

## **Better Than Before:** **VETERAN LORA GERVAIS COMMITS TO MOVE!<sup>®</sup>** **AND LOSES 50 POUNDS**

Veteran Lora Gervais says that her weight issues began recently, about 4 years ago. “In 2011, I began having thyroid issues and started gradually gaining weight,” she recalls. “My weight gain was exacerbated by unhealthy eating I developed while in a challenging marriage.” Lora never accepted the weight gain though, and always knew she could lose it. But at the time, she just didn’t have the knowledge and resources to get started.

### **Accountable**

When Lora moved to Massachusetts in the summer of 2014, she began getting care at the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital in Bedford. “I went in for a physical and learned about MOVE! from my provider and a nurse,” she recalls. She’d already lost some weight on her own—about 10 pounds—but when they gave her a flyer about the program, she signed up.

Lora started the Bedford MOVE! Program in September 2014, at one of her highest weights ever: 205 pounds. She attended MOVE! group classes and, soon after, began doing TeleMOVE!. “After 2 months of classes, I began working on individual weight management with Dr. Kendea Oliver, who was really helpful,” Lora says. “MOVE! gave me the resources and support I needed, and made me feel accountable to someone other than myself. And that’s what I needed to get started.”

### **Faithful**

Lora still does TeleMOVE! every day, faithfully tracks her eating on a smartphone app, and goes to MOVE! group classes when time permits. “I’ve lost close to 50 pounds since starting my journey,” she reports. “One of the best things I’ve learned to do is monitor my food and physical activity.” Every day, Lora logs her food into the app and tracks her steps with a MOVE! pedometer, which helps her understand how her diet impacts her



weight on the TeleMOVE scale each morning. Lora has gotten great support from MOVE! and TeleMOVE staff, her two dogs, and her dad. Through her dad's cooking, for example, she's learned about portion control and healthier eating—like always having vegetables at dinner and using more low-calorie cooking methods.

### **Good To Go**

With her weight loss and healthy behavior changes, Lora's noticed several significant, positive changes. The pain in her knees, hips, and back has noticeably decreased, and her plantar fasciitis is gone. She does not have to rest her back as much, and has increased her endurance and strength. "My breathing has improved considerably—I'm not so easily winded now," Lora reports. "My energy and activity levels are back to where they used to be years ago." No longer in need of a cane, she walks trails in 30 minutes that used to take her 3 hours. Lora says that she really appreciates how good it feels to move, especially on the long, daily hikes she takes with her dogs.

Additionally, the regular and disruptive gastrointestinal problems that Lora used to suffer from have significantly improved, and are much more manageable now. "I'm also getting positive feedback from my provider about my improved cholesterol levels and blood pressure," she says. "In general, I feel much better physically than I have in a while. I even recently returned to work part-time—a feat that was impossible last year!"

### **Better Version**

Aside from improvements in her physical health, Lora says that she's much happier since dropping the weight and making healthy behavior changes. "I no longer need to eat junk food when I feel angry or stressed," she says. "Instead, I go for a walk, which is a very effective coping strategy for me now." Lora's confidence has increased and she feels better—even excited—about going out with friends. "Clothing is more comfortable and I enjoy having more fashion options," she relates. "I have an additional 30 pounds to go, but I've gone from a size XXL to an M or L in pants and skirts, and down to a size 14 in shorts."

Lora says that you get out of MOVE! what you put into it, and that it works, but only if you commit to it. "I feel like I can manage my life better now," she explains. "I feel even better than when I was skinny. I'm a much better version of me than I was before!"