DHSS Wellness Superstar

Melissa Seaver works in the WIC and Nutrition Services section and is a 20 year veteran of DHSS. Over the last three years she has made incredible strides to lose weight, quit smoking and improve her overall health.

Making lifestyle changes

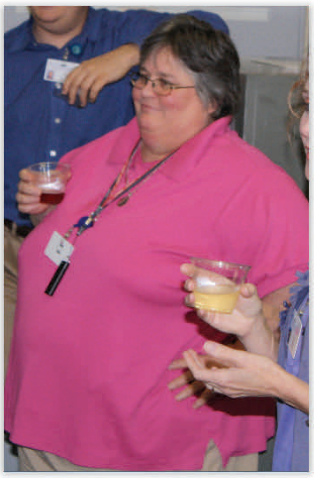
"Before I began my fitness journey, I literally couldn't stand up for more than about 5 minutes because my back hurt so badly," says Melissa. "Walking was a chore that I avoided at all costs. I smoked at least 1 to 1½ packs of cigarettes a day. I developed diabetes and high blood pressure and was well on my way to having a stroke or heart attack, and probably wasn't going to live very long." Weighing in at over 350 pounds, doctors were unwilling to perform knee replacement surgery until she lost weight. "I just didn't care anymore." adds Melissa. "I kept thinking if I could just get my son through high school, then I could go ahead and die." A turning point came in January 2012, when Melissa and her son were in Springfield visiting SMSU. She couldn't even walk around the campus with him to check it out- something she felt she should have done as a parent who was excited for her child to begin college. As she was waiting for him to get back from his tour, she decided that she had to do something. She did not really want to die young and wanted to be around to see her son continue to grow into a young man, go to college, get married and have children.

She started immediately and for over a year she counted calories, cut back on portion sizes, started exercising, and learned how to eat healthier foods. From January 2012 to June 2013, she lost about 100 pounds. In April 2013, she quit smoking. In a little over a year that is 9255 cigarettes she did not smoke, which means she avoided 37 grams of tar and saved over $1600.

Then she hit a six month plateau. Even though she was continuing to watch her food intake and exercising, nothing was working. She began getting really frustrated and finally joined a gym. Still there were no results and her frustration grew. She knew she didn't want to give up because she had accomplished so much. She eventually asked one of the trainers how people got their "before/after" pictures up on the wall - she wanted to be on that wall! She had never worked with a personal trainer before and was scared. In June 2013, she decided to make the commitment.

Melissa has also participated in Zumba classes and is participating in cardio kick boxing classes twice a week. After knee replacement surgery in February 2014, recovery was quick and she was back in the gym in 3 weeks. She uses the blood pressure cuff at DHSS for monitoring her blood pressure. With the improvements in health, her blood pressure and diabetes medications have been decreased by one half. Her goal is to get off all her medications completely.

Keeping on the right track

Melissa has made huge progress since beginning this journey. She has lost about 150 pounds and several inches. She is getting leaner and building muscle. About 95% of what she eats is healthy food (not processed foods) so she can fit in a few less healthy items occasionally. Standing and walking are not something she avoids anymore. She loves her life and is very happy. Finally, Melissa says, "I still have quite a bit of weight to lose, but I know now that I will make it and NOTHING is going to stop me. I also have my ups and downs (both weight and moods) but I am learning how to work through these times. As long as I keep a positive attitude, I am going to make it. My family and friends are proud of me and are very supportive. My son starts his third year of college this fall and is in the military. He is a runner and eats healthy food. He is proud of me and I am seeing him grow into a fine young man – that was my ultimate goal!"

Melissa before and today