

## **2009 MAYOR'S ANNUAL HEALTH AND FITNESS**

### **AWARD WINNERS**

#### **SMOKING CESSATION**

##### **Sarah Wells**

About a year ago, Sarah Wells was coughing so badly from smoking that she injured her back. Unable to work, she was in so much pain that she slept on the floor for two weeks. While “floor-ridden”, she realized she had to quit smoking.

About two weeks later, she was finally able to return to her job as a waitress at Teller's downtown. One night, one of her customers left a book at his table about back care. She tried to find the customer who had left the book, but he was gone. After work, she began to read the book and realized she needed to make changes.

Sarah began doing the back exercises demonstrated in the book. Over the ensuing weeks and months, she progressed to running. She now runs almost every day and works out in a gym. She is able to run up to 11-12 miles, but usually runs 4 miles a day. She recently ran in the St. Patrick's 5K run and has plans for a half-marathon and eventually a marathon.

Sarah has been able to lose weight, quit smoking, become a practitioner of daily fitness, and become a mentor to others.

## **WEIGHT LOSS**

### **Jill Diener**

In her years at graduate school at New York University, Jill had gained a tremendous amount of weight, and when she returned to Missouri she arrived at her heaviest weight ever. When she began work at the MU School of Health Professions, she committed herself to make positive changes in her life. She was determined to eat healthier, and get more active. She began walking the Katy Trail, got a membership at the ARC, and she joined Weight Watchers at work. The three activities combined created a fascinating shift.

Before long she was losing 5, 10, 15, 20 lbs., earning ring after ring on her Weight Watchers key chain. Her enthusiasm was infectious. Multiple people in the building were inspired by her weight-loss and joined weight watchers as well, making for a lively group and great support network.

Jill has clearly excelled at weight loss. But she came to that success only because she triumphed and conquered fitness and a healthy lifestyle. She has been maintaining her current weight for about a year. Meanwhile, at work she mentors students and counsels families, but beyond that, she mentors her co-workers, and inspires her friends while they face their own life hurdles, choices and futures.

To date, Jill has lost over 70 lbs.! She continues to amaze her co-workers with her enthusiasm, sense of humor, positive outlook and inspiring story.

## **WEIGHT LOSS**

### **Kathy Peters**

**Kathy's phenomenal weight loss of 150 lbs. has been achieved in just under two years. Her top weight was 326 lbs. She decided in June of 2007 to embark on a healthier lifestyle that included proper portions and nutrition, as well as fitness through dedication to daily exercise. Kathy is still working toward her goal weight, but she is today a lovely and healthy person. Kathy long ago decided that she wanted permanent results achieved through hard work. That meant no drugs, surgery, nor other unnatural aides to her goal. She has devoted at least a half hour each day to fitness activity. It wasn't easy for someone of Kathy's top weight to put on a swimsuit and participate in aqua aerobics, or to push herself to walk and workout, but now, she is a glowing example of the value of fitness. Kathy is a member of the ARC where she regularly attends a variety of classes.**

**Throughout this time, Kathy has maintained her usual jovial attitude toward life. She encourages her friends and coworkers to join her in activities such as walking, water aerobics, cycling and dance-exercise. She is always there for anyone who needs some positive encouragement or reinforcement. Kathy is a joy to be around, an inspiration to all who meet her, and a fine speaker when called upon to describe her experiences, to motivate others.**

## **WEIGHT LOSS**

### **Sean Powers**

Since the fall of 2007, Sean has lost approximately 100 lbs. He used to weigh 270 lbs. and now weighs 172 lbs. He started working out at Columbia College's fitness center where he is a student, and has been going fairly consistently since 2007. He had been overweight for most of his life. He has worked really hard for the past two years and is extremely proud of his accomplishments. He is an outstanding example of what can be achieved with positive changes in life, through fitness and healthy living.

## **WEIGHT LOSS**

### **April Rodeghero**

**April joined Weight Watchers in Columbia three years ago, and has lost over 80 pounds, putting her in a healthy weight range for her age and height. Not only did she lose these pounds, but she has truly transitioned herself into being active and making healthy lifestyle choices. April went from dreading work outs to really enjoying them. She has taken to heart the power of believing in yourself, and what it can do for yourself and others. She attends a Weight Watchers group meeting each week. As a vegetarian, it can be challenging to find the nutrients one needs for good health, but April meets this challenge well, and feels lucky to be connected to the Columbia community with its great choices in local and healthy foods, which are available at restaurants and markets year around.**

**April has inspired many around her to think about what they can do for themselves. She understands the importance of balance and moderation, and has been able to share her experience with others to inspire them to achieve balance in their own lives. She is one of Columbia's inspiring individuals.**

## **MENTOR**

### **Nicole Pele**

**Nicole is a full time medical resident with a demanding schedule. However, she does not allow this to hamper her efforts to remain fit, often grabbing a few minutes on the balance ball or dropping to give herself 10 push-ups. But what puts Nicole above all the others is her unstinting willingness to bring others along, too.**

