

Paying It Forward:

VETERAN CARYN CASH DISCUSSES HOW
MOVE![®] HELPED HER DEVELOP A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND LOSE 45 POUNDS

Tell us about your history with weight.

“I was always skinny growing up. But after I got married, I gained the ‘happy’ weight. Then, after going through some marital problems, I gained ‘unhappy’ weight as well. After my divorce, I finally I realized how big I’d gotten. I struggled with my weight for 5 years and tried countless yo-yo diets— I did all these ‘beach body’ exercises, but never followed the eating plans.”

What motivated you to start MOVE!?

“When I left the military, I was at my heaviest—190 pounds. Honestly, I just wanted to lose weight. I actually knew someone who was overweight and broke a foot just walking—I didn’t want to be like that! My parents hardly take any medicines, and I wanted that for myself, too.”

How did you find out about the program?

“I found out about MOVE! when I came to work for the VA. Someone mentioned the acronym before, but didn’t explain what it meant. I enrolled in the program at the Ralph H. Johnson VAMC.”

What about MOVE! worked for you?

“I love to exercise and have always done it. But as soon as I changed the type of food and the portion size I was eating, my weight started decreasing and I started getting results. The most important thing was learning that MOVE! isn’t a ‘diet,’ because all diets end. To be able to get the weight off and keep it off it requires a total lifestyle change.”

Have you achieved your weight goal?

“I’ve lost 45 pounds, which is 3 pounds from my goal. Watching that number drop has been an awesome feeling. But I want to tone up even more, so I’m about to start swimming to work on that.”



Who helped you be successful in MOVE!?

“My VA Dietitian, Wendy Wyatt, provided great support. She answered all of my questions—no matter how silly—and helped brainstorm with me when I hit a plateau.”

How long has your weight loss journey continued?

“I still participate in MOVE!—it’s lasted about a year and 2 months. I’ve hit a lot of plateaus, but I don’t give up. If I mess up one day, I try harder the next day. I honestly think of it as something that I just have to do.”



What do you do now to stay healthy?

“I love to run different 5K’s! I’m doing a ‘mud run’ with obstacles in the near future. I kick box and swim as well. I don’t have to remind myself to keep moving because I am always on the move!”

How’s your life different now?

“It’s really different—people hear my story and think it’s so inspiring. I love being able to share my knowledge and teach others.”

What would you like other Veterans to know about MOVE!?

“I tell other Veterans to never give up. I’ve been asked to share my story with every MOVE! class that comes to my clinic. When I talk to a class, I like to end my session by saying, ‘If you are tired of starting over, just stop quitting!’ I love being able to ‘pay it forward.’”