

Keeping A Promise:

MOVE![®] HELPS VETERAN DOROTHY LATSON GET ACCOUNTABLE AND LOSE OVER 45 POUNDS

During her 23-year military career, Veteran Dorothy Latson felt constant stress about meeting military weight standards. “I struggled with it during my time in the Air Force,” she recalls. “I’d worry about annual fitness reviews and meeting the guidelines.” But although she never tried a recognized weight-loss program, she somehow managed to stay on the right side of the scale.

Upon retirement 11 years ago, Dorothy was relieved. “I didn’t have to watch my weight anymore, and I could eat whatever I wanted,” she says. She did, and just accepted the weight gain. However, she felt increasingly self-conscious about her size. Dorothy seldom looked in a mirror, and avoided being in photos...unless someone was standing in front of her.

Ready To Run

In 2013, the principal at her daughter’s school started a running club. Dorothy encouraged her 10-year-old to participate, and made her a promise: together, they would run a 5K race at the end of the school year. “My daughter joined and started running at least twice a week,” Dorothy says. “I believe it’s important to keep promises. And I quickly realized that to keep my promise, I’d need to get ready!”



Fortunately, Dorothy’s primary care doctor at VA noticed that she had a weight problem, and asked if she’d consider joining the MOVE![®] Program. “She left it totally up to me,” Dorothy says, “but I realized it would help me keep my promise. So I accepted, then talked my husband, who had diabetes, into doing it with me!”

The Next Level

Weighing almost 292 pounds in January 2014, Dorothy started MOVE![®] at the Truman VA Hospital in Columbia, Missouri. Immediately, she realized that accountability was going to help her succeed. “At first, I kept a food journal—a real eye-opener for me—and

exercised only because I felt I had to do it for the program,” she explains. “Over time, I actually started to enjoy it...and I became accountable to myself!”

As Dorothy started getting into the program more, she began to take her health to the next level. “I started exercising slowly, riding the stationary bike even though I’d get winded quickly,” she says. “I began to increase my physical activity on my own. Soon, I was exercising 5 or 6 times a week at the YMCA during my daughter’s swim lessons, instead of just waiting and reading.” Dorothy’s workouts got longer—from 15 minutes to over an hour—and included the bike, the elliptical machine, and strength training.

Better Together

By the spring of 2014, Dorothy was down to 246 pounds—a loss of over 45 pounds—and ready to keep her earlier promise. “That April, when I finished MOVE!®, my daughter and I completed a ‘1-month triathlon’—we swam a mile, biked 66 miles, and ran 13 miles during that time,” she says proudly. “Since then, we’ve done 3 more 5k runs. I now even help coach the school’s running club!”

At first, Dorothy did these things for her daughter. But now, she’s doing it for herself and her family, who supported her the whole way. “We’ve taken up a healthier lifestyle together,” she says. “Family outings are not centered on food anymore, and we don’t eat out of boredom. We eat a lot better, keeping logs to watch our portion sizes and daily calorie. And we’re running and walking 5k’s as a family!”

Not Done Yet

Since finishing MOVE!®, Dorothy has lost 5 more pounds. “I keep a journal, make healthy choices, and most importantly, stay physically active,” she says. Weight loss has greatly improved her health and outlook. “I’ve got more energy, and am doing more with my family and friends. My blood sugar, cholesterol, and blood pressure are now normal,” she reports. “I don’t avoid looking in the mirror or being photographed—I’ve gone down two pants sizes!”



Dorothy urges other Veterans to try MOVE!®—and try it now! “Don’t wait like I did,” she exclaims. “I think about what I missed by not doing it sooner, like opportunities to be more involved in my daughter’s life and do things for myself. Don’t miss those opportunities—the MOVE!® Program makes you feel good!”