

Member Spotlight

TRACY WIGGINS



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“I won’t be that person who keeps giving up!”

Tracy never laid eyes her own wedding dress until her wedding day.

“I refused to look at my dress when I tried it on,” she said. “I was too embarrassed to ever look in the mirror.”

At almost 400 pounds, Tracy had simply accepted her weight as part of her identity.

In 1999, she experienced some weight loss when she committed to regular hip hop classes at a local gym. However, the death of her father and the pressure of a job loss caused Tracy to abandon her workouts and turn to food for comfort.

“I gained a lot of weight quickly,” Tracy recalled. “I didn’t want anyone in public to even see me.



Tracy, before her weight loss.



Tracy, after her 200-pound weight loss.

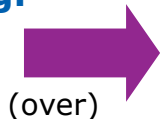
I wasn’t comfortable taking my kids to school in the morning for fear of what the other children would say.”

Since many of Tracy’s family members already suffered from acute diabetes, she feared it was only a matter of time before she, too, encountered serious health issues.

“And then it hit me,” Tracy recalled. “I had to get myself together; I couldn’t even bend over to tie my shoes!”

In 2008, Tracy chose gastric bypass surgery, and over the next 18 months, she lost an impressive 150 pounds.

But in a matter of a few months, **Tracy realized that the surgery wasn’t the permanent fix she had been seeking.**



(over)

“Given enough time, you can re-stretch your stomach” Tracy said. **“And I realized my weight-loss wouldn’t stick around unless I changed the way I lived.”**

FINDING AN INSPIRATION

In September of 2011, **Tracy walked through the doors of the Alexander Family YMCA.**

A little nervous, but very determined, Tracy showed up for the one class that she recognized on the schedule: hip hop. She immediately ignited her old love for cardio dance and aerobics and began taking classes 5-7 days a week.

And when instructor Marcus announced that the cardio dance class would perform a show in July of 2011, Tracy found her inspiration.

“I was bigger than everybody else in that cardio dance class,” Tracy said. “But I was determined to perform in that show. **I decided if all the other people in the class could practice four times a week, I could do it, too.**

I won’t be the person that keeps giving up! I can’t be that for my kids!”

MAKING A LASTING CHANGE

Next, Tracy sought a nutrition plan from her doctor to balance her diet. She learned to pack all of her meals and snacks in advance to avoid overindulging when she was hungry.

And her newfound friends from cardio dance kept her accountable with her exercise.

Tracy’s determination and dedication made the difference. Since September, **she has lost 40 pounds, for a total of nearly 200 since her gastric bypass surgery.**

THE DIFFERENCE

“The best way I can describe it is...I feel normal!” Tracy said. “I can be in a group of people and they notice not because of my weight, but because of my personality.”

Tracy’s bright smile lit up the room as she described the simple joy of being able to tie her own shoes, shop at “regular” stores in the mall, and go out to dinner with friends without the fear of overeating.

However, it wasn’t until recently that Tracy’s immense accomplishment became a reality in her mind:

“Whenever we visited other people’s homes, I would always grab a couch pillow or my purse and set it on my lap to help “hide” my weight,” Tracy shared.

“Just last week, my husband and I were out with friends, and my husband said to me, ‘Tracy! You don’t grab the pillow anymore!’

I realized that the only person I was hiding from was me, and I don’t feel like I need

“I don’t feel like I need to hide anymore!”