

## Coös County Nursing Home Staff Celebrate Weight Loss Success

Terri Eastman, Wellness Coordinator

Congratulations to the staff at Coös Nursing Home in West Stewartstown. Through a program sponsored by Primex<sup>3</sup>Health, staff members have collectively lost over 300 lbs and are still losing. The Weight Watchers at Work Program has helped staff to promote healthy weight loss, increased physical activity and healthy eating habits. Not only has this program allowed them to lose the weight, the benefits go well beyond the pounds lost. Staff exercise together and morale has increased. Here are just a few of the comments from participants of the program:

Elaine Johnson, lost 36.4 lbs to date. "This was the best thing for me. I feel good, the best I have ever done. I have never done this well, but having the group at work helps. Facing each other each week helps everyone stay on the program with positive encouragement that helps you stick with it."

For Elaine, she feels better, can move more easily when snowmobiling, and has a better self image. Elaine visited the doctor before the program and had a borderline fasting blood sugar level, and she has two siblings with type 2 diabetes. Her most recent test was normal and knows that this program and the weight loss made the difference. "Before the program, my diet was okay, but included too many carbs and sugars."

Coming together as a team to lose weight has also spilled over into other aspects of the workplace where they still exercise together and she sees the team continuing to work together during the day. Elaine is now swimming on a regular basis and confesses that she dislikes exercise, but now she "loves" swimming and staying fit.

Diane Hobart, lost 26.4 lbs to date. "Having the program in the workplace has been wonderful. Getting out to the meetings in the evening was a hassle, but having it right at work was very convenient for so many of us." The team approach really made the difference according to Diane, especially when eating together and having people ask "what are you eating?" and holding each other accountable.

For Diane, it was all worth it, especially when her granddaughter recently said, "Nana, you look awesome!" Diane began the program for herself, but hearing those words made all the effort worth it. Diane is looking forward to going shopping for some new (smaller) clothes.

Laura Mills, lost 22 lbs to date. "I was amazed that all of us lost at least 20 lbs, and we feel great." Laura, the newly appointed Nursing Home Administrator sees the difference



Participating in the Weight Watchers Program, L-R, are: Linda Harris (new lifetime member), Hilda Covell, Julie Brunault (new lifetime member), Bonnie Oleson, WW Leader Louise Favreau, Diane Hobart, Laura Mills, Sue Collins, Diana Jeffrey, Elaine Johnson and Brenda Ladd.

it has made for herself and the staff. Positive self-image and feeling better make a world of difference in the workplace.

Mary Merrit, one of the more successful benefactors of the program, has greatly reduced her health risks associated with carrying a few extra pounds. Mary was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, was taking 3 diabetes medications to control her blood sugar and was testing her blood daily to monitor her blood sugar levels. Before starting the Weight Watchers program her blood sugars were fluctuating in the 200mg/dl range. Because she has lost over 10% of her body weight she no longer has to take her diabetes medications and her blood sugars are now within normal limits. Mary states, "Having the program at work was a huge incentive for me. I had tried everything else to help me lose weight because I didn't want to take all those medications". She adds that it wasn't so much a diet, but a whole new way of looking at eating habits and being mindful of foods that can cause her blood sugars to rise. Mary lost a total of 15 lbs. She says "I didn't lose a lot of weight, but I feel as though I have learned so much about living a healthier lifestyle. My diabetes is under control and I owe it to this program."

Primex<sup>3</sup>Health recognizes the fact that developing a more conscious healthy lifestyle not only helps to reduce health claims costs in the Primex<sup>3</sup>Health Program, but helps to reduce claims across all lines of coverage. Healthier employees are more productive, have fewer sick days and have reduced incidences of accidents on the job. We at Primex<sup>3</sup> applaud the efforts of the staff at Coös County Nursing Hospital to incorporate a culture of wellness into their workplace! ■