Finding the Magic of Running

“Who in their right mind would run 13.1 miles?” Sarah Watson, Visual Arts teacher at North Lakeland Elementary, found herself asking that question early one morning while standing in the Magic Kingdom cheering on a friend who was running Disney’s Half Marathon. “She came bolting out of Cinderella’s castle, smiling and having fun,” Sarah recalled. In an instant, the magic of the castle was consuming. “I knew I had to run it, too!”

Sarah Watson was not your typical half marathon contender, although she had an interest to improve health. Several years prior to this, she found herself motivating students and staff at North Lakeland Elementary to be more wellness minded. Unfortunately, Sarah was having considerable knee pain, and surgery was a viable option. “I was told to either lose serious weight or undergo surgery,” she said. Over the years, she along with her husband and co-workers became more active participating in onsite group fitness classes and running in 5K events just for fun. In August, 2010, Sarah made the commitment and set her sights on a healthy goal.

With the support of family and friends, Sarah’s fitness journey and weight loss efforts began. “I quickly fell in love with the idea of dance infused into fitness and began taking Zumba classes twice a week,” she said. She enjoyed it so much, that she became certified to teach Zumba and now instructs classes at Lake Gibson Middle School after school through the Wellness Program.

In the spring of 2011, Sarah invigorated her efforts by joining LOSE (Lessons On Sensible Eating and Exercise) with the Wellness Team. Through LOSE, Sarah learned the importance of portion control and meal planning. She developed a multi-month meal plan to eliminate the hassle of day-to-day food preparations, and is selective when eating out. “When going to a restaurant, I choose items a la cart or bring half of the entrée home.” Sarah admits that no foods are forbidden. “I try not to restrict my eating because it only creates mental cravings for me,” she said.

Sarah is reaping the rewards of her healthy lifestyle, and is enjoying fun runs with her husband, James. “We ran in the Royal Family 5K in 2011 simply to get tiaras!” she said. “I’m a Disney nut, and signed up for the February 2012 Princess Half Marathon solely to run through Cinderella’s castle!” While training for this event, Sarah learned of the Inaugural Tinker Bell Half Marathon at Disneyland in California. She also discovered that if you complete a full or half marathon on opposite coast lines within a one-year period, you qualify for the Coast to Coast Medal.

Sarah and James kicked up their training, traveled to California’s west coast, and reveled in the ultimate celebration that permeated Disneyland’s Inaugural Tinker Bell Half Marathon. One month later sporting tutus, Sarah and her husband and rallied down Main Street and through Cinderella’s castle at Disney World in Orlando. “The thrill of running through the castle was nothing short of magic,” Sarah said. The impact to her health has been substantial.

Over the last two years, Sarah has lost 54 pounds and her husband 36—90 pounds total as a couple. “The hardest time for me was when I would hit long plateaus.” Sarah believes reevaluating her diet and making little changes was important, but running made the biggest difference. “The easiest weight loss for me was when my husband and I took up running. That made a HUGE impact!”

Are you looking for the magic of weight loss and improved fitness? Begin your healthy journey today; contact your Wellness Team at 648-3057.

Princess Half Marathon 2012

Spotlight of the month shines on Sarah Watson
**Thank You—2012 Health Fair Sponsors!**

**BlueCross BlueShield of FL**

**Boar’s Head**

**Clark & Daughtrey**

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**Build-a-Salad**

Whether you choose to chop your own, toss a salad from a bag into a bowl, or build a salad at a restaurant or the supermarket salad bar, you can make healthy, calorie-conscious choices—and get plenty of your 5-a-day portions of vegetables (and fruits) in just one meal.

- Start with dark lettuces, such as romaine, red leaf lettuce, and spinach. A good rule of thumb for salads: the darker the leaf, the more nutrients it contains!
- Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in calories, fat, and sodium. They’re good sources of vitamins A and C and contain no cholesterol. So pile on at least one vitamin-A-rich selection such as carrots.
- Add fiber to your salad with oranges, broccoli, apples, and beans.
- Tomatoes include valuable cancer-protective lycopene.
- Include fruits (cantaloupe adds vitamin A), nuts (instead of high-fat croutons), and beans (garbanzos are often found on salad bars). Walnuts provide omega-3 fatty acids. Or try almonds or pistachios.
- Add grilled chicken, water-packed tuna or salmon, low fat cheese, an egg, or low-fat, low-sodium deli meat. Skip high-fat bacon bits, fried noodles, and cheese.

