble. The three major forms are rheumatic heart disease, high blood pressure, and coronary heart disease, which is more commonly known as hardening of the arteries.

[ER:] Most mothers have heard about rheumatic heart disease because it's earned the unenviable reputation of being childhood's greatest enemy.

[Louise Baer:] Yes, and there's good reason for such concern, Mrs. Roosevelt. Rheumatic heart disease is a greatcrippler. It comes from rheumatic fever, which strikes mainly in childhood, most frequently between the ages of seven and ten. It has a tendency to damage the heart valves and muscle, and it is likely to return again and again.

[ER:] What progress has medical science made in combating rheumatic heart disease, Mrs. Baer?

[Louise Baer:] No cure has been found yet. It seems that the best treatment consists of prolonged bed rest under careful medical supervision. The idea is to prevent a reoccurrence, to keep the child free from exposure to colds, and to give the heart a chance to become stronger. Of course, this presents another problem, the shortage of beds in hospitals and convalescent homes.

[ER:] Haven't I heard something about experiments in home care for children with rheumatic heart disease?

[Louise Baer:] That's right. The home care division of Montefiore Hospital is carrying through a very interesting experiment that brings all of the hospital facilities into the home of the young patient. The heart specialist makes regular visits, and working with him is a team of other people: a visiting nurse who shows the mother how to keep the proper charts and records, a recreational therapist who supplies the youngster with things to do, a teacher provided by the New York City Board of Education who keeps the child up with his studies. If any family problems arise, a social worker is available to help adjust them, and a psychiatrist works with the child when necessary. (4:55)

[ER:] That sounds like a well-rounded and carefully conceived plan, it must be very rewarding work.

[Louise Baer:] Indeed it is. We at the New York Heart Association are happy to have furnished the funds that make this study possible. Actually, Mrs. Roosevelt, the people deserve the credit, those generous men and women who contributed to the New York Heart Campaign last year.

[ER:] What about high blood pressure? Does the medical profession understand what causes it?

[Louise Baer:] People make the mistake of thinking that high blood pressure is the sure beginning of the end. I am told that a good many women develop high blood pressure in their forties. With men, it is more frequent after the age of fifty. It comes gradually, and if the heart is not abused, people can continue to lead useful, active lives for many years.

[ER:] That-- what can we do as individuals to speed up this crusade against heart disease, Mrs. Baer?

[Louise Baer:] Wherever we are in any part of the United States, we have an opportunity to support the work of the American Heart Association by helping our own community campaigns. This year the American Heart Association is asking the people of America to enlist five million dollars in this fight against heart disease. We in New York have cheerfully accepted the goal of one million dollars and we are confident that we will be able to report a complete success.

[ER:] Thank you, Mrs. Baer, for visiting us today. Your work is for the benefit of us all and deserves the cooperation of all of us. And now back to my daughter Anna in Hollywood. (6:36)

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