



*"The Schuylkill River Trail was my medicine."*

In 2014, Hatem was told he had one hour to live and a 6% chance of surviving necessary open-heart surgery. The surgery was successful but doctors informed Hatem he would now have very limited mobility. He regained his strength by bicycling on the trail for one hour every day. Hatem says he made an almost perfect recovery with the support of his family, his faith and the happiness the Schuylkill River Trail brings him each time he's on it.

My name is Hatem Eldoronki. I had emergency open-heart surgery in November of 2014, for aortic dissection, aortic aneurysm, aortic valve replacement, and coronary artery bypass. Aortic aneurysm and dissection is a very serious genetic disease that claims the life of many people each year. It's difficult to detect, and has a lifetime effect on the majority of patients, who are left with lots of restrictions on lifting, heavy sports and other enjoyments of life.

I was given one hour to live, and a 6% chance of surviving the surgery. While I passed that test I was informed that I would be very limited in my motion and work abilities. I passed that test too, but not without the help of the Schuylkill River Trail! I bought a bicycle, and started cycling the SRT daily for an hour. I mostly needed emotional support, which my wife and children never ran out of, but also the assurance that "I can do it". I found that on the SRT.

With the diverse scenery available along the trail, I was kept entertained and hopeful. From the buzz around the Art Museum in Philadelphia, to the quiet concert of the running streams by the Perkiomen leg of the tour, from the geese and tortoises by the Manayunk Canal to a quiet bench by the Betzwood Park, I felt how beautiful life is, how beautiful America is, and how lucky I am to be here enjoying all of this! I never tire of thanking every maintenance worker or any SRT personnel I encounter on the trail for keeping it immaculate.

I couldn't have been the happy, grateful person I am today without the Schuylkill River Trail. Besides faith, biking the Schuylkill River Trail was my medicine, and it always brings happiness to my chest! I am truly lucky to be an American citizen, and lucky to enjoy the fruit of the hard work of those maintaining this trail! Thank you forever!

## YOUR TRAIL NEEDS YOU!

**Please join Schuylkill River Greenways by becoming a member so we can continue to build the trail and provide opportunities for people like Hatem so they have enjoyable, life-changing experiences.**

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TO BECOME A MEMBER!](#)

