



# Success Stories

*Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.*

## ***Alive and healthy!***

***AFTER A BLOOD SUGAR EMERGENCY, DURING WHICH AN ER PHYSICIAN EXPRESSED SURPRISE HE WAS NOT ALREADY IN A COMA, JOSEPH BRAY ENDED HIS "RELATIONSHIP WITH OBESITY." WITH THE HELP OF MOVE!, HE LOST OVER 150 POUNDS — AND CHANGED HIS LIFE!***

Read Joseph's powerful story about his transformations, both physical and emotional, thanks to his own dedication and the help of the MOVE! program.



## ***The critical moment that led Joseph to the MOVE! program...***

In December 2007, Joseph visited a Connecticut hospital's emergency room, where he had an extremely high blood sugar level of 1,000. "The ER doctor told me, 'Mr. Bray, you should be in a coma,'" Joseph recalls.

At the time, Joseph weighed 350 pounds. He had diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and hypothyroidism. His care team warned that his poor health could lead to even more serious consequences, including a premature death. As Joseph himself puts it, "I joined the MOVE! program to prolong my life and end my relationship with obesity."

## ***After leaving the Army, a new struggle began.***

“My struggles with weight issues occurred after I left the United States Army,” Joseph explained. After his discharge, Joseph’s lifestyle changed, as he pursued an education and a new career and resumed socializing with friends and family. “I went from being a lean, mean fighting machine to a sedentary lifestyle that lacked exercise and healthy food choices.”

“**It was time to make a lifestyle change to prolong my life.**”

– Joseph Bray

## ***MOVE! helped Joseph change his attitude about food and dieting.***

“The first step was changing my ‘all-you-can-eat’ mindset,” Joseph said. “I had to eliminate my love affair with food. The MOVE! program educated me about food and how to make healthy choices.”

VA MOVE! dietitians also helped Joseph understand that losing weight gradually was healthier than crash dieting. “I wanted my weight loss results immediately, but I had to learn patience. My destructive eating behaviors had to change first.”

## ***MOVE! became a life-changing experience.***

Losing over 150 pounds changed Joseph’s life. “My waist size was 62 inches; now I wear 32-waist pants and have reached my goal weight of 178 pounds. I no longer take any medication for diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, or hypothyroidism.

“My body image, confidence, and self-esteem have increased 1 million percent. It’s a natural euphoria that I feel daily.”

## ***An environment for success.***

“MOVE! provides an environment to educate and support Veterans suffering from obesity,” Joseph said. “The weekly classroom meetings, food journals, guest speakers, peer discussions about failures and successes, and weigh-ins all helped make me accountable for my weight loss.”

## ***VA health care teams and MOVE! — empowering Veterans.***

Joseph has nothing but the highest praise for his VA health care team. “The VA staff empowers Veterans to set healthy goals about their health care concerns and needs. They are committed to serving Veterans.”

And would he recommend the MOVE! program to other Veterans? “Absolutely! For any Veteran dealing with obesity, it is a valuable asset that will enhance their lives.”