

Bariatrics



Catholic
Health Initiatives

Weight?

August, 2007

THE CENTER FOR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Barbara Thompson speaks out on issue...

Weight loss
retreat inspires,
educates

See 2-3

Lap-Band will be option for patients...

See 4

Additional surgeon signs on...

See 4

New PA arrives...

See 5



Center of
Excellence
BARIATRIC SURGERY

Barbara Thompson brings knowledge, humor, candor to obesity struggle

Because of the kind of person she is - friendly, compassionate, encouraging, accessible - getting to know Barbara Thompson up close is pretty easy.

The author of *Weight Loss Surgery: Finding the Thin Person Hiding Inside You* freely offered information, advice, and support to those attending A Weekend in the Pines weight loss retreat this past spring as hosted by The Center for Weight Management.

A candid demeanor and bright sense of humor, Thompson asked all to celebrate their weight loss journeys together and feel the sense of fellowship that bariatric patients share.

"We all share a past history of being morbidly obese," she said while pointing out that, like the phoenix who rises from the ashes, the crowd gathered were some of the strongest people and complimented their fortitude.

It was that strength that had given them the courage to say to themselves: "I want a better life than I had before."

Thompson's story isn't unlike many other weight loss struggles. Her eventual turn to gastric bypass surgery came after unsuccessful attempts to lose weight only to gain it back. She



Messages from Barbara

- ▶ Honor your gift, the surgery which gave you a chance at a second life.
- ▶ Be a weight loss surgery advocate. Thank your employers and insurance companies.
- ▶ Be there for others.
- ▶ Be open to great things. Great things will be happening; let them in.

lived her life on a diet, was facing near-disability status as a result of weight-related complications.

"I was so tired of failing," she said.

Thompson asks people to realize why we are the way we are and what forces are at play to make us that way. Genetics, the foods we eat, and the lack of exercise all contribute to the

obesity problem.

She encouraged anyone who had recently had weight loss surgery to take their tool seriously and to "not waste any time" during their window of opportunity, or that immediate post-surgery period when the majority of weight loss is achieved. That window is different for everyone, she says, but that it's key everyone take the most advantage possible of their new gift during that time.

Her four rules of success are simple:

- 1) Eat protein first.
- 2) Drink water.
- 3) No grazing or unplanned eating.
- 4) Exercise.

It's been said before, and Thompson reiterated the fact that weight loss surgery is not the easy way out.

Dumping, hair loss, transfer of addictions for some, body image, family issues, are all reasons as to why this process can be an overwhelming one.

She suggests taking baby steps or to seek out counseling for anyone who needs help.

Her ultimate message is that no one ever forgets where they've been and "help others who could use your help."

"People accept that height is genetically determined, but they are less willing to accept that a person's weight depends on genetic makeup."

Barbara Thompson quoting Dr. Allen Spiegel



Center of
Excellence
BARIATRIC SURGERY

CATHOLIC HEALTH
INITIATIVES

The Center for Weight Management

A service of St. Joseph's Area Health Services

600 Pleasant Avenue
Phone: (218) 732-3311

Park Rapids, MN 56470
Fax: (218) 732-1368

We want to hear from you...

Y Weight invites you to submit articles, questions, stories, your personal profile or any information you feel would benefit other gastric patients, to Arlys Hess, social worker, at 218-237-5588. Address correspondence to her at St. Joseph's Area Health Services, 600 Pleasant Ave., Park Rapids, MN 56470 or e-mail: arlyshess@catholichealth.net

If you choose to no longer receive this newsletter, please call 218-237-5711 or 1-800-566-3311 ext. 588 and ask to have your name removed from the mailing list. Also, drop us a line if you have a change of address you would like us to know about. Thank you.



Barbara Thompson gets to know fans at her book signing.

The weekend in photographs

Motivational personal accounts, educational panel discussion, and entertaining guest speakers kept the Weekend in the Pines weight loss retreat held in April informative and fun.

Sandy Jones, PA, opened the event with a closer look at The Center for Weight Management and its treatment for bariatric patients. Friday night guests could catch a bonfire, visit vendors and have a clothing exchange. Saturday guests charged their morning with exercise and/or took part in health screenings prior to a full day of speakers and events.

Barbara Thompson was also on hand throughout, sharing her time and sense of humor with all.



A lovely, calming morning stretch starts the day for energetic conference goers on Saturday.



