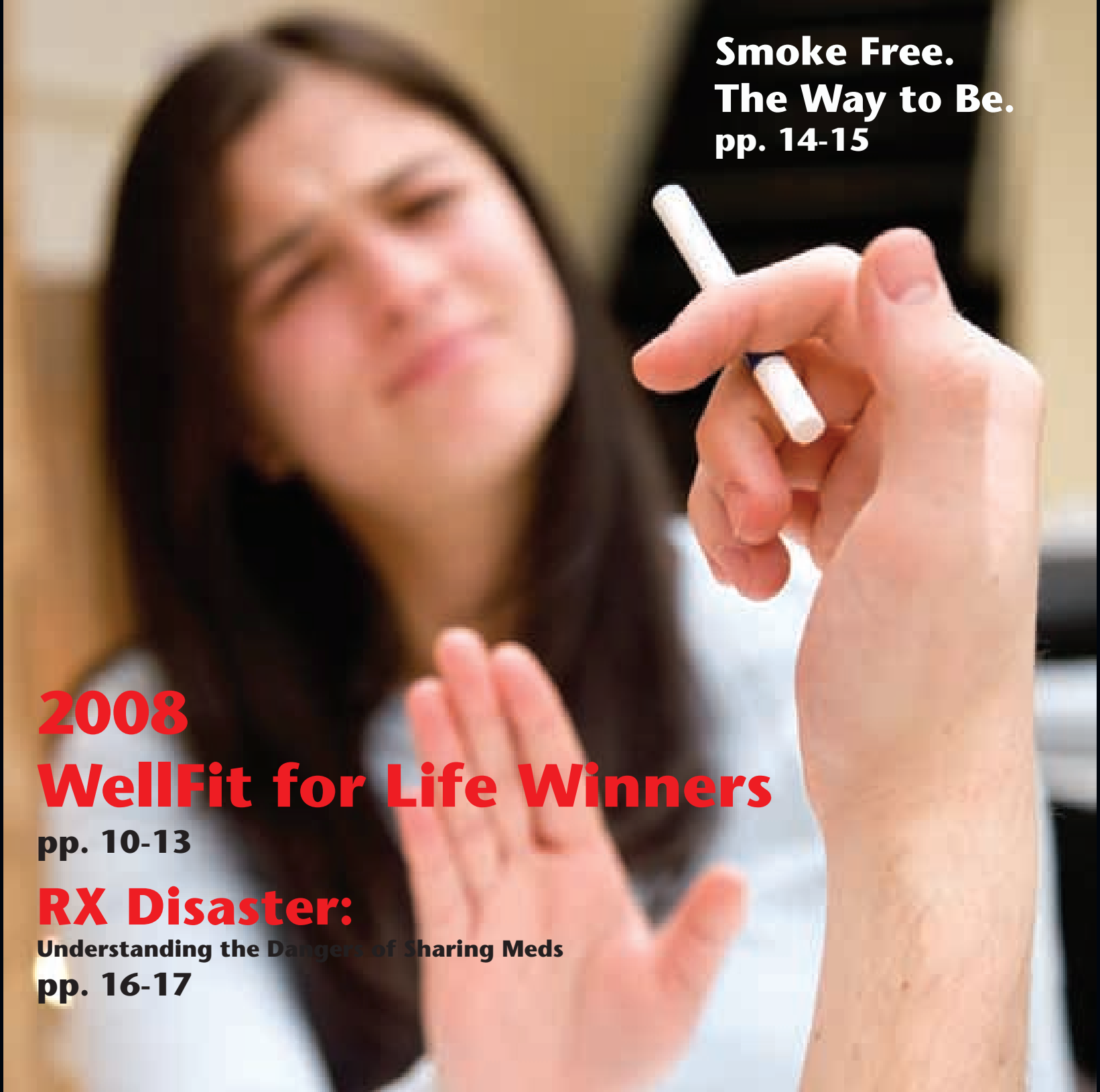


Health Traxx

For Teachers by Teachers

A PUBLICATION FOR TEACHERS HEALTH TRUST PARTICIPANTS

SUMMER 2008  VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2



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The Way to Be.
pp. 14-15**

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RX Disaster:

Understanding the Dangers of Sharing Meds

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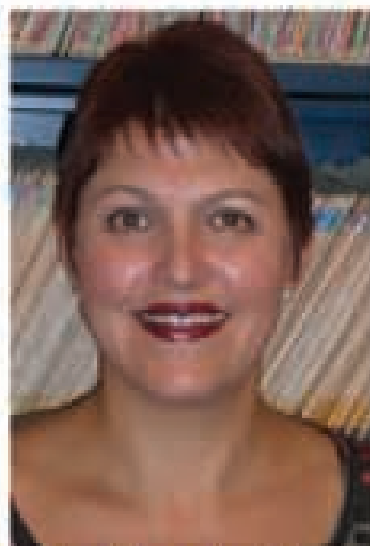


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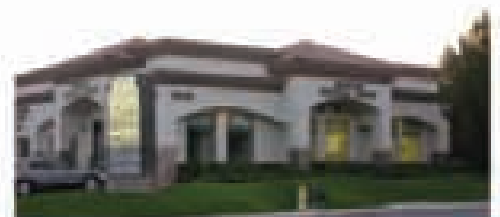
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HEALTH TRAXX

*The Teachers Health Trust
Quarterly News Publication*

Health Traxx is published quarterly by the Teachers Health Trust to help participants make life-saving choices when making health care decisions. Although editorial content is based on sound medical information, we ask that you consult a health care professional for all matters of concern. We encourage you to keep copies of this news publication to build a handy home-medical reference or recycle issues to friends and family.

Any opinions expressed by an author/source whose article appears in this publication are solely the opinions of the author/source and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Teachers Health Trust. If you have questions or comments regarding this issue, email the Trust at wellness@teachershealthtrust.org or write to:

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The discussion about the current state of health care delivery in the United States, as well as what we can expect in the future, continues to be divisive, not only in the national political arena but also in a very individual and personal way in your workplaces and homes. State and federal governments, employers, medical providers, families and every person accessing the health care system are searching for the magic "silver bullet" that will solve the issues of cost, quality and access to services that confront each of us every day. Unfortunately, that bullet has yet to be found.

The recent discovery of alleged improper practices at several endoscopy centers in Las Vegas only serves to remind us that we have a long way to go before we can be assured that our dollars being spent for medical care are returning to us the access to care and quality to which we should be entitled. We are fortunate to have some extremely well-qualified physicians and state-of-the-art hospitals and surgery centers in Las Vegas, but the headlines regarding the endoscopy centers and some of the physicians associated with them cast an unwarranted dark shadow on the entire medical profession. We need to keep in mind that most of us have medical providers who are dedicated to dealing with our medical needs in a professional manner. In addition, it is extremely important that each of us becomes an informed consumer and that we question the cost and necessity of the medical care we are receiving. Many people accept medical care without questioning a physician or a hospital. We shop for food, cars, homes and almost every other product useful or necessary in our daily lives with cost and quality uppermost in our minds. Why don't we do the same for our medical needs?

The Teachers Health Trust has its own network of about 2,500 medical providers, and we have direct contact with them whenever any issues arise. The Trust receives relatively few complaints from its network providers, and we go to great lengths to offer you the services of medical professionals who care. Is this system perfect? Of course not, but it does offer a greater level of scrutiny and concern which not all health plans offer. This is only one of the ways that the Trust is actively seeking to make the access to quality health care more affordable and beneficial to you and your families. We can't solve all the problems, but we are doing our best to balance your medical care needs against the needs of the medical professionals who are contracted with our provider network. They are entitled to make a profit but not at the expense of rendering substandard medical care. Our goal is to make available to you affordable and quality health care, and we are continually seeking to find better ways to achieve that goal.

