

City employees celebrate wellness program success

by **Steve Giardini** - Jul. 30, 2009 02:08 PM
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Scottsdale's Live Life Well Team recently celebrated a successful worksite wellness initiative called Weight Busters.

The weight-loss challenge was designed to help city employees lose weight in a healthy way. Nearly 500 employees registered in teams of six. Twelve weeks after the start, 336 of the 480 employees that started lined up one last time to be weighed. The group lost a total of 1,430 pounds.

Fifty-nine employees lost more than 10 pounds, and 12 employees lost 25 pounds or more. More than one employee reported past failed individual attempts to lose weight.

What was different this time? Most participants remarked that success was easier as a member of a supportive team.

On March 23, the Sneaker Club initiative was launched.

The goal was to increase physical activity among employees. More than 580 employees registered. The project combined the spirit of team competition with the use of a unique wireless pedometer called an ActiPed (www.fitlinxx.com).

Teams were encouraged. When the start flag dropped, teams were off and stepping. Support networks sprang up everywhere. Cheered on by co-workers, family and friends, participants quickly found ways to fit in a walk before work, at lunch or after work.

Ten weeks later, participants crossed the finish line with 187 million steps and 82,000 miles logged. Many said enlisting the help of co-workers and family kept them motivated. As a bonus, many employees reported that the whole family started going on regular fitness walks.

Behavior change is not easy. While many of us can craft a personal wellness plan, often it fails because we forget the importance and inclusion of a social support team. A hand-picked, well-respected support team can provide encouragement, motivation and praise when it's most needed. Moreover, a support team is critical when faced with setbacks and relapses.

Talk to family, friends and co-workers about your wellness goals. Interview and select support team members.

Then you'll be ready for a change.

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