Participants could take part in health screenings. (Below) A panel of professionals takes questions.



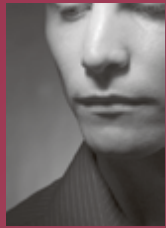
Protein tasting gave insight to what's available.

In case you missed out... Notable facts from weight loss retreat

▶ "Commitment has no end date." That from a patient testimonial (Carol) who lost 135 pounds.

▶ Obesity is the last frontier on the discrimination front. As Barbara Thompson says: "We still look at morbid obesity as being our fault. Let's stop blaming ourselves."

▶ Depression isn't always related to obesity. Don't just stop taking medications to treat depression. Talk to your physician first.



▶ Some gastric bypass patients suffer from "dumping" syndrome when ingesting sugar. Others don't. "The lucky ones are the ones who do react."
-- Sandy Jones, PA.

▶ The divorce rate among bariatric patients is somewhat elevated.

▶ Watch your posture. Stand up straight and pull your shoulders back.... That's it!

▶ Beware of transfer of addictions. If food was your addictive substance of choice, watch out if you are replacing it with another harmful alternative.

▶ Avoiding carbonation is one of the lifelong changes you should really stick with if you want to keep your pouch size small.



Dr. Robert Wroblewski signs on as surgeon

The Center for Weight Management is happy to announce a new surgeon, Dr. Robert Wroblewski, recently signed to join the surgical team at St. Joseph's Area Health Services and Dakota Clinic. He is expected to arrive in August, 2008.

Dr. Wroblewski studied under Dr. Dan Smith while attending the University of North Dakota (UND) School of Medicine and Health Science Department of Surgery and completed his residency training there.

"He will be an excellent addition to our medical staff and help us grow the services that we offer for the communities that we serve," says Ben Koppelman, St. Joseph's President/CEO.

Dr. Wroblewski graduated from the College of St. Scholastica, Summa Cum Laude with a BA in biology and attended medical school at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.



Dr. Robert Wroblewski

His arrival will allow St. Joseph's to expand general surgery offerings including some vascular surgery. His talents will also enhance offerings at The Center for Weight Management, named a Center of Excellence by the American Society for Bariatric Surgery.

While the Roux en-Y procedure for gastric bypass surgery has been deemed the gold standard of the industry, both Dr. Wroblewski and Dr. Dan Smith will also soon be offering the LAP-BAND® System procedure as a choice for bariatric patients. Dr. Smith was recently selected to pursue certification and is expected to begin performing LAP-BANDS® as early as this fall. (The Center for Weight Management also offers patients a non-surgical alternative to weight loss.)

Among his honors at medical school were an AAFP Research Presentation Award, the Minnesota Valley Cryogenics Engineering Scholarship, Ronald D. Schultz/Minnesota Medical Foundation Scholarship, and Ronald D. Overman Scholarship.

Dr. Dan Smith selected to pursue LAP-BAND® System certification

Dr. Dan Smith has been selected to pursue certification for the LAP-BAND® System procedure which will likely be offered as a choice for patients as early as this fall.

The Roux en-Y procedure for gastric bypass surgery is considered the gold standard in the bariatric industry and is one in which Dr. Smith stands out with success rates above the national average. A non-surgical option is available to patients at The Center for Weight Management as well.

The Lap-BAND® System procedure will be an additional option for patients from Dr. Smith as well as Dr. Wroblewski after his arrival in 2008.



Dr. Dan Smith

LAP-BAND® System information

The following information on the LAP-BAND® System came from the product website at www.lapband.com. See their site for this and more.

The LAP-BAND® System is an adjustable gastric band designed to help you lose excess body weight. It reduces the stomach capacity and restricts the amount of food that can be consumed at one time.

The LAP-BAND® System procedure doesn't require stomach cutting and stapling or gastrointestinal re-routing to bypass normal digestion.

The LAP-BAND® System is a silicone ring designed to be placed around the upper part of the stomach and filled with saline in its inner surface. This creates a new, smaller stomach pouch that can hold only a small amount of food, so the food storage area in the stomach is reduced. The band also controls the stoma between the new upper pouch and the lower part of the stomach. When the stomach is smaller, you feel full faster which the food moves more slowly between your upper and lower stomach as it is digested. As a result, you eat less and lose weight.

Once in place, an access port fixed beneath the skin of your abdomen allowing the surgeon to change the stoma size by adding or subtracting saline. The diameter of the band can be modified to meet individual needs.