Enjoy your summer vacations (those of you that get them)!

Sincerely,

Peter Alpert
Chief Executive Officer
April 2008

TRUST TIDBITS

DON'T MISS THESE IMPORTANT TRUST DEADLINES AND EVENTS:

The Trust staff would like to wish you all a safe and relaxing summer break!

> 2008-2009 New Hire Orientation

New Hire Orientation for the 2008-2009 school year will be held Wednesday, August 13 through Friday, August 15, 2008, at Cox Pavilion. The Trust offices will be closed to the public these three days in order to provide benefit and enrollment information to newly hired employees.

> 2008 SPD

The 2008 Summary Plan Document PDF file is now available online. Please log on to the Trust's website at www.teachershealthtrust.org and click on the Plan Benefits link on the left side of the page. Your CD Rom copy of the Summary Plan Document was placed in the mail in early May. If you did not receive your copy, please refer to the online version for your benefit questions or contact the Trust's Service Team at 702-794-0272 or via email at serviceteam@teachershealthtrust.org.

> Returning LOA

The Employment Forms and Benefits Session for employees returning from a Leave of Absence for the 2008-09 school year will be held Wednesday, August 20, 2008, beginning at 3:30 p.m. at the Education Center Board Room, 2832 East Flamingo Road, Las Vegas, NV 89121.

> Health Festival

Planning for the 2008 Health Festival is underway at the Trust. The festival will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, October 25, 2008, at Cox Pavilion. More information will be provided in the fall issue of *Health Traxx*.

TRUST OFFICE CLOSINGS

The Teachers Health Trust Offices will be closed for the following holidays and events:

Memorial Day	May 26, 2008
July 3, 2008	Offices open 8 to 11:45 a.m. only
Fourth of July	July 4, 2008
New Hire Orientation	August 13 through 15, 2008
Labor Day	September 1, 2008



YOU MUST FILE A REPORT ON ALL INJURIES AND/OR ILLNESSES INCURRED AT WORK WITHIN SEVEN DAYS!

Claims resulting from work-related injuries must be filed through your Workers' Compensation carrier, not the Teachers Health Trust. This includes but is not limited to coaching injuries, environmental illnesses, etc.

If you are injured on the job, the Clark County School District (CCSD) and the State of Nevada require that you submit a written notice of injury or occupational disease (Form C-1) within seven (7) days of the incident.

If a timely-filed claim and all permissible appeals (including court reviews) are denied as not being work-related, the Trust will review your claims for payment. The Trust will not consider claims if Workers' Compensation denied them because you failed to file your claims in a timely manner.

Regardless of the severity or type, any injury or illness sustained on the job should be submitted to Workers' Compensation. Notify your administrator immediately and then call the School District's Risk Management office at 702-799-2967.

Avoid High Hospital Bills: Demand In-Network Providers

The Teachers Health Trust recognizes that medical bills resulting from visits to Out-of-Network providers can be both frustrating and, at times, financially devastating. While the Trust encourages you to verify your physicians' In-Network status on a regular basis, it also realizes that there may be times when you feel that the doctor selection is beyond your control. During your stay in a hospital, for instance, it is possible that you could be seen by an unfamiliar physician, generally known as a hospitalist, who may be Out-of-Network.

The Trust would like you to know that you do have the right to question the doctors who are caring for you in a hospital setting. The following tips will help you save money and hardship when you have to visit the hospital:

Know who your physicians are.

Ask the admitting staff to ensure all your physicians are with the Teachers Health Trust Provider Network.

Speak your mind.

Question any unfamiliar doctor who enters your room. Request a business card for your records and insist that you be seen by an In-Network hospitalist if the physician is Out-of-Network.

Know what questions to ask.

Be sure to ask any unfamiliar doctor if he or she is contracted with the Teachers Health Trust. Simply asking if the doctor takes the Trust insurance does not guarantee that he or she is In-Network.

Inform your family members and friends.

Ensure that anyone who may accompany you to the hospital and may speak on your behalf knows to ask for In-Network hospitalists only.

Carry your Trust In-Network Hospitalist Groups card in your wallet or purse. Cut out the card below and present it to the admitting staff if you are ever hospitalized. Ask that a copy be kept in your records.

It is your right and your duty to take control of your health care and to ensure you are doing everything possible to keep your health care costs low. Please make note of the following names and be aware that these Providers **are not** part of the Trust Network of Providers.

Cardiovascular and Thoracic
Surgery of NV
Desert Palms Medical Association
Fawad and Associates Inc.
Lake Mead Care Center
RMS Healthcare Inc.
Shivay Saran International
Valley Primary Care Center
Mandip S. Arora
John X. Brown
Marc C. Bush
Bashir Chowdhry
Ishitaq Chowdhry
Ahmed Fawad
Miguel M. Gonzales
Frank Gruber
Nauman Jahangir
Pavan Janapati
Robert Johnson
Ritu Joshi
Westbrook Kaplan
Michael R. Klein
Vrijendra Kumar-Hoon

Vrijendra H. Jumar
Sharon Landers
Javed Malik
Nath Manoj
Ramanathan Muthaiaian
Emmanuel Onwutuebe
Sukhbir Pannu
Vijay Steele Patel
Paul Ponnaiya
Johnathan C. Reboton
Ardeshir Rohani
Lewis H. Self
Rebecca Sinai
Mahender P. Singh
Abhinar Sinha
Sean S. Steele
Finch Sudhir
Kent A. Swaine
Muhammad Ali Syed
James W. Vahey
Sandeep Vijay
Sandhya Wahi-Gurur
Kim H. Won

As always, the Trust Service Team is available to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have regarding Out-of-Network hospitalists. For more information, please contact the Service Team at 702-794-0272 or via email at serviceteam@teachershealthtrust.org.

Teachers Health Trust In-Network Hospitalist Groups

Services rendered by Out-of-Network Providers will greatly increase your personal expense! To keep your costs down, demand to be seen by In-Network Providers:

Fremont Primary Care Hospitalists
Inpatient Physicians Network of NV (IPN)
United Hospitalist Incorporated (UHI)
TriCity Medical

University Health System
Zenith Hospitalists
Twin Valley Emergency Physicians*
(*Mesquite Participants Only)

Use this card to ensure you are seen by providers within the Trust Network when receiving hospital care. Present this card to the admitting staff and request that a copy be placed in your chart.

KIDS KORNER

Beware of Secondhand Smoke: Protecting Little Lungs



“Children who breathe secondhand smoke are more likely to suffer from lung infections, including pneumonia and bronchitis,” explained Maria Azzarelli, Tobacco Control Coordinator for the Southern Nevada Health District. “It also leads to a greater number of asthma attacks which are more severe in nature when they come from secondhand smoke exposure.”

According to the American Lung Association, “[s]econd hand smoke is especially harmful to young children,” resulting in between 150,000 and 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections in children under 18 months, 7,500 to 15,000 of which require hospitalization. Sadly, approximately 430 deaths from Sudden Infant Death

Syndrome (SIDS) occur annually as a result of secondhand smoke exposure.

Since the passage of the Nevada Clean Indoor Air Act in November 2006, exposure to secondhand smoke has been limited in most public places. And, though adults can still be subject to smoke in casinos and bars, most areas where smoking is permitted are not places children frequent.