**Top it off:**

- Toss grapefruit and orange sections into a fresh crunchy salad of mixed greens. The juice moistens the lettuce leaves. No need for dressing.
- Or select salad dressings with no more than three grams of fat in a two-tablespoon serving or make your own. Order salad dressing on the side in restaurants and use sparingly. Here’s how: Dip your fork first in the dressing, then stab the salad.
- **Tip:** While grabbing a salad for lunch at the supermarket salad bar, also load up on pre-cut carrots, cauliflower, mushrooms, broccoli, onions, and tomatoes in a separate container. Sauté as a stir fry for dinner and serve on whole-grain instant rice.

Sources: www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

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**Walk/Run Your Way to Fitness**

If you don’t consider yourself the “typical” runner but you have always wanted to start running, consider the Galloway training method. Mixing running with walking, you achieve success with less chance of injury. The run/walk method is simple. After you’ve warmed-up with a 5-minute walk, run for a short segment and then take a walk break.

Beginners can alternate very short run segments with short walks, such as 1 minute running, 7 minutes walking. Keep repeating your run/walk pattern until you’ve covered your goal distance or time. For example, if you want to run/walk for 16 minutes, you can run/walk at a 1:7 ratio for two cycles. To keep track of your running and walking intervals, you can use a watch or other device that beeps to signal when you need to switch. Any simple running watch that has an interval timer feature will work. You should start your walk portion before you get too tired. This will allow your muscles to recover instantly, which extends the time and distance that you can cover. If you wait until you’re very fatigued, you’ll end up walking slowly and it will be difficult to start running again.

As you continue with your run/walk program, try to extend the amount of time you’re running and reduce your walking time. In no time, you will be able to run for 30 minutes continuously. For more information about the Galloway training method, visit the website, www.jeffgalloway.com. If you would like help getting started with a training program, please contact the Wellness Program, 648-3057.
**North Lakeland El. Healthy School Climate**

The incremental progress North Lakeland Elementary School has made since they joined the Healthy Schools Program in 2008 is a great example of how small changes over time can lead to sustainability. In the first year, visual arts teacher Sarah Watson focused on developing interest in wellness initiatives through motivating staff to participate in employee wellness activities. She was able to leverage that interest to build an active school wellness council, leading the effort towards implementing best practices in competitive foods and beverages, employee wellness, and student wellness.

Ms. Watson whole-heartedly understands and advocates the rationale behind not using food as an incentive for children. She uses creative means by which to find FREE alternatives and encourages others in her school to do so as well. Students earn Star Bucks for achieving specific goals, and these Star Bucks can be redeemed for rewards. As an art teacher, she offers face painting as one of the rewards and has come up with many creative ways to reward children, including chalk drawing on the car ramp, mini dance/Zumba parties, and letting kids write a play to act out, all of which have received enthusiastic responses from the students!

North Lakeland Elementary School’s Running Club has also been a huge success. Forty-nine students ranging from 3rd-5th grade meet on Thursday mornings for a half hour before school. On Tuesday nights, they meet at a local high school track for an hour with a Lakeland Runner’s Club representative to work on pace, form and technique. The staff portion of the running club consists of nine employees who meet on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Currently, they have three staff members training for a half-marathon!

The healthy habits the students are learning at school are being carried into the families. Ms. Watson took advantage of free Be Well books offered through the Alliance for a Healthier Generation to distribute to parents at open house this year with a large number responding to follow-up about the book, and several parents are running with their children in the Running Club!

Source: Alliance for a Healthier Generation

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**When Dispair Turns Into Hope**

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, deserted island. Every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming.

Over time, he managed to build a little hut out of driftwood for protection from the elements, and to store the scant food he was able to gather. Mostly he ate wild berries and other fruit. He cooked the few fish he was able to catch over a small fire that he tended carefully day in and day out. But his strength was diminishing, and he wasn’t sure he’d survive until rescue came.

One day, after hunting unsuccessfully for food, he returned to find disaster waiting for him. His fire had somehow engulfed his small hut, and black smoke billowed up into the sky as his only shelter burned. In despair, he collapsed on the sand, cursing his luck and his fate. However, hours later he rolled over to see a boat approaching the island.

