



# Success Stories

*Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.*

## *Focused, Committed, Determined*

### **U.S. MARINE VETERAN JOHN COFFMAN DISCUSSES HOW MOVE!® HELPED HIM NEVER GIVE UP ON THE PATH TO A HEALTHIER, LIGHTER LIFE**

"In 2007, I developed arthritis in my knees, and as time progressed, I needed a cane for stability. By 2013, my knees had become so bad that I started wearing bilateral braces. With my mobility limited, I began to gain weight—I was just sitting around doing nothing. Not being able to walk also impacted my ability to work, and I was forced into retirement.



In 2014, I started struggling with my weight. In June of that year, I had an appointment with my primary care doctor at the Boston VA HCS, Dr. Khendi White. When I weighed in, the scale showed 248 pounds! I was disappointed because I'd never weighed that much before.

During the appointment, I told Dr. White how upset I was with myself for gaining so much weight. She told me about the MOVE! Program and explained how it could help me.

I'd never tried any diets or programs to lose weight. But I thought I'd give MOVE! a try because I had nothing to lose but weight.

In February 2014, I began MOVE! and attended the 16-week sessions twice, then transitioned into the MOVE! Alumni group in May 2015.

In MOVE!, I learned so much. Before, my typical diet consisted of eating whole pizzas, fast food, and junk food, and drinking lots of soda. Today, my diet includes lean meats, brown rice, yogurt, lots of fruits and vegetables, and water with a sweetener. In addition, I attend the Healthy Teaching Kitchen sessions where I've learned to cook healthier food. Dietitians Melissa Moore-Boyle and Christine Reid teach us about better food choices and making healthy yet very tasty and appetizing meals.

Another important thing I learned is that regardless of your physical limitations, everybody can exercise. Being active with bilateral leg braces was a struggle I needed to overcome. I started by walking for 30 minutes, with lots of breaks. Today, I regularly walk 5 miles every morning, taking breaks when I need to. I can bend over and tie my shoes without being out of breath, my clothes fit better, I sleep better, and I am more confident.

I also took advantage of the cardiac rehab exercise program, building my endurance by using the treadmill and elliptical machines. As a Marine, we were taught to 'NEVER GIVE UP!' So when fellow participant would say "my knees hurt," I would encourage them not to quit. I knew I needed to stay determined and committed, otherwise I'd fall back to my old habits.

I started MOVE! at 248 pounds and today I weigh about 184. I am proud to say that I have lost over 63 pounds! But even more importantly I've gained a lot of knowledge, confidence, and great friends.

“ The support I received from the MOVE! leaders and other Veterans... helped me stay focused, committed, and determined to become and stay healthy.”

– John Coffman

The support I received from the MOVE! leaders and from the other Veterans in the group sessions helped me to stay focused, committed, and determined to become and stay healthy. As of October 2015, I continue to attend MOVE! Alumni meetings because I need their support and they keep me accountable.

My advice to any Veterans who are struggling with their weight is to learn about the MOVE! Program. And if you get involved, make the full commitment by attending the meetings, sticking to the goals you set, and trying different things to learn what works best for you.

And once you make that decision to join MOVE!, **NEVER GIVE UP!**”