

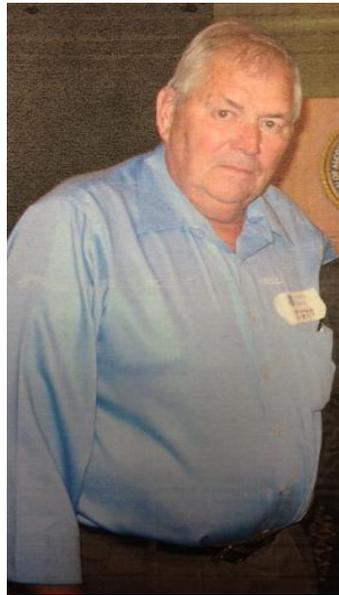
## New Normal:

### MOVE!<sup>®</sup> INSPIRES VETERAN MICHAEL FOX TO LOSE 50 POUNDS AND GET HEALTHY

Before getting into state government, Veteran Michael Fox was an active worker and volunteer fireman. But that changed once he advanced into management. “I was less and less active,” he explains, “and I was no longer a fireman. Years of low activity and heavy drinking contributed to my weight gain.” By 1990, Michael noticed that he really needed to lose some weight. “I tried every fad diet out there,” he says, “you name it, I’ve tried it.” But even though he’d quit drinking 8 years earlier and had been trying to “work” the weight off, he was unsuccessful. That’s when he had an important realization: *the only way to lose weight is through proper exercise and good nutrition.*

#### Inspired

In September 2012, Michael came to the Columbia (Missouri) VAMC to see his nurse practitioner for an annual check-up. She recommended that he see his dietitian, Nadine Freshman, who gave him several weight management options to consider. One thing she mentioned was MOVE!<sup>®</sup>.



“I drove 120 miles one way to come to the initial 2-hour MOVE!<sup>®</sup> educational program in December 2012, and I left the meeting feeling inspired,” Michael explains. “I immediately called a long-time friend, also a Veteran, and told him he should enroll with me. He did, and we both came to the first class in January 2013 really motivated.” After successfully losing a little weight each week in MOVE!<sup>®</sup>, Michael and his friend knew they could “do it.”

That small, but immediate weight loss motivated Michael as he completed the 10-week program. “The aim of MOVE!<sup>®</sup> was to lose 1 to 2 pounds of weight per week, which I

could do,” he says. Each week he came to class, he’d weigh in and see that he’d lost another couple of pounds. Watching that weight come off helped him keep going.

### **Support For Change**

Michael says that keeping a food journal—writing down everything he ate—helped develop his inner discipline. A calorie-counting book he received in one MOVE!® class also made a big impact. “That book was a real eye-opener in terms of understanding the calories in the foods I was eating,” he says. Setting weekly SMART goals for nutrition and activity also helped Michael stay accountable and make small, but necessary behavioral changes each week. In fact, he still keeps a daily food and activity journal, and he still sets weekly SMART goals.

In addition to the great support from family and friends, Michael was also inspired by the Columbia MOVE!® Team—Nadine, Melissa, and Joe. “The MOVE!® classes were well presented and class questions were answered openly and accurately,” he says. “I really enjoyed the classes, and the after-class phone calls were especially helpful.”

### **Better Choices**

Before he started MOVE!®, Michael didn’t realize that he had been snacking all the time. Now, he eats some fish, but is a vegetarian by choice. And because Michael’s also making better choices, he feels great. “I used to have a favorite snack—a sweet potato covered in butter and brown sugar,” he explains. “Now I have that same sweet potato, but with spray butter and black strap molasses, which has less sugar. This is one example of how MOVE!®’s helped me understand what I eat, then make healthy changes.” Before MOVE!®, Michael rarely ate fruit; now he eats fruit and vegetables every day!

And Michael’s changed his exercise habits, too. “Before, I was inactive and would slowly walk 1 or 2 miles per day,” he says. “Now I ride my bicycle 8 to 9 miles per day, rain or shine, and walk briskly 2 to 3 miles, several days a week.”

### **If I Can Do It...**

Michael finished MOVE!® in April 2013, and continues to lose weight. “My heaviest was 248 pounds, but today I’m down to 198—that’s a 50-pound loss!,” he notes. “I’m now approaching a ‘normal’ BMI—I’ve got only about 5 pounds to go!”

Since completing the 10-week program, Michael tells every Veteran he meets that they should sign up for MOVE!®. “If Ol’ Fox can do it, anyone can,” he concludes. “You just need to make the decision to do what’s right for your body, and you will feel better!”