“How did you know I was here?” the man cried when the boat landed. “We saw your smoke signal,” a sailor replied. Remember, the next time your life seems ruined, help may be just around the corner.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Aetna Resources for Living (formerly Horizon Health), can provide you and/or your family solutions for both life and work challenges. Professional counseling and support services help you create resolutions, identify resources to address your concerns—and help you live well!

The EAP is confidential, voluntary and offers short-term counseling and referral services for you and your household family members 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Don’t hesitate; contact the EAP today.

Aetna Resources for Living 1-800-272-7252 or visit www.horizoncarelink.com Login: PCS  Password: PCS

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**Grins & Giggles**

A magician on a cruise ship had a parrot he used in his act. His gimmick was that the parrot would always give away the trick: “He’s got the card up his sleeve,” the parrot would squawk, or, “Don’t look at his right hand, look at his left.” The audience loved it, and the magician’s act was hugely successful.

One day a storm hit in the middle of his show. Waves crashed against the side of the ship, and it began to sink. The captain gave the call to abandon ship, and the magician ran for a lifeboat, clutching his parrot. They shivered in the lifeboat as the cruise ship sank beneath the waves.

The parrot hopped on the magician’s shoulder, flapped its wings, and then leaned its beak toward the magician’s ear. “Just tell me,” the parrot whispered. “How did you make the boat disappear?”
Cancer Screenings Can SAVE Your Life!

On-site cancer and osteoporosis screenings are provided to you by the Polk County School Board (PCSB) Wellness Program in conjunction with Lakeland Regional Cancer Center (LRCC). This FREE benefit is available to all employees and spouses who have PCSB Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance. For an appointment, please contact the Cancer Screening Coordinator at each location at least two weeks prior to the screening date. There are no age restrictions for cancer and osteoporosis screenings on the LRCC screening bus.

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ABCs of Diabetes

The ABCs of Diabetes is a proactive course through the Wellness Program that provides educations, screenings, and discounts for diabetes supplies and prescriptions. Here are a few of the benefits ABCs of Diabetes participants enjoy:

**Benefits:**
- Free eye and foot exams
- Free lipid, HbA1c, kidney function, and blood pressure screenings—two times each year
- Free glucose monitor

**Education/Winter Haven:**
- Medical Issues in Diabetes 05/03/12
- Nutrition & Exercise 05/10/12
- Advanced Diet Planning 05/17/12
- Hypertension & Heart Disease 05/24/12

Classes will be held in the Amelia room at the Bartow Municipal Airbase, Hwy 17, Bartow. All classes start at 4:30 PM; registration is required.

**Diabetes Screening:**

The next diabetes screening will be held May 19, 2012 at Phillips, Salomon & Parrish, 4337 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland. Appointments are required.

Please email allison.sullins@polk-fl.net or call Allison Sullins, RD, LD/N at 648-3057 for more information or to schedule a diabetes screening appointment.

Get Out of Debt
One Step at a Time

Debt can feel like a load of bricks on your chest, slowly crushing you. You can’t throw it off in one big shove—you’ve got to dismantle it brick by brick. Take these steps to reduce your debt burden, and start breathing easily again:

* **Figure out where you stand.** Debt can seem overwhelming unless you cut it down to size. Make a list or spreadsheet of your creditors, and note how much you owe each one. You’ll find it easier to deal with smaller sums of money one at a time.

* **Set some priorities.** Identify which debts need to be paid off, or at least paid down, first. Pay attention to debts with the highest interest rate—they’ll cost you more in the long run if you delay taking care of them.

* **Cut back on spending.** Select one spending item, such as buying new clothes or eating in restaurants, and eliminate it for a specific period of time. Use the money you save to pay down your debt. You’ll start reestablishing smart spending habits at the same time.

* **Get tough with credit cards.** It may be impossible to cut up your credit cards these days, but make an effort to limit their use unless you have a real emergency. Make yourself wait at least 24 hours before buying anything; most of the time you’ll realize that your “need” was really just an impulse that you can ignore.

* **Start a plan for saving.** Get into the habit of putting a little money away each week. Even a small amount will add up over time, giving you more flexibility and easing your anxiety about financial worries.

Get On The Bus!

Coming Soon:
The New ABCs of Diabetes featuring enhanced benefits, education, screenings... and much more.