

The Salem Leader
Educationally Speaking
Justin Harter
February 5, 2007

And one and two and...

Three weeks ago I received a flyer in the mail from the Fishers Parks and Recreation Department inviting me to join Fishers Gets Moving, a local fitness and health program designed for Fishers residents to become more active and healthier in 2007. Participants sign up to meet goals – like walking 200 miles in the year – and receive support from other participants and discounts from local restaurants and gyms. Then, just a few short days later I saw a poster on the walls of the Indiana Government Center urging all Hoosiers to join INShape Indiana – a similar fitness and health program sponsored by Governor Mitch Daniels. The Governor’s challenge was to lose 10 pounds in 10 weeks. Aside from what you or I think about the Governor – he’s right on this one.

As a reader of this news publication you are probably familiar with the statistics about Indiana’s general health. Frankly, we’re fat, lazy and we smoke a lot. Something I don’t really like being associated with. I’m all about keeping up appearances and the obsessive compulsion of mine to make everything look neat and presentable kicked in.

Thus, I’m also urging people to get up, tuck that shirt in and put down that slice of pizza. I will say I am rather lucky because I’m not going into this with a weight problem. However, my eating habits and fitness habits were hit-and-miss at best. My belief that being out of shape was better than having no shape at all was a bit off the mark. I joined both Fishers Gets Moving and INShape Indiana with the intent of developing better habits to coexist with the ones I already have.

I should explain that I have really good willpower. It makes me feel like a superhero sometimes. Normally I’d settle on some super power that would allow me to put toilet paper back on the roll if it runs out mid-use. But I often see 400-pound men scarf down a pudding cup like nobody’s business. Then I realize if I loved food as much as a 400-pound man I’d weigh 400 pounds. My power lies in the ability to take action. I am more than capable of just saying I won’t do something anymore and actually living up to it.

At the start of this year I was eating pizza, frozen TV dinners, ice cream with strawberries and all sorts of other unhealthy things. I swore off the TV dinners. (I figure my metabolism won’t always be able to drop 10 pounds in 10 minutes). For example, I always brought a microwaveable potpie to work for lunch because they were small, filling and cheap. I realized that cheap food is the worst. Those potpies clocked in with over 600mg of sodium in one sitting. I’ve also weaned myself off my “must have a sweet after each meal” habit. Additionally, I have only ordered one pizza this entire year and only because I had a coupon. I now buy the lean meats and cook *everything* on my George Foreman Grill. Plus, with my inability to prepare a decent batch of peanut butter

fudge that was also easy to give up; let's just say the ninth attempt of fudge involved heavy smoke, tall flames and me holding a fire extinguisher for half an hour.

I've set a goal to walk at least 200 miles in 2007, eat healthier and participate in at least 100 hours of physical activity. So far I'm well on my way with the physical activity. I'm in the gym playing racquetball at least every other day and when the weather gets warmer Fishers' 75 miles of paved walk and bike trails will be getting used a lot by myself. Maybe not all 75 miles of it, but a good chunk near where I live at least.

I'm not just limiting this to myself either. The cats are in on this, too. Payton, my oldest female cat, is the definition of a fat cat. Her day starts at 6 AM with a trip to the litter box, then a trip to the food and water dish and then she takes her perch on the nearest windowsill or rug. Bath time comes around 7 in the evening when she rolls over to lick something and then she's off to the chair in my bedroom where she sleeps. Dayton, my younger male cat, isn't nearly as heavy but he could stand to eat better. That's why I've upgraded their food to PurinaOne instead of the usual MeowMix. It's never too late to start eating better. Now if I could just get the cats to come walking with me we'd be set. That might be next year's goal, though.