

Morbidly Obese No More:

VETERAN GARY A. VOELKER DISCUSSES HOW MOVE![®] WORKED FOR HIM

“In December 2009, I was having difficulty breathing and rushed to the hospital, where I was successfully treated. But as I was leaving the hospital, I almost lost my breath again—my discharge papers said that I was ‘Morbidly Obese!’ I weighed 286 pounds, which is okay if you’re over 7 feet tall. But I am just under 6 feet and was carrying over 100 extra pounds, which was making several of my chronic health problems worse. It was then and there that I decided I had to do something.”

Hooked

“I had heard about MOVE![®], but I didn’t want to give up my favorite foods, exercise like crazy, and be hungry all the time. But being described as ‘morbidly obese’ changed everything. In January 2010, I started 1-hour, weekly MOVE![®] classes at the Aleda E. Lutz VA Medical Center (Saginaw, MI). I was excited when Sonya, my program coordinator, told me



- I didn’t have to give up my favorite foods, just eat in moderation.
- I didn’t have to exercise all the time, just do more than I was doing now.
- If I followed the lifestyle changes, I wouldn’t be hungry all the time.
- All I needed to think about was doing better than I was doing now.

It worked: in only 8 weeks of MOVE![®], I dropped over 22 pounds...and I was hooked!”

Anyone can do it

“MOVE![®] provided practical information that anyone could use. I was amazed at the all great insight I received on exercise, medications, eating right, and the psychology of weight loss. I knew that it would take a combination of information, encouragement, and discipline to make the program work for me.

Using the self-discipline I got in the U.S. Army, I made up my mind to do it. The rest was surprisingly easy. I ate smaller food portions and got regular exercise. I embraced MOVE!® as a lifestyle change instead of just a ‘diet.’ And with encouragement from program staff, the pounds melted off slowly but surely.”

Continued success

“I continued attending the weekly MOVE!® maintenance group and by March 2011, I was at 228.5 pounds. That’s a loss of about one pound a week—58 pounds in just over a year! And I’ve kept it off. I still suffer from several medical conditions, but for the first time in my life my health has improved. I’ve reduced many of my medications, and I’m thrilled with my progress.

Now, a little over 2 years after starting the program, I weigh 219 and am close to reaching my goal of 180 pounds. For motivation, I’ve kept the jeans that I wore on my first day of MOVE!® classes—I put them on sometimes to see how far I’ve come!

I can’t thank my MOVE!® team enough for all the encouragement that they’ve given me—they are the real heroes. And my biggest supporter is my wife, who does the program with me and has lost over 32 pounds!”

It works

“Like I said, all it takes is information, encouragement, and discipline. I tell Veterans with weight problems two things: you need to join the MOVE!® Program, and I hope to see less of you soon!”



“In May 2010, several of us were given certificates honoring our weight loss. It was really encouraging to be known as one of the “BIGGEST LOSERS.””