

BECOME A BIG LOSER

By Evan Kozierachi
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In 2010, North Carolina was the 10th most obese state in the nation, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A year later, it dropped to 14th, making it the Southeast's biggest loser.

Burlington Nutrition, which opened in downtown Burlington at 127 W. Davis St. this past November, wants to help people do the same with a fourth eight-week long Weight Loss Challenge.

Dawn Marvin, the owner of members-only Burlington Nutrition, retired from LabCorp after 23 years as a sales representative in Raleigh to open the store.

"In my previous life, when I worked in Raleigh, I just kept gaining more and more weight until one of my physician-clients recommended me to a club in

Raleigh — like this one — for the moral support and coaching I would need on a daily basis," Marvin said.

After losing 65 pounds, Marvin became inspired to share her experience with her community.

"Living here in Burlington, I knew we needed something like this — a healthy place (with healthy smoothies) where people could hang out in a positive atmosphere with positive music — and we have a 'no poop talk' policy here," Marvin said. "No one's allowed to sit in here and grump. If they do, we just turn up the music."

On the same note, Marvin described the "fiber toilet," a cardboard, toilet-like bowl in which winners deposit their answers to the Fiber Trivia Challenge. Winners of this challenge are the participants who have correctly picked the most fibrous foods from a weekly list.

The Fiber Trivia Challenge is only a small part of the comprehensive Weight Loss Challenge, which is now larger than ever with 25 participants. The entries range from tattoo artists to police officers. Marvin described it like a big, functional family, where "you can see people bonding in a really unique way."

The biggest loser from the last challenge, Elon police officer Candace Sappington, exceeded her goal of 15 pounds over the eight-week time period and lost 16.25 inches.

Bill Sandford lost more than 16 pounds, but came in second place since he lost 7 percent of his body weight and Sappington lost more than 9 percent. Third place was Faye Webster, a Burlington grandmother, who lost 5.6 percent of her body weight.

Dawn Kistler, a former LabCorp

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colleague of Marvin's, enjoys her lunch breaks with a meal-replacement smoothie at Burlington Nutrition. Kistler didn't have great success in the last challenge, but she is motivated in the current one.

"I am actually down 8.4

pounds this week," Kistler exclaimed. Exercising, along with the support from other members, has helped Kistler start her new life.

"I believe the Weight Loss Challenge is so successful because we're not telling people things they don't already know — we're reminding them of what the facts are. And people are sharing tips and ideas on how to accomplish goals and are cheering each other on, here and outside the club. It has been amazing to watch it happen. I would call it life-changing," Marvin said.