Unfortunately, friends and family are more likely to be the source of secondhand smoke exposure than public places.

“Secondhand smoke lingers on fabrics and porous surfaces, such as curtains.”

While you may think your child is safe as long as you or your acquaintances are not actively smoking while the child is present, secondhand smoke exposure can occur long after that cigarette has been put out.

“Secondhand smoke lingers on fabrics and porous surfaces, such as curtains,” Azzarelli said, meaning that children can be exposed to smoke even if an individual is not physically smoking in their presence.

To effectively limit the amount of secondhand smoke to which a child

Between daily bumps and bruises, finicky mealtimes, and before-bed tantrums, the last thing today’s parents should be worried about is the quality of air their little ones are breathing.

Sadly, between the soot and smog our factories and vehicles emit into the air on a daily basis, those little pink lungs are exposed to harmful pollutants, increasing the risk of developing mild to severe breathing-related disorders and even ear infections and upper and lower respiratory infections.

Ozone and particle pollutants aren’t the only impurities making their way into air at the park, the pool, and entry ways outside shopping malls and theaters. Even with new regulations regarding public smoking in Clark County, smoking is still a hot topic, especially when it comes to a child’s exposure to secondhand smoke.

Kids’ Korner is designed with the health of your students in mind. Have an upcoming event focused on kids’ health and fitness and you’d like to get the word out? Have a program that implements healthy habits at your school that you’d like to share with others? Send the details along with your name, school and contact information to Brenda Kelley at bkelly@teachershealthtrust.org, and you may see your ideas in the next *Health Traxx* issue!

is exposed, the Southern Nevada Health District and the American Lung Association both recommend initiating a smoke-free policy at home and in the car.

"While public places may be out of the control of parents trying to protect their children, in the home and car you can make sure that no one is allowed to smoke," Azzarelli urged. "We suggest people start there first."

Protect your children by making sure guests understand that your home, the area surrounding your home, and your vehicle are off limits to smoking. If you are a smoker yourself, be aware that smoke can linger in your clothing and on your person for hours following a cigarette and take the necessary precautions to avoid exposing your child.

Azzarelli also added that the best way to ensure your children's lungs are protected from secondhand smoke is to quit if you currently smoke. The Nevada Tobacco Users' Helpline (1-800-QUIT-NOW) is a free telephone-based service designed to assist you in your efforts to stop smoking permanently.

For more information regarding secondhand smoke and the health risks it poses, log on to the American Lung Association fact sheet at www.lungusa.org. To find out about local smoke-free promotion programs sponsored by the Southern Nevada Health District, log on to www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org and click on the tobacco link.

*Misti R. Brock, Publications Specialist
Teachers Health Trust*

FOR YOUR BENEFIT

- **American Heart Association's 2008 Stroke Awareness Fair**, Thursday, June 5, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to noon at Orleans Hotel & Casino. Onsite registration and a continental breakfast begin at 7:30 a.m. Event will include short lectures in English and Spanish; an interactive CPR session; free blood pressure and cholesterol checks; counseling and stroke assessments; \$30 lipid panels; and product and service review from various area exhibitors. RSVP at 702-367-1366.
- **4th Annual Teachers to Students 5K and 1 Mile Walk**, Monday, September 22, 2008, beginning at 7 a.m. at Bonanza High School.
- **American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer of Las Vegas** Kick Off Breakfast, Thursday, August 14, 2008, at 8 a.m. at JW Marriott Las Vegas Resort & Spa, 221 N Rampart Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89145. Contact Melissa Stemmler at melissa.stemmler@cancer.org for more information.
- **American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer**, Saturday, October 4, 2008, at 8 a.m. at JW Marriott Las Vegas Resort & Spa, 221 N Rampart Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89145. Event is a non-competitive walk to raise money for prevention and awareness. Contact Melissa Stemmler at melissa.stemmler@cancer.org for more information.
- **Free Indoor Walking Group for 50+**, sponsored by the City of Las Vegas, every Tuesday and Thursday from 8 to 9 a.m. at the East Las Vegas Community/Senior Center Ballroom, 250 North Eastern Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89121. Call 702-299-1515 for more information.
- **Clark County READS** is in need of reading volunteers to work one on one with struggling readers. Call 702-799-5437 for more information.
- **Child Focus Academic Success Program** is in need of individuals interested in training to become reading tutors for foster children. Call 702-436-1624 for more information.

Staying Motivated:

5 Tips for Year-Round Healthy Living

“I’ve been on a diet for two weeks and all I’ve lost is 14 days.”

Totie Fields

For the past ten weeks, you’ve been focused. You’ve been driven. You’ve learned to count calories, scheduled your workouts, and have gotten up early to prepare those salads for lunch, carefully measuring exactly a serving of dressing in your container. You’ve committed to a healthier lifestyle for the entire ten weeks of the WellFit for Life program, but now it’s over and you can’t help but wonder where’s the mini-parade and street-side celebration when I need them? You did, after all, make quite a change for the better.

Before you take that celery stick and throw it across the room, go back and focus on defining the word that carried you for ten weeks: **motivation**. Motivation is a psychological decision to work toward an end-goal, usually accompanied by incentives that keep you both physically and mentally focused. Now that the competitive edge and the incentives of the WellFit for Life and Best Weigh to Go programs have worn off, what will be your motivating factors to continue your positive life change? If you’re still stumped, consider the following to help keep you on track for maintaining your newfound lifestyle:



1. Set an Intention.

No one can deny a major factor behind the decision to choose to participate in the WellFit for Life program was the competition. Whether you were competing with friends at work or trying to beat your own mileage from last year’s program, the thrill of victory was surely a major motivating factor. You started the program with the intention of winning. It is human nature. Why not set a new intention? The intention of staying healthy. The intention of feeling strong. The intention of keeping those illusive “back of the closet” pants in the front of your closet in plain view, where the front zipper goes up without panting, pressure or threats. Now, that is a victory in itself!

2. Remain Optimistic.

You have worked so hard to get where you are today. Don’t throw it away. Remember, the ten week WellFit for Life and Best Weigh to Go programs are designed as jumping off points. The programs get you started and help you set long-term goals. It’s up to you to remain optimistic by setting smaller, more obtainable goals along the way. A few small changes are all it takes to feel amazing. Remember if you slip up, as everyone inevitably does, pick yourself up and start again. Remaining self-assured, focused, and optimistic is the key to making your WellFit for Life changes a permanent part of your daily routine and achieving those long-term goals, whether they be to stop smoking or lose 100 pounds!

3. Do Not Deprive – Improvise!

Why is it that many of us have accepted the notion that in order to stay fit and healthy, we must deprive ourselves of the foods we love to eat? The key is moderation. The decision to stay healthy and eat well should be a lifelong one, and, by creating reasonable limits you can live with, you are less likely to be overtaken by a “weak” moment in which you thoughtlessly overindulge. If you are in the habit of reading from the Dessert menu prior to choosing your entrée in a restaurant, for instance, why deprive yourself of an indulgence when you have been keeping up with workouts? Why not ask the waiter to take back the bread, choose a lower calorie entrée, and then split the dessert with your dinner partner. You are reasonably entitled to enjoy yourself and you’ll be less likely to fall back into old, unhealthy habits if you allow yourself the things you love.