**She has coached non-swimmers from being able to swim 25 yards in a pool to completing distance swims of over 1,000 yards in open water. More than just swimming, Nicole has mentored people in all three sports of triathlon, organizing bike rides where no rider is left behind and all riders are given the opportunity to excel. She has fostered a community of new runners, now ready to go for races of up to marathon distance and even ultra-marathon distance.**

**She has been an inspiration, a mentor, a coach, a teacher, and sometimes a task master, all with grace and humor. Her patience, example, discipline and organization make her a heroine for many who have been lucky enough to train with her. Nicole is the epitome of mentorship.**

## **MENTOR**

### **Steve Stonecipher-Fisher**

**Steve opened his store “Tryathletics” in 1986. He won the local Heart of America Marathon in 1980, 1988 and again in 1991. Steve placed 37<sup>th</sup> in the Boston Marathon in 1983 and ran in the Olympics Trials in 1984. He has been an inspiration to local runners, and has been generous with his time and expertise through his involvement in numerous local running events, including Race Director for the Show Me Games Triathlon and St. Patrick’s Day 5K. Steve’s commitment to a healthy lifestyle is reflected in his daily behavior, and his kindness and encouragement to others has helped many Columbians live their lives to the fullest.**

## **MENTOR**

### **Alvin Sweezer**

**Alvin is the Lead Custodian at Fairview Elementary School. His commitment to fitness is an inspiration to the entire school. Alvin rides his bike to and from work throughout the year, a distance of 30 miles round trip. This is especially admirable because he has a physically demanding job that begins at 6:30 a.m. and often goes into the evening hours.**

**Alvin also assists PedNet in its efforts to prepare adults and children to be safe bicycle riders. He volunteers as an escort rider in group bicycle rides. He also assists during Walk to School Days to make the arrival at school a celebration for all the participants.**

**Alvin deserves this recognition for his outstanding example to children and adults, and for his commitment to physical fitness and environmental stewardship.**

## **MENTOR**

### **Annie Taylor**

**Annie Taylor spent her working career teaching children the components of fitness and health as a physical education educator in the Columbia Public Schools. After retiring, she listened to friends and relatives lament about being overweight and experiencing health issues that could possibly be alleviated or lessened by a consistent exercise program and nutritional changes. An overweight friend asked for help in losing weight. For more than two years, Annie and the friend exercised regularly and, with nutrition counseling from Annie, changes were made in the friend's eating habits. The weight was lost. This was the start of Annie helping anyone, friend or stranger, who requested assistance in improving their fitness and health.**

**Since 2003, Annie has helped over 125 people develop exercise programs for weight loss, fitness, and health. She only asks for commitment to the exercise program in exchange for her assistance. Merely seeing change in a friend or acquaintance is her reward.**

## **FITNESS**

### **Chris Miller**

**Chris has always had some interest in fitness, but in the past year he has taken it to an entirely different level. Exercising at least five times a week, he has committed to a regimen that includes running, cycling, abdominal work and pushups. As a high school soccer coach he finds his time to be very limited during the seasons, yet he has continued to maintain his workouts and fitness level, even if it means exercising after 10:00 at night.**

**Chris has also made positive changes in his overall health through the foods he eats. He has read extensively about the benefits of various foods and the value of choosing one food over another, and has committed to making those choices every single day. He chooses organic fruits and vegetables whenever he can, avoids anything fried or overly refined, and takes daily supplements to enhance his overall health.**

**As a result of his efforts to improve his fitness level and general health, at 41 years old Chris is in the best shape of his life. He is an incredible model for his two young children, and an example for the many high school students whom he coaches and mentors.**

## **FITNESS**

### **Bryan Sappington**

**Bryan works closely with all residential students at Columbia College. He has always been involved in the College's intramural program and encourages other students to get involved as well. Last year, he decided he wanted to finally realize a long-time dream he had: to run a marathon. He recruited several students to begin training with him. Brian and the students could be seen at the College's fitness center and running around campus—rain, shine, sleet or snow. In February, he and another student went to South Carolina to compete in a marathon. Although exhausted, they both finished and were proud of their accomplishment.**

**He is a role model to students about the importance of setting a goal, working hard to accomplish that goal, and celebrating when you have met your goal. His commitment to fitness and good health is apparent to all the residential students at Columbia College.**

## **FITNESS**

### **Boone County Minority Health Network**

The Boone County Minority Health Network, founded by Paula D. Williams, convened in May 2008 and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in July 2008. The Network members partner together to meet mutually agreed upon goals addressing health disparities in Boone County. The Networks objectives include the provision of activities that are intended to enhance the skills, knowledge, and abilities of minorities of all ages and socioeconomic status, to achieve optimal health. Empowerment is a large part of the work of the Network.

The Network is an all volunteer organization. Activities implemented by the Network include: participation in the May 2008 Health Fair; Pathway to Healthy Living in August and February 2008; and participation in Columbia Black Health Expo in October 2008.

Network members are: Paula Williams, Debra Finley, LeGreta Hudson, Jennifer Anderson, Angie Patterson, Kerry Lewis, Rosie Warren, Kathy Davenport and Maureen Coy.