

Looking Forward:

MOVE![®] GIVES VETERAN MURRAY DARBY THE SUPPORT TO GET ON TRACK TO BETTER HEALTH

Veteran Murray Darby says that he began to get concerned about his weight when he started to notice elderly people on scooters and in wheelchairs. “I didn’t want that to be me,” he recalls. “I wanted to be able to do things and enjoy my life.” But he’d struggled with weight into his 70’s, for a period of 20 years. Dieting had been successful to a degree, but he usually didn’t reach his goals and always gained the weight back.

Support Needed

In 2012, Murray’s wife provided him his first inspiration to confront his weight challenges. “She entered a weight challenge contest at her school that involved a weekly weigh-in and logging calories,” he says, “and she eventually won the contest!” Meanwhile, Murray’s weight had climbed to 279 pounds, and he was fighting high cholesterol numbers and blood pressure. He felt something had to be done. “First, I just stopped eating as much, and I lost a little weight,” he recalls. “But I later regained some of it over several months.” It was clear to Murray that he needed a support program to be successful, so he decided to learn more about MOVE![®] at the Waynesville CBOC of the Columbia (MO) VAMC.



On Track

After talking about MOVE![®] with his doctor, Murray thought about it for a few months. Then in August 2013, he entered the 10-week program weighing 261 pounds. Almost immediately, Murray was able to “get on track and stay on track.” “The big thing MOVE![®] did was bolster my self-confidence and willpower,” he says, “both of which can be fragile when it comes to food.”

Murray started a food diary, and paid close attention to what staff had to say—especially the instruction from his psychologist, nutritionist, and MOVE![®] coordinator, on topics like stress management and positive self-talk. And as his habits changed, so did his diet:

surprised to find out how much salt he was consuming, for example, he was able to cut back by using alternative seasonings. Support from his wife, the MOVE!® team, and fellow MOVE!® participants helped him make dietary changes like this stick.

Looking Forward

The numbers show that the work Murray first began in October 2012—when he weighed 279 pounds—has paid off. He’s lost 37 through MOVE!®, for a total weight loss of 55 pounds! “Reducing my weight and fat intake has helped me improve my cholesterol numbers and get off statins,” he says. “And my blood pressure, which was commonly in the 145/85 to 90 range before, is now a normal 120/80, or lower!”

Murray’s achy knees and feet don’t hurt anymore, and he has lots more energy. “Prior to MOVE!®, I was not active,” he says. “Now I’m able go to the gym three times a week for strength training and ride the stationary bike for 6 miles. I’m looking forward to all of the things I can now do with my time!”

With MOVE!® classes now over, Murray has maintained his newly-found health habits. “I continue to keep a food diary, and I’m working towards a goal of 185 to 190 pounds,” he explains. “I still have over 30 pounds to lose, and I know my journey doesn’t end there. But having MOVE!® staff and Veterans check on my post-program progress has been something I’ve really appreciated.”

Great Service

Murray believes that any Veteran who’s overweight and wants to do something about it should do the program. “They should try it even if they’ve tried to lose weight before. The support you get from MOVE!® staff is great, and the support from the other Veterans is even better,” he says. “VHA is providing Veterans a great service through MOVE!®, and I’m happy to help others see that they can change and have a better life!”