4. Keep it Spontaneous.

Jack LaLanne, renowned fitness godfather once said, “the key [to a successful workout] is changing your program every thirty days.” Pumping iron and still going strong at age 93, LaLanne has proven that his fitness method works. By varying workouts, you challenge yourself to learn something new. Take up a dance class, invite a friend on a Saturday morning hike, invest in a bike and enjoy the morning air. This method will help avoid the monotonous workout trap which ultimately starves motivation, and both your muscles and your mental outlook will thank you.

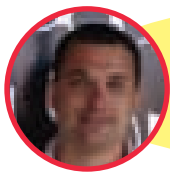
5. Be Vocal.

It’s likely that the last day of the WellFit for Life program happened to be the last time you heard from some of your biggest cheerleaders, family or otherwise, and vice versa. Don’t allow the end of the program to be the end of your encouragement! Let friends and family know that you plan to continue your healthy lifestyle. And offer support to those you know who are in it for the long haul. It’s amazing how effective the occasional “great job” can be!



For those of you who enrolled in and completed the WellFit for Life program, making the decision to take charge of your health, congratulations to you. But the journey has only just begun. Remember that you’ll no doubt have days where you eat more than your fair share of calories and the sofa seems so much more appealing than the treadmill. And that’s completely okay because WellFit for Life isn’t about a temporary fix. It’s not about dedicating ten weeks a year to eating right and exercising. It’s about making the right decisions for a lifetime of health and happiness.

*Sandra Garza-Chavez and
Misti R. Brock, Publications Specialist
Teachers Health Trust*



Elementary Division
NOVICE
Jeremy Brain
Bell ES



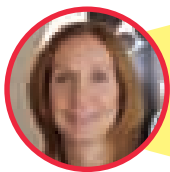
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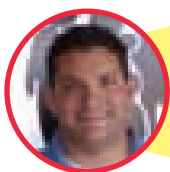
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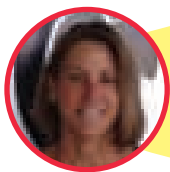
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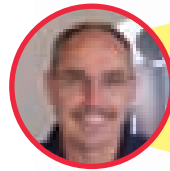


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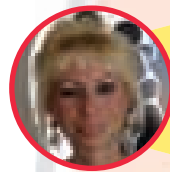
WellFit 2008 Individuals



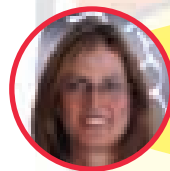
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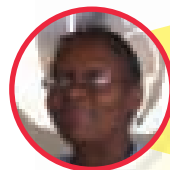
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Lisa Anderson
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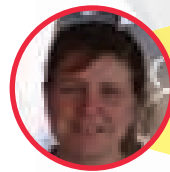
Middle School Division
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Emily Rodriguez
Sedway MS



Middle School Division
NOVICE
Alison Reed
Johnston MS

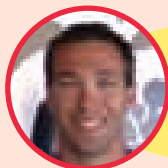


Middle School Division
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Scott Carter
White MS



Middle School Division
INTERMEDIATE
Kelly Wilson
Johnston MS

for Life Dual Winners



Middle School Division

INTERMEDIATE

Nick Meis
Rogich MS



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ADVANCED

Dawn Borjas
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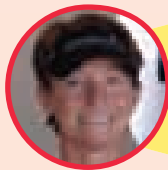
Darla Johnson
Cram MS



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Kevin Ferre
Cram MS



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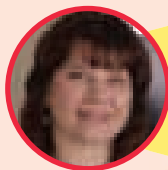
Kimberly Jefferson
White MS



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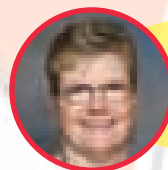
Tracy Fisher
Mannion MS



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Ricci Slobodnik
NW Career & Tech Academy



High School Division

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Laura Eaton
Durango HS



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INTERMEDIATE

Julie Weatherford
Adv.Tech Academy



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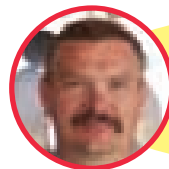
Dena Trees
Las Vegas HS



High School Division

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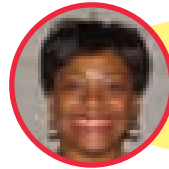
Pauline Blovsky
Durango HS



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Mark Jensen
Palo Verde HS



High School Division

EXTREME

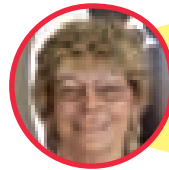
Felicia Henderson-Norris
Durango HS



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Alicia Boland
Durango HS



Special Schools Division

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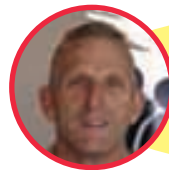
Berna Rickman
Variety



Special Schools Division

INTERMEDIATE

Dee Lyon
Stewart



Special Schools Division

EXTREME

Bob Swift
Variety



Rural Schools Division

NOVICE

Mary Ellen Keeton
Joseph L. Bowler



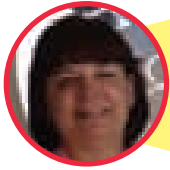
Rural Schools Division
INTERMEDIATE
Paula Gardner
 Joseph L. Bowler



Licensed Dept. Division
NOVICE
Lori Moroz-White
 Visually HDCP, Wasden



Licensed Dept. Division
INTERMEDIATE
Diana Kline
 SouthEast Region



Licensed Dept. Division
ADVANCED
Dee Arting
 NorthEast Region



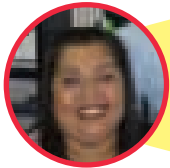
Other Division
NOVICE
Carol Fesser
 Licensed Personnel



Other Division
INTERMEDIATE
Hayden Ross
 Curriculum & Prof. Dev. Ctr.



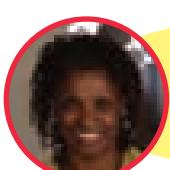
Trust/CCEA Division
NOVICE
Stephanie Bisulca
 Trust Personnel



Trust/CCEA Division
INTERMEDIATE
Ana Tarango
 Trust Personnel

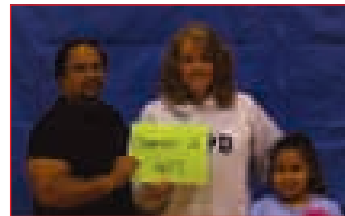


Trust/CCEA Division
ADVANCED
Mary White
 Trust Personnel



Trust/CCEA Division
EXTREME
Candy Smith
 Trust Personnel

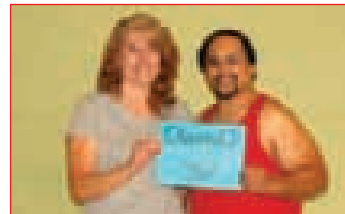
Best Weigh to Go **WINNERS**



\$1,000

Chamoli 2
 Raymond Afleje
 Dena Trees
Cashman MS
Las Vegas HS

Lost **11.30%** body weight



\$500

Wide Load
 Darcy Gonzales
 Diane Hughes
Newton ES

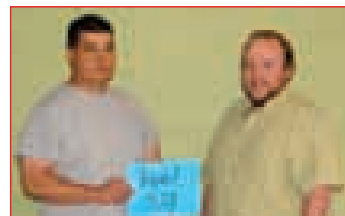
Lost **10.77%** body weight



\$250

Triple F
 William Fitzgerald
 Forrest Campbell
Basic HS

Lost **10.39%** body weight



WellFit for Life Division Winners

Elementary Division

M.J. Christensen Elementary School
Eileen Connors Elementary School
Rex Bell Elementary School
Lewis E. Rowe Elementary School

Middle School Division

Brian & Teri Cram Middle School
Jack & Terry Mannion Middle School
Sig Rogich Middle School

High School Division

Durango High School
Palo Verde High School

Special School Division

Variety

Rural School Division

Joseph L. Sr. Bowler

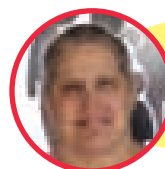
Licensed Department Division

Visually HDCP, Wasden

Worksite Breakfast Winner

Visually HDCP, Wasden
 with 7 participants completing the program

Lifetime Achievement Award Winner



SPECIAL AWARD
Jackie Johnson
 NorthEast Region

Congratulations to all WellFit for Life Participants!

