

Choose to Lose: Learn from Our Biggest Losers



Ann Lecarpentier

Going All In to Beat Pre-Diabetes

When Ann Lecarpentier decided she was going to Choose to Lose, she went all in.

The analyst for the ConnectCare Reporting Team signed up for Bon Secours Virginia's 19-week Choose to Lose (CTL) program in September and found it to be just what she needed to fight

her pre-diabetes diagnosis.

"I really think it's a great opportunity; the whole wellness program Bon Secours offers is very beneficial," said Lecarpentier, who has worked for Bon Secours since 2004. CTL "was a structured program, which really helped. I had been doing things on my own with varying degrees of success."

When she weighed out in January, Lecarpentier had lost 10 percent of her body weight, improved her blood work and even lost weight during the holidays. Her husband also joined her in eating healthier and saw positive results. Lecarpentier was at the top of her CTL class.

"They give you a lot of ways to succeed," she said.

She especially appreciated learning about intervals and strength training.

"Thanks to the program, I was able to learn strength and resistance exercises that I had never tried before. Jake [Broaddus] was super and showed us the correct way to do the exercises then offered modifications for any who needed them. We worked on push-ups, squats, planks, and other weight or resistance band exercises. It was fun and a great workout. Something that we can do at home too!"

Lecarpentier met with a nutritionist and found allies among other CTL participants. In fact, she won free training at the Bon Secours Redskins facility and is using this time to train with other CTL graduates.

The toughest part? Getting in 8,000 steps a day in a job where she sits in front of a computer all day.

"You've just got to say I'm going to take time to do this."

She recommends CTL to others, saying, "If I can do it, anyone can ... We should think we're worth it!"

Her advice?

- 1. Take more steps each day.** "It really does make a difference, and it's something everyone can do."
- 2. Record what you eat.** "You think twice before putting it in your mouth."

First Step is the Hardest

Lora Blount admits that her memories of the day she began her journey to better health were not altogether pleasant.

Committed to losing weight, she signed up for Bon Secours' Choose to Lose program.

"Before you begin, you had to meet with a trainer and do an assessment," she said. "They do measurements, see how many squats and pushups you can do ... by the time I left there and went to parking lot, I was so sore I could hardly walk!"

Fortunately, that first day was the hardest of all for Blount, a nurse practitioner at The Spine Center of Hampton Roads. But as she learned more and became comfortable with exercising, she was happy to watch her weight drop and strength grow.

For several months, Blount worked out twice a week with a trainer, going from completing nine "girl pushups" at the start to 30 by the end of the program in mid-January. She met with a nutritionist who taught her how to set goals, measure nutrition and find healthy recipes (a favorite: spaghetti squash with marinara sauce for just over 200 calories).

"The best thing about program is it empowers you and gives you the tools and education you need to succeed. They tailor it to you, not to a whole group in your age category. They sit down with you and say, 'this is YOUR goal, this is how you get there. This is your Fitbit; use it as a tool.' And if you use those tools, it empowers you to get where you want to go."

Though she didn't compare herself to others during the program, she was surprised to be named the program's "Biggest Loser," dropping 17 percent of her initial weight.

Blount reminds employees that the commitment to begin – and the first day – are the hardest. "Don't be afraid to take the first step," she said. "I was embarrassed because I couldn't do everything. But you just have to push past it and just do it."

And now she has the trophy to prove it.



Lora Blount

