

CULL

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night of April 11 that there was a problem, he listened.

Cull's wake-up call literally began with a thud. After making preparations to depart for Washington, D.C., the next day with the Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce, he laid down in his bed around 11:40 p.m. that night to get some much-needed rest.

That's when he heard the first, "Thud!" Cull asked his wife, Jennifer, if she had heard anything. And then there was a second, "Thud!"

"I ran downstairs and realized it was someone shuffling on the porch," Cull said. "It was pitch dark outside and hard to see."

The intruder had broken through a screen door and was trying to turn the door knob to enter the home. Cull rounded up his family and called 9-1-1. Police showed up to question the man, who was intoxicated and apparently thought he was at a different residence.

Cull became irritated when he walked out on the porch to speak with police and stepped barefoot in a puddle of urine left by the intruder. While visiting with the officer, however, that irritation manifested itself as something else entirely.

"In the middle of (the conversation), I had a pain that hit me really high in the chest," Cull said. "I looked at the sergeant who was there and my wife and said, 'Could I be having a heart attack?' It was one of those things where you just know what it is. There was no doubt in my mind — or at least not a very big doubt. About that time I said to Jennifer, 'We're going to the hospital.'"

Within five minutes, Cull was at the emergency room and consulting with a doctor.

"The emergency team did all the right things," he said. "Within an hour or so, I was airlifted to the Avera Heart Hospital of South Dakota in Sioux Falls."

The doctor there successfully inserted a coronary artery stent.

Although he was still sedated with morphine at the time, Cull said the impact of what had just happened really sunk in when the doctor said something along the lines of, "There is a 50 percent chance that if you go back to smoking and any of your other risk factors, you'll be back here. Or you may just bypass that step."

Cull's mind reeled. "We may just miss the hospital part of this routine and go straight to the morgue," he recalls thinking. "It was definitely a wake-up call. It's been an interesting two months now."

Because he immediately received help, Cull was able to avert more serious implications from his heart attack. In fact, he believes that he will eventually not even have to take medication and will be able to maintain his health through diet and exercise.

"I cannot say enough about the medical care I got through Avera and how great it was," Cull said. "They really knew what they were doing."

After going through a six-week cardiac rehab program, Cull said he has learned a lot about what he needs to do to maintain his health. Of nine risk factors for cardiovascular disease ranging from an unhealthy diet and high cholesterol to physical activity, Cull said he initially ranked high in eight of them and moderately in the remaining one.

"I was like a poster child for the American Heart Association," he said. "I was a walking time bomb."

Now Cull has low risk in eight of the categories and has moderate risk in the last one.

"It's great," he said. "I have done some things right. But there is no quick fix to it. I'm just trying to do the right things. Eating right. Working out. Hopefully, everything will work out."

Leaving the smoking habit behind hasn't been very hard, according to Cull.

"As I started out those first few days, I'd find myself thinking about having a cigarette. Then I would ask, 'What the hell are you thinking? You just about died!'"

And he has also lost 30 pounds. It's the result of being more proactive about his life, Cull said.

"I've had to plan a lot more for my personal lifestyle," he stated. "Before, that stuff always came second. I would take off and grab some food wherever."

Cull does shares his story with anyone who wants to listen.

"I'm not going to be one of those guys going around telling people to do this or that, but it would be great if I could help just one person so they don't have to go through what I did," he said.

On the telephone in his office, Cull keeps a piece of paper with a quote from a good friend of his father's, Winston Churchill: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

It's a motto that Cull takes very seriously.

"I learned a long time ago that you can't keep taking, taking, taking from something," he said. "You've got to give something back. That's the bottom line. That's what makes a small community like Yankton so great. Everyone contributes."

REIMLER

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"If I had a job during the day, then I couldn't do any of these things I like to do, and that's why it's weird to say it's my job," she said. "It's always, 'I'm going to dance, I'm going to play practice, I'm going to rehearsal.'"

Each week, Reimler teaches 15 dance classes at the Academy of Dance in Yankton, including ballet, pointe, tap and modern dance.

She also choreographs show choirs and musical productions for Yankton High School, Mount Marty College, the Lewis and Clark Theatre

Company and the Vermillion Community Theatre.

She has worked with the Freeman Community Theater during the annual Schmeckfest celebration, as well as with the University of South Dakota musical theatre department.

When time allows, she teaches private dance lessons. She has helped serious dancers with college and company dance auditions, as well as football players who want to become lighter on their feet and better at the game.

Terry Winter, a retired teacher and musical director from Yankton High School, has worked with Reimler several times in the past. Each time, it was a positive, challenging experience.

"One of the things I've really

always appreciated about her is that she knows what people are capable of doing and she choreographs to those abilities and limitations," Winter said. "She always manages to make people look good. I think she's one of those talents that makes our community a better place and she spreads it around."

In fact, sometimes she doesn't consider what she does a job.

"It's hard work, but it's not like a job — it's not like 9-5, it's not a desk," she said.

Growing up in a musical family, it's no surprise Reimler still loves the arts.

Her father, the late Dave Elder, was a violinist and orchestra teacher at Yankton School District. Still today, her mother Lelia helps behind the scenes for musicals in

the area and serves on the board of directors at the Lewis and Clark Theatre Company.

Her parents' support and interest in the performing arts inspired Reimler and her two sisters to learn piano, violin and cello at a young age. In high school, she took part in theater and chorus, too, in addition to dance classes.

When it came time to pick a college and a major, however, she found that she couldn't continue all of the arts.

"Dance was just my strongest passion of them all," she said. "Specifically, I looked for a big school with a big dance department."

That school was the University of Iowa in Iowa City. It was there she was exposed to even more forms of

dance, as well as choreography and dance improvisation.

"For me, it really did take me going away and studying all those years with different people and getting the training and education to come back and do this," she said.

She returned to Yankton in the fall of 1999 to marry her husband Jim, the AM program director and an on-air personality at WNAX radio.

"I have a very patient and understanding husband who not only understands and appreciates the arts, but also supports and allows me to do what I do," Reimler said.

"I love dance, and I love being able to share what I know," she said. "I have my serious students and my musical theater students. I just get to meet so many people."

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