



Facilities Wellness Challenges Wrap Up

By: Amber Whitby; Health Promotion Intern

After two twelve week challenges, the Facilities Wellness Challenges have come to a close. The challenges began with an orientation offered by Caroline Shugart, Justus Williams, and Dayna Barrett, which included a tour of the HPER facilities, and the opportunity for employees to utilize a free fitness assessment and free personal training. These services are available to all insurance-eligible employees of USU. The fitness assessment is performed first, and measures your level of fitness compared to national norms. Following the fitness assessment, a personalized exercise prescription is tailored to meet your individual needs.

Working with a personal trainer, the exercise prescription can be explained, and proper methods of exercise can be demonstrated. There were seven Facilities Challenges participants that utilized this service, and their results were outstanding. One participant was able to regain feeling in his right leg and foot due to the excellent guidance from his trainer, Matt Kohler. Another participant appreciated becoming aware of his health status after participating in the fitness assessment.

Throughout the course of the twelve-week program, motivational messages were distributed to the participants, which included diet and exercise tips, and the recommendation to utilize mypyramid.gov. *MyPyramid* asks you to key in your age, gender, and physical activity level and gives you a personalized calorie recommendation that allows you to maintain a healthy body weight. Tracking of the Biggest Loser Challenge was posted at the Facilities Department as well as the Wellness Center. Healthy recipes were also printed in *The Image* Newsletter. (For a copy of our recipes, please see the recipe link on our website homepage.)

The outcome of these challenges was outstanding, with one individual losing thirty pounds! For the Individual Wellness Challenge, 15 participants received 75% of the points, or 252 points and won a ZEN Stone Mp3 player! One point could be accumulated daily for each of the following:

1. Exercising for 30 minutes.
2. Drinking 64 oz. of water.
3. Eating 5-9 servings of fruits & veggies (1/2 cup portions).
4. Reading leisurely for 15 minutes.

For the Biggest Loser Challenge, teams of 4-6 were formed, and the team to lose the greatest percentage of weight won. The winning team consisted of four people who also received a ZEN Stone Mp3 player. Of the 77 participants enrolled in the Biggest Loser Challenge, 27 individuals adhered to the program for at least six weeks. Of these 27 participants, an average of 5 pounds was lost for each individual. This is great success because even a modest weight loss is likely to produce health benefits, such as improvements in blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and blood sugars. And if you need more motivation, exercise reduces the risk of heart disease, adult-onset diabetes, breast cancer, osteoporosis and colon cancer. Exercise may also help prevent, or be effective in treating some mental illnesses, such as depression.

For more information regarding Employee Wellness, please visit (www.usu.edu/hr/wellness) or contact: Caroline Shugart, Wellness Coordinator, by email or by phone: Caroline.Shugart@usu.edu, (435) 797-0735.