The Roux en-Y procedure is considered the gold standard in the bariatric industry. There is also a non-surgical component offered through The Center for Weight Management. The LAP-BAND® Systems is yet another offering which will be offered to patients. If you would like more information, please visit our website at www.sjahs.org, or please contact us at 1-800-566-3311 or 218-237-5757.



Meet Mandi Splonskowski

*Mandi
Splonskowski*

New Physician Assistant joins The Center for Weight Management team

With a winning smile and a quick likability, Mandi Splonskowski loves her new role at St. Joseph's Area Health Services, Dakota Clinic, and The Center for Weight Management. She joined the staff on June 4 as a Physician Assistant (PA) under surgeon, Dr. Daniel Smith.

"He's a good mentor to have," she says, "an excellent surgeon."

She has equally high praise for her new co-workers. "Sandy Jones (PA) is great as well," Splonskowski adds and can't stop there. "All of the people... I enjoy working with them all."

Originally from Bismarck, ND, Splonskowski attended school at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in Manchester, NH, after obtaining her undergraduate degree at North Dakota State University, Fargo.

She worked in the general surgery field for five years in Bismarck prior to her arrival in Park Rapids.

Splonskowski says she has enjoyed working in the bariatric fields and has seen patients who have returned for follow-up exams four, five, and six months post-gastric bypass surgery. The transformation that happens when a patient loses 200 pounds, as an example, amazes her.

Not so amazing is living away from her husband who is still working in Bismarck until they make a full transition to the area. Hopefully that will happen very soon.

\$10,000 grant targeted to support adolescents

St. Joseph's Area Health Services has received a \$10,000 grant from Dakota Medical Foundation to support "Healthy 'n Fit Kids," a multidisciplinary adolescent weight management program.

This program will be available to 10- through 15-year-olds starting this fall. If you have a child that is strug-

gling with weight management or for more information about the program, please call St. Joseph's and Dakota Clinic's Center for Weight Management at (218) 237-5757, option 2.

Dakota Medical Foundation of Fargo, ND, focuses its efforts on improving health and access to med-

ical and dental care in the region, with a special emphasis on children. Since 1996, the Foundation has invested more than \$28 million in over 275 nonprofit organizations in the region. For more information, see www.dakmed.org.

The Center for Weight Management

A service of St. Joseph's Area Health Services
600 Pleasant Avenue Park Rapids, MN 56470
Phone: (218) 732-3311 Fax: (218) 732-1368



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Park Rapids, MN
Permit No. 52

Address Service Requested



Calendar of activities

Bariatric "Y-Weight?" Support Group

"Y Weight?" Support Group meetings are held from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. in St. Joseph's All-Purpose Room. Mark your calendar: Aug. 23, Sept. 13 & 27, Oct. 11 & 25, Nov. 8, and Dec. 13.

Back on Track

Back on Track - Kick Start Program will again be offered for individuals who have had weight loss surgery but need a refresher course in the basics of getting back on track and maintaining their weight loss.

Discussions will include ways to start eating that promote weight loss as well as psychosocial reasons for weight regain.

The next six-week session is scheduled for Oct. 4 through Nov. 8, and meets at 5:30 p.m. (Thursdays) in St. Joseph's All-Purpose Room.

Cost is \$60 for first-time attendees to cover the cost of materials and \$30 for repeat participants.

Call Arlys Hess at 218-237-5588 to register. Class size is limited.

Staying On Track

This support group is geared for anyone more than one year post gastric bypass surgery intent on maintain-

ing weight loss. Meetings are held from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month in St. Joseph's All-Purpose Room. Look for coming dates: Sept. 13, Oct. 11, Nov. 8 and Dec. 13.

Walk canceled

The Walk From Obesity will not be held this year in Park Rapids. However, reserve time during late September, 2008 for a Weight Loss Retreat/Walk From Obesity combined event. Watch future mailings for details as they are confirmed.

Bemidji support group

Another weight loss surgery support group is meeting in Bemidji at North Regional Country Hospital. The group meets from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. the second Monday of every month in Conference Room C. Please call Pam at 218-333-6738 or e-mail Commander at saddoris@paulbunyan.net for additional information.

Detroit Lakes support group

A support group meets in Detroit Lakes at Grace Lutheran Church at 4:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month. Contact Ann Zick (218-573-3413) or Carla Mitchell (218-334-2485) for more information.