Mental Muscle Express

Boost your brain power by solving these puzzles. See if you can uncover the meaning in these words, letters, symbols, and their positions. Each puzzle represents a common word, phrase, expression, person or place. The example below is "uptown."

N
W
O
T

1. **STRING
STRING
STRING
STRING**

2. **coldwashH²O**

3. **ERIF**

4. **knock**

wood

5. **COME** hands

See answers on page 17.

SMOKE FREE. THE WAY TO BE.

It is responsible for one in every five deaths, making it the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. It is associated with an increased risk for developing any number of life-threatening diseases, from breast and lung cancers to coronary artery disease and stroke.¹ It is dangerous, it's expensive, and it stinks.

So why do an estimated 45.3 million Americans continue to smoke cigarettes, even now when cigarette manufacturers have been forced to admit the dangers of smoking?²

According to the Center for Disease Control, they do so because tobacco contains nicotine and "research suggests that nicotine is as addictive as heroin, cocaine, or alcohol," making it the most common form of chemical dependence in the United States as of late 2007.

Research has shown whether the source of the nicotine is cigarettes, cigars, pipes or through smokeless tobacco, the body eagerly absorbs the stimulant, which accumulates and stays in the user's body for hours at a time. Because of this the average daily user, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, is exposed to nicotine 24 hours a day.

Because of this constant exposure, the body reacts violently when an individual attempts to quit smoking or chewing, causing, as a NIDA study showed, "increased anger, hostility, and aggression, and loss of social cooperation" as well as impairments with "psychomotor and cognitive functions, such as language comprehension" over longer periods of time.

Some individuals are able to quit smoking with the help of support groups or the nicotine patch or gum, while some may need a combination of smoking cessation prescription drugs and therapy. The Teachers Health Trust currently covers one course of smoking cessation treatment per calendar year under both the Diamond and Platinum Plans. The Trust offers an added incentive in the Health Improvement Benefit by providing \$50 reimbursement for tobacco prevention counseling and education.

For more information on your covered benefits, log on to the Trust's website at www.teachershealthtrust.org or contact the Service Team at 702-794-0272 or via email at serviceteam@teachershealthtrust.org.

¹Smoking & Tobacco Use Fact Sheet: Cessation. Center for Disease Control. www.cdc.gov.

²Smoking & Tobacco Use Fact Sheet: Adult Cigarette Smoking in the United States: Current Estimates. CDC. www.cdc.gov.

I quit
smoking
because..

After 5 to 15 years of not smoking, my **stroke** risk is reduced to that of a person who has never smoked.

Bad breath and teeth stains decrease improving my overall **dental hygiene**.

My risk for **cancer of the larynx** is reduced after quitting.

5 years after quitting, my risk for **cancers of the mouth, throat and esophagus** is halved.

Lung cancer risk drops by as much as half 10 years after quitting.

Coronary heart disease risk is cut by half 1 year after quitting and is nearly the same as someone who never smoked 15 years after quitting.

Ulcer risk drops after quitting.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease risk of death is reduced after I quit.

Bladder cancer risk is halved a few years after quitting.

My **Cervical cancer** risk is reduced a few years after quitting.

Low birth weight baby risk drops to normal if I quit before pregnancy or during my first trimester.

Peripheral artery disease risk goes down after quitting.

Information obtained from:
Center for Disease Control www.cdc.org

RX DISASTER:

Understanding the Dangers of Sharing Meds

From high school and college-aged kids looking for a quick, inexpensive high to adults hoping to save money on prescription medication costs, the amount of prescription drug sharing across the United States has skyrocketed in recent years.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, approximately 7 million people in 2006 admitted to nonmedical use of prescription drugs, specifically those affecting the central nervous system such as pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants and sedatives.

With the prevalence of illegal drug use in college, high school and even middle school-aged children, it's not surprising that kids this age are turning to their medicine cabinets at home for what they consider a legal, safer way to get high. What these children don't realize is the eminent dangers associated with the sharing and nonmedical use of prescription drugs, from overdose and addiction to potentially life-threatening interactions with other medications the child may currently be using.

Recent concerns about prescription drug sharing have sparked Internet rumors about "pharming" parties in which kids reportedly raid their parents' medicine cabinets and then meet with other kids, randomly sharing and ingesting any number of prescription medications to achieve intoxication. Whether such parties are widespread or rare occurrences, these stories are cause for concern for parents, educators and other adults who share responsibility in the supervision of children.

Alarmingly, such prescription drug sharing has become so customary on college campuses, that a basic Internet search reveals colleges and universities across the country have provided guidelines for their students on sharing such medications. American College's Office of Campus Life provides a breakdown of the dangers of sharing drugs as well as a list of "dangerous or lethal if shared" medications, including Adderall, Ambien, Paxil, Prozac, Ritalin and Zoloft, amongst others.

But prescription drug sharing isn't isolated to just teens or college students looking to get high. On a regular basis, unassuming adults fall victim to this ever-growing trend out of convenience, in an attempt to save money, or because they just do not realize the risks associated with sharing prescription drugs.

It's not uncommon for an occasional migraine sufferer to gain access to prescription strength medication—Zomig or Maxalt, for example—from a chronic sufferer. Many wonder, if it eases the pain, what is the problem? Likewise, news report after news report focuses on couples diagnosed with the same chronic condition, maybe diabetes or high blood pressure, who share their medications in order to save on the rising costs of prescription drugs.



But the dangers associated with such behavior are many and can range in severity from countering the effects of another prescription drug in the user's system to causing death from accidental overdose or anaphylactic shock.

Drug addiction.

According to the Mayo Clinic, drug addictions occur when the drug in use changes the reward pathways in the brain, resulting in cravings and a need for increased and more frequent dosages of the drug. Prescription narcotics, tranquilizers, sedatives and amphetamines are examples of high-addictive drugs. It is possible to develop an addiction to such drugs whether using them for recreational purposes or under the close supervision of a physician.

Allergic reactions.

Not everyone responds to medication in the same way. While penicillin may be successful at fighting infection in one patient, it may cause an allergic reaction in the form of a rash, internal swelling or even anaphylactic shock in another. Ingesting random medications not prescribed by a physician greatly increases a person's chance of having a severe, if not life-threatening allergic reaction.

Drug interaction.

Prescription drug advertisements warn against combining certain prescription drugs with others for fear of dangerous interactions. Some drugs have adverse interactions while others block effectiveness, causing severe complications to internal organs such as the heart or the liver. When doctors write prescriptions, they take into account their patients' other medications, but this is impossible when a patient self-medicates by sharing a friend or relative's drugs.

Incorrect dosage.

Likewise, physicians make dosage decisions based on the individual and the severity of the condition. Sharing diabetes medications, for instance, not only puts the prescribed at risk because he or she is unable to take

the correct amount of medication; it also puts the sharing individual at risk for receiving too much or too little of a dose.


