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I would like to tell you about my weight loss story and how it resulted in a building-wide healthy lifestyle change.

Last January my weight was 342 lbs. I decided that it was time to change that. I no longer wanted to be the “fat girl” in the office. Shortly afterward, DelaWELL began and a lot of us started to attend the workshops. In the last year, I have lost 100 pounds by doing several things: I now stay under a specific calorie intake, use a food diary to help with that, eat healthy (for the most part), and I added exercise to my life on a daily basis.

I haven’t given up any food that I like; I have just learned portion control and try to make healthier choices. About 6 months ago, I added Zumba to my regular exercise because I needed something that was fun and would keep my interest, because regular exercise did not do that.

When my co-workers started to see the results I and those participating in the DelaWELL workshops were getting, many of my co-workers at DSS, and now also DSSC at Laurel, decided it was time for them to get healthy as well. Let me just say, it is working. Several have lost weight as well. At our center, I now hold a Zumba class 3 times a week after work. DSSC holds a class that does walking aerobic style during breaks as well. At Laurel we have 14 DSS workers, 9 of which attend the Zumba classes (not to mention we also have another supervisor who comes from Bridgeville to attend). DSSC has 5 workers and 4 of their workers attend the walking class, plus there are several others in the building from different state agencies also attending. It has taken over the center.

We have all become very health conscious and the results are amazing. Everyone is watching what they eat and is trying to incorporate a healthy lifestyle into their lives – even some who can’t attend classes go elsewhere for exercise. Everyone is so enthused about becoming healthier! Team spirit has just tripled. We are all so encouraging to one another and rooting each other on. Our center has become a healthy and joyful place to be. We have even talked about starting a weight loss contest in the near future.

As state workers, we are constantly giving of ourselves; and I am so happy that our center staff have taken the time to do something good for them. It is not only working physically, but also mentally. I can’t tell you how very proud I am of my building co-workers; they are truly making changes that will result in healthier, happier employees. Their encouragement to me has also inspired me to keep with my weight loss journey (I still have more to go), so I have to thank them for that, I couldn’t have done it without their encouragement. Way to go Laurel Social Services, you rock! Let’s keep moving and shaking. –*Melody Rose*