

## **213 Pounds Later: VETERAN JOHN BACHER DISCUSSES HIS “LIFESTYLE JOURNEY” THROUGH MOVE!<sup>®</sup>**

### **How long have you struggled with your weight?**

“I’ve struggled with my weight since the mid-80’s, and I’ve tried a number of programs and pills. I even tried regulating what I ate on my own.”



### **What got you motivated to start MOVE!<sup>®</sup> ?**

“I was a mess—I weighed 458 pounds and truly believed I was dying from my weight and ailments, which included diabetes, sleep apnea, high blood pressure, breathing issues, and knee problems. I actually woke up one morning in the summer of 2011 and realized that if I didn’t do something, I was going to die. I already felt like I was going through a slow death. My orthopedic surgeon and primary care doctor referred me to the program.”

### **What about the program worked for you?**

“I think it was...all aspects of MOVE!<sup>®</sup>. At first, I thought it was something I just had to do to get bariatric surgery, so I was attending classes. But by the second week, I’d bought into the program 100 percent. The first thing I did was cut down my portions; later, I cut down on fried foods and started eating more vegetables. I used Facebook for accountability—I didn’t and still don’t want to disappoint myself or anyone who has been following me.”

### **How much weight have you lost, and how long have you maintained your weight?**

“I took the preliminary MOVE!<sup>®</sup> orientation class at the VA St. Louis HCS on June 30, 2011, along with a nutrition and diabetes class in July and August. I weighed 446.1 pounds on Sept 6, 2011, the first day of my 8-week MOVE!<sup>®</sup> program. On May 18, 2012, 5 days before I underwent a sleeve gastrectomy (bariatric surgery), I weighed 296. By December 21, 2012, I was down to 232.8 pounds!

Since beginning MOVE!<sup>®</sup>, I have lost a total 213.3 pounds—and I’m still losing weight! I continue to do secure messaging, individual appointments, and the surgery support

group. I plan on continuing until I reach my goals and then I'll do whatever's necessary to maintain my weight and stay healthy the rest of my life. I will never forget what everyone has helped me accomplish!"

### **Who's helped you reach your goals?**

"Everyone has helped me stay on track—VA staff, family, friends. It amazed me each week how many people wanted to read my weekly status reports on Facebook. I was amazed how many words of encouragement I received...the response was tremendous."

### **How's your life different now?**

"I have experienced many changes—I am no longer...a diabetic, the pressure on my CPAP machine has been turned way down, I breathe normally these days, and I've made improvements in my medications. I can walk more than 20 feet without needing rest—just getting out of the house for any reason is fun for me now!"



Before, I would just sit there day after day and it felt like I was slowly slipping away. Now, I do exercises like shadow boxing and I swim at least 4 times a week. I think about never being obese again. I am eating 3 small healthy meals plus 2 snacks each day.

I talked to MOVE!® Coordinator Kristine Jamerson and HBC Dr. Amanda Purnell about giving back in some way. They asked me if I wanted to become a Health Coach, and I said 'yes.' I'll soon be attending classes to do so. Then I'll be volunteering at the HCS' John Cochran Division and attempting to help people who are looking to make the same types of decisions I made to get healthy."

### **What would you like other Veterans to know about MOVE!®?**

"If you give the program a chance, it will also work for you. There is plenty of help out there, all you have to do is ask for it. [The MOVE!® program at the VAMC has] given my life back to me!"