While sharing medications may seem like a quick fix to a financial burden or a convenient way to overcome illness, your life or the life of a relative or friend is not worth the risks involved. Exercising your ability to protect yourself from such dangers could mean the difference between treating an illness or disease and a potentially devastating disaster.

*Misti R. Brock, Publications Specialist
Teachers Health Trust*

**As Life Changes,
So Do Your Financial Needs**




Glenn Merryman, CLTC, LUTCF
Financial Services Representative
6795 Edmond St., Suite 110
Las Vegas, NV 89118
Gmerryman@metlife.com



**Call Glenn today
at 702-731-0257, Ext. 34.**

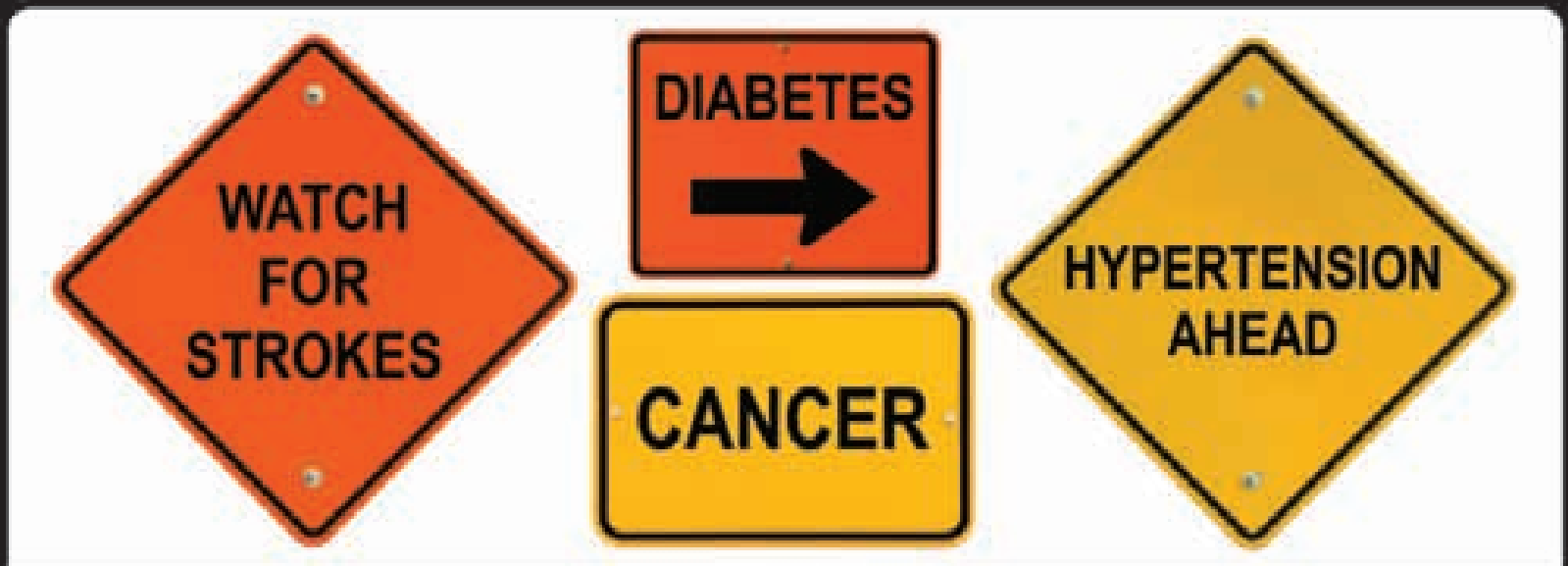
For the if in life.SM



Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, NY 10166. L06075537[exp0609] 0709-5871 ©UFS

Answers to Mental Muscle Express

1. String quartet
2. Wash in cold water
3. Backfire
4. Knock on wood
5. Come out with your hands up



Signs aren't always this clear.
That's why Lifesigns is here.

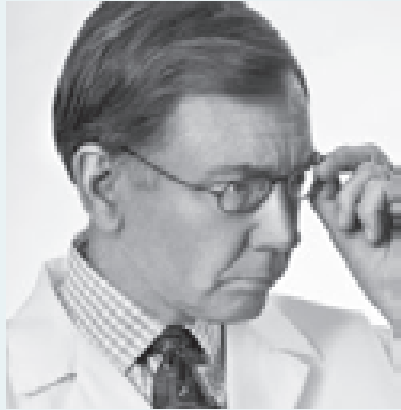
At Lifesigns, you'll get the most thorough health screening available — the kind that can show you the future of your health. We help you detect and prevent health issues while they're still treatable and curable. And it all happens in one location, in a comfortable home-like atmosphere, in less than three hours. You'll get a full picture of your health and clear direction on illness prevention. Sign up for an appointment today by calling 702-254-7200.



Metropolitan Life | Two locations: Henderson (7251 W. Lake Mead Blvd., Suite 100) and one in Henderson (8905 S. Pecos Rd., Suite 100)

Lifesigns accepts most insurance plans, including: Blue Cross | Cigna | Aetna | United Healthcare | Blue Cross PPO Health Plan | City of Las Vegas Health Plan | MICHIGAN PPO Health Plan | Palms PPO Health Plan | Suncoast Gamma PPO Health Plan | Teachers Health Trust. Not all insurance plans accepted by Lifesigns are listed here. If you had any questions, please call us.

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“Doctors, patients and knowledge cure cancer, not bricks and mortar.”

As director of Nevada Cancer Institute, Nicholas Vogelzang, M.D., is taking the lead in replacing fear with knowledge. Vogelzang is a nationally recognized expert in the fields of prostate, bladder and kidney cancer. He wants patients, families, fellow physicians and the community at large to join him in the fight against the disease. Now more than ever cancer is treatable and beatable. In fact, more advances have been made in the past 20 months than in the past 20 years. Nevada Cancer Institute is a state-of-the-art research and quality care facility fully committed to patient safety. NVCi treats patients with up-to-the-second learning frequently gleaned from its own research. If you're truly committed to beating cancer, you have a partner in Nick Vogelzang and Nevada Cancer Institute. **Call (702) 822-LIFE or go to FightHere.org**

 **Nevada Cancer**
INSTITUTE
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1 (866) 621-NVCI

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Overcoming the Love/Hate Relationship

Editor Misti Brock shares her thoughts on living healthy, loving your body, and enjoying the only life you've been given.

As I stood in front of the mirror on New Year's Day, ruthlessly scrutinizing my body's imperfections, I realized that, as depressing as this sounds, I've probably been on a "diet" for right at half of my life.

I honestly can't remember the last time I didn't calculate the calorie and fat content of my meal before eating it or take a quick peek at the online menu of a restaurant before lunch with the girls to figure out what I could order without feeling too guilty. And, I'm sure if you were to add up the total time I spend sitting on the couch at home and compare it to the total time I spent at the gym in any given day, the gym would win—hands down.

But all of this didn't mean I was leading a healthy life. In fact, it was just the opposite. I was obsessed with what I thought I should look like and not how healthy I really was.

You see, I think that the media—Hollywood, in particular—plays a huge role in America's warped sense of the ideal body image. I admit that I'm guilty of looking at magazines or seeing celebrities on television and wishing I had Cameron Diaz's long, slender legs or Jennifer Garner's awesome arms. And it's this unrealistic image that is constantly thrust in our faces that leads many of us to believe that the airbrushed thighs, flat bellies and toned arms of magazines are achievable, if only we consumed less and exercised more.

