

## SUCCESS STORIES



A lifestyle change is not an easy decision. Russ and I have been together since 1994. At that time, I would say we were both in very good shape, but we were almost 20 years younger. Over the years, we have gone back on forth with weight gain and loss, but we seemed to always find time to exercise, usually walking. We would walk long distances up to 6 or 7 miles at a time, but even with the exercise the weight came back because our eating habits were unhealthy.

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, after returning from a vacation in Las Vegas, we decided to change our lifestyle. Our vacation was good because it allowed us time to slow down and talk about getting healthy and in shape. The 1<sup>st</sup> thing we did was weighed ourselves and told each other what we weighed. Each of us logged our weights and report in each morning where are weight is at.

Our normal week always included some walking but our meals were usually eating in a restaurant or picking up something quick. The Route 66 Healthy Challenge has been great to log my exercise and weight. Since July 8<sup>th</sup>, I have logged 3705 minutes of fast-paced walking, uphill walking and weights. Russ has lost over 35 lbs. and I have lost over 23 lbs. At noon, I walk with 3 co-workers for ½ hour and it is a fast-paced walk and hasn't been a treat in the 90+ degree weather here.

We are preparing wonderful meals together every night. Adapting a recipe to fit our new lifestyle is easy. We cut down or completely out salt, sugar, flour, pop and cheese. Reading labels is second nature now. Quinoa, rice and black beans are staples in our refrigerator. Our food has a taste that used to be smothered by sauces, salt or cheese. Starbucks isn't part of my daily routine anymore because it was a bad habit with very little nutritional value. My treat now is a Greek yogurt with blueberries.

Russ and I are both getting close to our goal weight and the nice thing is that we don't feel like we have denied ourselves food. Every night we look forward to preparing a healthy and tasty meal and going for a hike or brisk walk.

I am hoping to finish the Route 66 Healthy Challenge twice. This fall we will probably join a gym because our nights are already getting shorter and will limit our walking time, but we are also looking forward to a more active and healthy lifestyle for the rest of our lives.