

Lifestyle Change Award Winners Announced!

November 26, 2009

St. Joseph's Hospital, the American Heart Association & Z106

You may be aware that we launched a Lifestyle Change Award with the American Heart Association and Z106 at the Heart Walk in early October. We asked the community to submit entries about how you made lifestyle changes to inspire others and impact their health.

The winners were announced at the Turkey Trot.

1st Place: Amber Hanes

2nd Place: Kathy Brown

3rd Place: Diana Riffle

Honorable Mention: George Welch



Photo (L to R):

George Welch (Honorable Mention), Jill Parsons (St. Joseph's Hospital), Diana Riffle (3rd Place), Kathy Brown (2nd Place), Amber Hanes (1st Place) and Kendra Liddle (American Heart Association)

Amber's story:

I am a Kindergarten Teacher and the Varsity Girls' Basketball Coach at Belpre City Schools in Belpre, Ohio. I have recently committed to several lifestyle changes, because I believe that I owe it to my class and my athletes to model fitness, healthy living, and a renewed spirit. During the past six months, I have lost 40 pounds, become a competitive runner, increased the time I devote to rest, and reconnected with my church to revive my spirit.

To lose the weight, I have made several changes in the way I prepare meals. I now take the time to review the nutrition information on food labels, measure appropriate portion sizes, and make informed decisions about what I put on my plate. I have traded the potato chip bag for fresh cut baby carrots and apple slices when I want to snack.

In addition to healthy food choices, I have increased my physical activity by becoming a competitive runner. I made the decision to train for the 2009 Columbus Nationwide Half Marathon in October, with the goal of finishing in mind. After training for only a few of weeks, I had placed second in my age group in a 5K race in Dublin, Ohio and then won in my age group in the 2009 Mountwood Trail Run. Recently, I placed first overall in the ACE New River Gorge-ous Trail Run. As a graduate of Frontier High School, where track and cross country are not offered, I had no idea that I seem to have some talent in running.

Another important lifestyle change that cannot be ignored is the proper amount of time devoted to rest. With the hectic schedule of a Kindergarten Teacher and the Varsity Girls' Basketball Coach, I used to be lucky to sleep a four hour night. Realizing how important sleep is to healthy living and the ability to properly train for running, I have revamped my schedule to allow for at least seven to eight hours of sleep per night.

Finally, to live a truly, healthy existence, one must have a revitalized spirit to compliment a fit lifestyle. I have rekindled my spirit by committing to attend church regularly and participate in the choir outside of the regular Sunday service. This has certainly helped to renew my spirit and redirect my energy to live by positive example.

After recently changing my lifestyle, I cannot begin to express how great I feel. I love life, am full of energy, and cannot wait to take on another challenge. I am interested in beginning a student fitness club at Belpre Elementary to help children learn how to take care of their bodies now, and gain the skills that I took so long to learn for myself. I am newly inspired to be a living example to both the children I teach and the athletes I coach.

Kathy's story:

Weight has always been an issue in my life. In September 2006 I was at my heaviest weight in my life. A few months earlier I had lost both my parents. My father, who had been overweight most of his adult life, died from complications after his 5th knee replacement. I was sure that I would be heading down that same road so I decided to take a DETOUR! At age 49, I knew I had too much life left to live and decided that I needed to lose weight, and lots of it. I joined Weight Watchers, for about the fourth time, and was determined to do it this time. Making a determination in my mind and heart to get healthy and stay healthy, the following months proved to me that I could do it. I have lost a total of 99 pounds. I plan to continue to maintain a healthy lifestyle. I have way too much to live for and things to enjoy, like my grandchildren, and my family and friends.

Diana's story:

I am a registered nurse and work with cardiac patients. I tell my patients they need to follow a heart-healthy diet and exercise regularly in order to reduce their risk for future heart disease. I got tired of feeling like a hypocrit because I was not doing what I was telling my heart patients to do. I wanted to be a better role model for my patients. Last August I began my journey into a healthier lifestyle. I started walking 4-5 miles per day and changing my dietary habits. I drink mostly water these days and I am eating more fruit and vegetables and making healthier choices during my meals. Since August 1st of 2008, I have lost 50 pounds and maintained my weight loss. I am committed to a healthier lifestyle and my desire to teach others what they can do to live healthier lives.

George's story:

I was 48 years old and my blood pressure was very high - 240 over 160. My doctor wanted to put on medication but I talked him into giving me 6 months to get it down my self. I started a weight loss program. I am a simple man so the program I used was simple. I decreased input and increased output. My daughter, who is a runner, talked me into joining her and my wife in a 5k race. I soon found out that I was not a runner! I started walking and learned to racewalk. I've lost almost 100 pounds my blood pressure is 120 over 70. I have become hooked on racewalking. I do many 5ks, some 10ks and as many 1/2 marathons a year that I can get to.