Hit television shows like *The Biggest*

Loser have brought America's weight problem to the forefront, as many of us watch faithfully, mesmerized by the transformations occurring right before our eyes. But the transformation isn't just weight loss. It is lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, fewer meds, and even the disappearance of diabetes! And what's even more remarkable is contestants aren't stick-thin when the show is over. They are healthy, having replaced harmful fat with lean muscle mass.

And that just goes to show that contrary to what Hollywood would have us believe, thin does not equal healthy. It is natural that in an effort to regain your health, you will shed unnecessary pounds and inches. But that doesn't mean that there is a set weight we should all strive to achieve. We must just learn to face the fact that we can't and shouldn't all weigh 115 pounds. And making the decision to focus on healthy rather than skinny is the first step toward reclaiming hold of your life.

I am proud to say that after some real soul searching, I've realized that true health, including achieving a healthy weight, lowering your cholesterol, and eating a balanced diet, begins in the mind. And if your mind is on the right track, the rest of your body sort of just follows suit.

And it is amazing just how effective the right mindset can be. Since January 1, I've lost twelve pounds. And this time around, it wasn't anywhere near as hard as I remember it being.



Sure, I busted my rear at the gym and I carefully watched what I ate, but, this time, it wasn't about looking like the girl on the cover of a magazine. It was about maintaining a healthy weight to protect myself against breast cancer, which runs in my family. It was about making smart food choices to help me push through a hectic day with energy to spare rather than collapse into bed completely worn out. It was about being able to run five miles each morning, a feat I couldn't come close to accomplishing even in high school.

But most of all, it was about looking in the mirror and being able to say, no, I'm not perfect. Maybe my arms aren't as toned as they could be, but I've gotten stronger. Maybe my abs aren't rock-solid, but they are there and I can feel them working. And maybe I have a weakness for chocolate-covered raisins, which, last time I checked, aren't on any diet plan. So what?

I've only got one body, and, so far, it's been really good to me. I figure it's time I start being good to it because I've got a lot more living left to do.



THE TRUST WANTS YOU TO JOIN THE WELLNESS TEAM

The Teachers Health Trust relies greatly on the input of its participants in order to achieve excellence in terms of wellness programs and benefits.

One of the primary sources the Trust has to assist in the development of wellness programs and benefits is the Wellness Team, not to be confused with educators who are coordinators of the Trust's WellFit for Life program in the spring.

The Wellness Team meets on the first Thursday of every month during the nine-month school year to ensure that the wellness programs and activities of the Trust meet the needs of all Trust participants. Your participation in this group is vital to the success of the Trust and its programs.

The Trust is currently recruiting new Wellness Team members for the 2008-09 school year. To learn more about the Wellness Team, to find out if a team member exists at your worksite, or to volunteer for the Wellness Team, contact the Wellness Division at 702-794-0272 or via email at wellness@teachershealthtrust.org.

JOIN TODAY!



"Blurry" Eyes Signaled Dangerously High Blood Pressure

It was supposed to have been a routine eye exam for a patient who had complained that his vision seemed "blurry and fuzzy" at times.

But when VSP network doctor Richard A. "Rick" Corcoran, O.D., carefully checked the patient's eyes, the word "routine" suddenly morphed into three other words: potential medical emergency.

"This patient was a 52-year-old sheet metal worker, and what I saw on his retina was a 'flame-shaped hemorrhage,'" Dr. Corcoran recalls today. "His left retina was actually awash in blood, and the flame shape told me that the bleeding was probably a symptom of high blood pressure.

"I knew the patient was being monitored for hypertension (the medical term for high blood pressure) [. . .] but I also knew he wasn't taking any medication for it, and that his medical doctor hadn't seen him for the past eight months."

Alerted by the blood that covered the surface of the "macula" (an area of light-sensitive tissue in the retina), Dr. Corcoran performed a quick vision test—and discovered that his patient's eye sight had deteriorated to 20-200 in his left eye.

"He was essentially blind in one eye, and that was all I needed to see," remembers Dr. Corcoran, who practices optometry in Marina, Calif. "At that point, I suspected that I was looking at a sign of extremely high blood pressure.

"After 25 years of experience, I could tell my patient was a heart attack or stroke just waiting to happen. This was potentially a matter of life and death, so I responded accordingly."

While being careful not to unduly alarm the patient, Dr. Corcoran urged him to see both his family physician and a retinal specialist, that same day. Fortunately, the patient complied. Within a few days, he underwent emergency heart bypass surgery to correct the hypertension that had triggered the arterial blockage. He also began taking medication designed to lower the out-of-control blood pressure.

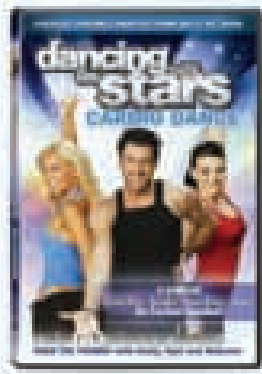
The operation went well, says Dr. Corcoran, and today the sheet metal worker has a clean bill of health. "He's back at work and enjoying good health," says the upbeat California eye doctor, "and whenever I see him, he credits me with saving his life. Really, I'm just glad he came in for his regular eye exam that day. As an optometrist, it's nice to know we can often do much more for people than prescribe glasses and contacts.

"It doesn't happen every day [. . .] but once in a while, you really do feel that you've been able to help save a life."

Article provided by Vision Service Plan (VSP)

CRITICS' CORNER

As *Dancing With the Stars* fever hits America full force, the Wellness Division takes to the living-room-turned-dance-floor for a little one-on-one with *Dancing* instructors as they review the at-home workout DVD, inspired by the popular reality show.



BRENDA KELLEY *Dancing with the Stars* just isn't my cup of tea. Although the stars on the television show appear to get a great workout, the same cannot be said for those performing the DVD at home. The dance instructors lack the knowledge needed to deliver a structured fitness routine that is easily followed by those at home, which makes it difficult to know what is going on from move to move. They also do not mimic the movements from the same direction the viewer will be doing the moves, forcing the viewer to try to figure out steps, which results in both twisted feet and sighs of frustration. I would definitely not recommend this DVD to serious fitness gurus; however, if you like to dance, possess a little coordination, and would like a routine that is both fun and low-impact, this might be the DVD for you. Unfortunately, you have to be willing to do the tape several times in order to catch on to the moves because, one time through just won't cut it. If nothing else, your abs will certainly get a workout because you'll be laughing at how ridiculous

you look through the entire hour.

