

The Story of John

Solano County has the highest incident of people with diabetes in Northern California. The result is that our cost of health care is higher than it need be and people are suffering under this disease more than need be.

The results are in...in double blind scientific study after scientific study results show that almost every health problem responds to activity, both physical and mental.

I will tell you the story of John but I will use factices names.

About six weeks ago a friend of mine, who is an in-home care nurse called me about a client of hers.

I would like you to think about starting a Walking Group with my client John. John is overweight, with diabetes, and a fast heart rate, high blood pressure, a high level of cholesterol, joint pain and reduced cognitive function.

John has no local friends, he has disconnected from his kids, rarely leaves his house and spends way too much time watching TV. He is articulate, intelligent and likeable.

I think a Walking Group would be ideal for him.

I called him and asked if I could come over. Before I ran the door bell I surveyed possible walking routes in his neighborhood. There was a nice street with no dogs, good sidewalks and no rising grade that would be tough for a starting walker.

I asked him if he would be interested in joining a walking group if I could find a few people in his neighborhood to walk with him. He agreed.

I went door-to-door passing out fliers (You Are Invited) and talking to people. I passed out 27 flyers (most people were not home from work), talked to 7 people and found 3 stay at home moms who jumped at the chance. They wanted the benefits of a walking group and were pleased to be able to help out their neighbor.

Each of the walkers bought their little starter Walking Tools so they were prepared for safe walking. They exchanged names and phone numbers so they could keep in touch, encourage each other and act as a structured group to stay motivated. John started walking 3 days a week and the ladies brought their outings up to four days and finally five days a week. John could not walk very far at first, so he would turn around and return to the house when he felt he had pushed enough.

Three weeks later I went to see John to see how he was doing. He had walked three days a week for the first two weeks and had increased it to four days a week.

I asked how the process was going. He told me that this was his morning routine: he would get up and first go to the bath room; then he would take and then record his blood pressure, heart rate, blood sugar, steps taken yesterday and about every few days he would measure his belly. Then he would fix his fat flush and drink it as he went about his morning.

I asked to see his General Health Journal. He was consistent in taking and recording his readings every day. His numbers, although not perfect yet, were headed in the right direction. He feels better and has a sunny attitude.

The group calls each other to check in, lend support on those days when they just don't feel like walking and give each other kudos. As a change of scenery they sometimes jump in a car and to a mall and walk that. They all say they appreciate getting their weekly email from A. I. M. to help them keep going and hints on nutrition and other subjects.

Last week they went to a farmer's market and John actually bought fruits and vegetables. He is going to try his hand at cooking rather than eating out of his freezer with all those processed foods.

- Here are John's results after only three weeks:
 - Blood pressure ...down
 - Heart rate...down
 - Blood sugar...less wild swings
 - Belly measurement...two inches less
 - The really exciting part: Gained five new friends

Over all:

- Three ladies became five as they added a mother and an additional neighbor.
- The group is planning a pot luck
- John has scheduled a visit to his doctor in about a month to be sure his medicines match his new health
- John has set his goal to take dancing lessons once he has lost 30 pounds
- The ladies have all bought a pair of skinny jeans and are working toward their goals and they have all lost weight.