

## **Much Different Now: VETERAN STEVE KRASLEN DISCUSSES HOW HE IMPROVED HIS HEALTH THROUGH MOVE!<sup>®</sup>**

“Before the MOVE! Program, I tried some fad diets, but they didn’t do much for me. I developed some medical issues and just wanted to start feeling better about myself. When my primary care doctor at VA told me about MOVE! and encouraged me to try it, I just knew I needed to do it.

When I started MOVE! at the Evanston (IL) CBOC in December 2010, I was 260 pounds, pre-diabetic, and suffering from high cholesterol and blood pressure. Even though it wasn’t really my style, I completed the 6-week course and watched as my weight started gradually going down. By the time I finished, I was down to 238 pounds—a 10-percent weight loss.

I liked that MOVE! wasn’t a ‘diet’ like other programs. The most important thing I learned was moderation. I realized that I didn’t have to give up certain foods; I just needed to control my portions. Eating pizza was my big thing, so I had to learn to limit how much I ate and eat in a healthier way.

During the program, I had excellent support. MOVE! Coordinator Erin Thompson really motivated me, as did my fellow Veterans, who contributed lots of great ideas in class that helped me stay on track.

After the 6-week program, the MOVE! Coordinator asked if I was interested in helping out with future classes as a volunteer. I really like volunteering. I help the Veterans on my end, setting up pedometers and showing food models as Erin conducts class on the video screen (we’re in Evanston and she’s at the North Chicago VA facility). We’ve been doing this for four and a half years. The program is now 16-weeks long, we do a 4-week



orientation, 12 week MOVing Forward, and ‘Be Active and MOVE!’ with the kinesiotherapists. So many people were interested in MOVE! that we were running out of room, so we came up with a ‘graduate’ group!

In addition to traditional MOVE!, I use MOVE! Coach, which is a nice refresher and a good follow-up/maintenance program for me. I like the combination of options that Coach offers—watching videos, reading material, using the diaries, and having that interaction. You can also customize Coach to meet your needs—I highly recommend it.

Since starting MOVE!, I’ve gotten as low as 201 pounds, but my weight has fluctuated a bit over time. Now if my weight goes up a little, I just review my food logs to see what’s going on. For exercise, I use a treadmill and have also started bicycling. I used to walk, but now I’m switching up my physical activity.

My life is much different now—I feel better about myself and my medical issues are under control. My blood pressure and cholesterol are now normal, as is my A1c—no more pre-diabetes! I used to have a 50-inch waistline; now I wear a size 42. I still watch what I’m eating and remind myself to stay active every day. And I’m getting closer to my final goal weight.”