GRADE: **D+**

ROBIN DOMINQUEZ *Dancing with the Stars* allowed me the opportunity to exercise while trying a few dance moves. The DVD began with a warm up that was appropriate for preparing me for the rest of the moves. However, as we moved through each dance, it became harder for me to keep up. The instructors made it easy to follow the dances, except in the challenge section of the video. At times, some of the moves became repetitive, and I think more variation would have made for a better workout. The dances were fun and the energy of the video was good, though it may be too easy for those looking for a more vigorous workout. Overall, though, I believe it was a fun, new way to workout, and I would definitely try it again if given the opportunity. GRADE: **A**

ISTI BROCK I might be one of the most uncoordinated people ever. So you can imagine that I am not that great of a dancer. But I know that dancing is a great workout, so the idea of a dance workout you could do in the privacy of your own home (where no one else could laugh at you) was really exciting to me. *Dancing with the Stars* includes four dances, an impromptu session with the trainers, a warm up and a cool down. It begins slowly and, with each dance, gains intensity, though, all in all, it remains a relatively low-intensity workout, which may be its greatest downfall. Folks who are looking for a workout equaling the intensity of, say, kickboxing will not really benefit

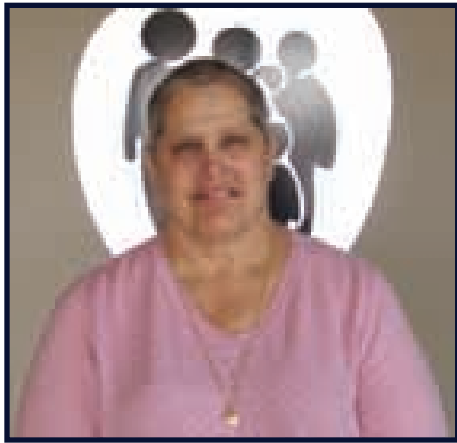
from this version of popular Latin and American dances. It took me a little while to loosen up and get comfortable with flailing arms and legs, spinning right then left, and Cha-Cha-ing my way across my living room. But once I quit glancing in the mirror every few minutes to see how silly I looked, I actually found some of the moves fun. As a workout DVD, though, I have to admit that *Dancing* just doesn't measure up. The instructors jump right into moves and provide very little guidance, leaving you trying to catch up with their rapid movements. And, as if for their own personal enjoyment, they incorporate an impromptu jam session at the end of the video, during which I sat down on the couch, wishing I'd been at the gym running for the past hour. In the end, *Dancing* will provide you with a great opportunity to laugh at your own lack of rhythm, but, if you're more advanced and looking to break a sweat, you're better off foregoing the DVD and hitting the treadmill instead. GRADE: **C-**

MARY WHITE I watched this DVD with an open mind. I did find that if you are familiar with the certain moves this would be easier for someone who doesn't know anything about dancing the Paso Doble or the Samba. I can't seem to get myself to jump from one move to the other. To me, it's too confusing and too much is going on at one time for me to comprehend the moves all at once. Also, the focus seems to be more on dancing than on working out. This is fun to do when you have a girls' night in or if you like dancing. I think that if you are looking for something different to incorporate into your workout routine this would be a good choice. GRADE: **D**

H.E.R.O.S.

HEALTHY EMPLOYEES REPRESENTING OUR SCHOOLS

Jackie Johnson



Jackie Johnson has a special glow about her. She is incredibly optimistic and cheerful despite being diagnosed with Breast Cancer in April of 2007 and enduring a double mastectomy and chemotherapy for a localized tumor. Ms. Johnson is the 2008 recipient of the WellFit for Life Lifetime Achievement Award for completing the ten week program while suffering from a severe health condition.

Jackie has a family history of breast cancer and prior to having a double mastectomy was living with Fibrocystic breast disease. "I have regular mammograms every year and I found the tumor 10 months after my last mammogram," she explained.

The lump in her breast was found while performing a regular breast self-exam. When asked about how it was discovered, she said, "It was very obvious and it seemed to have come up suddenly."

Although it is an aggressive form of cancer, fortunately, it has not spread

to her lymph nodes. Jackie explains how she coped during this time, "I counted down my chemotherapy treatments, I'm 50 percent done, 75 percent done...My prognosis is very good with all the medication I've been on" she stated. "There is a 94 percent chance of it not returning in the next 10 years."

In regards to her double mastectomy she states, "I'm 54 years old and I don't care if I have breasts. I can have reconstructive surgery. I'm very content right now."

"Having co-workers support and participate in the program was tremendous."

Jackie has not participated in any cancer specific support groups; however, she is involved in another support group- Survivors of Suicide. "I would have gone to support groups had my prognosis not been very good. I feel very positive about this. Breast Cancer is not the worst thing that has happened in my life. My son dying is." Having lost her son to suicide, Jackie truly is a survivor.

Jackie described the WellFit for Life program as, "An opportunity to get my energy back and push myself. It helped me tremendously. I noticed a big increase in energy and strength. I was surprised at the difference it made since I had gotten very weak."

She is not new to the WellFit for Life or Best Weigh to go program, in fact, she used to be a coordinator and her team won their division last

year. This year, Jackie and her co-workers made arrangements to walk together, brought healthy snacks to work, and shared their progress and concerns with one another during the ten week process. Jackie explained, "Having co-workers support and participate in the program was tremendous. It was a tough day, a tough time. Having people there to listen and commiserate helped."

Her physical activity consisted of walking, riding the stationary bike, and a little gardening. Jackie expressed the challenges of being tired and the difficulty of getting started with a routine again, "Initially, it was hard to just get myself up and go walk."

Staying positive and finding people who support you in staying positive is a piece of advice Jackie would like to pass on to those who face similar situations. She also stressed the importance of setting small goals and making plans for the future. This provides something to focus on beyond the health condition you are facing.

With all she has endured in her life and contributed to this community as a teacher, a mother, and a role model for health and wellness- she is one amazing woman! Her special glow and kind demeanor offer inspiration and hope. The Teachers Health Trust is honored to award her with the WellFit for Life, Lifetime Achievement Award.

*Heather Doane
Teachers Health Trust*

HEROS is a section of Health Traxx that highlights outstanding CCSD licensed employees or employee groups who have achieved excellence by being healthy educators. A healthy educator can be a person or a group who has won a competition, the leader of a non-profit local or national health organization, one who has developed a health policy, curriculum, program or wellness initiative at a CCSD worksite or in the community, someone who has achieved a drug-free nutrition or weight loss goal with before and after results or a person who has a health condition and has made great strides despite the condition. To nominate a licensed employee or group for HEROS, contact Brenda Kelley at bkelly@teachershealthtrust.org.

bodyMIND

Your Monthly Guide to Good Health

According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, approximately 50 million Americans currently suffer from allergies. Allergies can be seasonal or perennial. While seasonal allergies generally cause symptoms for weeks or months at a time, perennial allergies cause symptoms throughout the year. In many cases, allergies lead to inflammation of the sinuses, called sinusitis, which develops in approximately 22 million Americans each year.

Allergies

Allergies are adverse reactions to particular substances called allergens that may trigger an overreaction from the body's immune system. Pollen, mold, dust mites, and dog and cat dander are common allergy triggers. Allergy symptoms include sneezing, nasal or sinus congestion, itchy, watery eyes,

Sinusitis

Affecting approximately 16 percent of American adults, sinusitis is one of the most diagnosed diseases in the United States, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. Sinuses are air-filled pockets above, below, and around the eyes that serve as an air filter for the nasal cavity. When the sinuses become inflamed or infected, they cannot

function correctly which eventually leads to sinusitis. Symptoms of sinusitis include facial congestion and headache, facial swelling, constant tenderness, yellow-green nasal discharge, and in some cases, fever.

The Connection between Allergies and Sinus Disease

People who suffer from allergic diseases, such as allergies and asthma, have a higher likelihood of developing sinusitis compared to people who do not have allergic diseases. This occurs because allergies can trigger inflammation in the sinuses and therefore prevent them from flushing out bacteria.

Treatment

Untreated allergies can lead to health problems such as ear infections and asthma, as well as sinusitis. Fortunately, allergy symptoms are manageable. The most effective method of prevention is to identify which allergens trigger a response and to minimize exposure to those particular substances. In most cases, allergies can be treated with medication or a series of shots. Typically, sinusitis is treated with medication or a combination of medications.

If you suspect that you suffer from allergies or sinusitis, consult a physician.

Allergies & Sinusitis

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