

Stronger than Ever in 2013

It's a new year, and many employees are looking to lead a healthier life. The Strong4Life team recognizes that many employees aren't sure where to begin. Get inspired by your co-workers who are making positive changes and reaching their wellness goals.

Start with one step

Medical Technologist Cynthia Farrington walked 8,345,000 steps last year. Yes, you read that right, she walked the equivalent of 3,799 miles. Cynthia thinks walking is the perfect exercise because she can do it anywhere, and it's free. When she decided to become healthier, she just started walking. And, she hasn't stopped yet. Because of walking, she has lost 70 pounds and has more energy. She walks in the mornings before work, during breaks, and on her days off, she walks around the city of Duluth. Many days she walks 20 miles, but if she doesn't take at least 10,000 steps, she doesn't feel right. Cynthia added, "It's a great stress reliever, and I've seen so many beautiful sunrises because I was outside walking."



The Marcus Milers running club show off their kicks (l to r: Tawny Tsang, Sarah Shultz, Maria Ly, Michael Valente, Peter Lewis, Susan Shepard and Paul Davis).

Use the buddy system

There's a group of Marcus employees who get together (every Thursday), rain or shine, to do one thing: run. After a casual conversation last summer, Peter Lewis, Research Technology Program Manager, Tracy Cermak, Research Project Coordinator, and Susan Shephard, Manager, Business Operations, decided to start a running club. Although there is a regular group of 7-10 runners, they encourage new runners to come out and tackle the Atlanta hills with them. Their motto is that no one runs alone, and they've even sent out a search party for a runner who had taken a wrong turn. The group has found that this weekly commitment keeps them motivated and makes exercise fun.

Get focused as a family

Gerald Drummond, Patient Accounts Supervisor, found that getting healthier became easier once his wife and 11-year-old son were on board. Together, they participated in the Strong4Life Family Wellness Program where they learned healthy eating strategies. "I realized that to prevent my son from eating junk food, we had to start by purchasing healthier options at the grocery store." Gerald's family replaced chicken wings, fries and Kool-Aid with grilled chicken, yogurt and water. They also became more active as a family. Instead of sitting on the bench watching their son play, Gerald and his wife now walk a two-mile loop at the park. Gerald increased his workouts by participating in Mission: Slimpossible, but he continues his family walks. Gerald has lost 31 pounds, sleeps better and has energy to try new things, like learning to play the saxophone.

Give it your all

If anyone watched Alesha Vample, Respiratory Care Professional and individual winner of Mission: Slimpossible, at a team workout, they knew she was focused on results. "She was a beast about fitness," said Purple team trainer Linda Byams. Alesha lost 35 pounds, 13 inches, decreased her body mass index 6.13 points and moved her blood pressure to healthy levels. No matter how tired she was, she worked out faithfully

and inspired her teammates to do more. She is proof that even after working a 12-hour shift, there is always time for exercise.

Set new goals

Kelly Holden, Technical Trainer, set a goal last year that she would complete the International Distance in the Peachtree City Triathlon, which is a .93-mile swim, 25-mile bike and 6.2 mile run. She had completed a shorter sprint triathlon and decided to push

herself further. "If you had told me five years ago that I could actually accomplish this, I wouldn't have believed you," said Kelly. "I was out of shape and so unhealthy, both physically and mentally. Completing this triathlon really shows me what I am capable of, and I have to thank Strong4Life for that. I don't know that I would have ever attempted such a feat without people who knew what they were doing guiding me." ☐

What's Coming Up for 2013

Strong4Life is expanding some of its successful programs, as well as offering a few new options for employees. On deck for 2013:

Healthy Cooking Demonstrations

Every other month, Strong4Life dieticians will host themed healthy cooking demonstrations. Dieticians will make a meal or snack focused on a relevant theme, and attendees will have a chance to win prizes.

Resilience Seminars

Children's is hosting bi-monthly resilience seminars with topics like "Say No to Negativity, Say Yes to Positivity" and "Time out for Time Management."

Step Challenges

Make sure your pedometer is working, grab a few colleagues and sign up for an individual or group step challenge. Strong4Life will be hosting step challenges every six weeks with different criteria for winning, so that employees can focus on wellness and participate in some friendly competition.

Mission: Slimpossible Returns

Mission: Slimpossible was such a success last year that Children's will be hosting another "Biggest Loser" type competition this fall. The contest is expanding to include an "at home" challenge this year.

Family Wellness

Children's will continue to offer Family Wellness sessions for employees, which provide guidance on how to be positive wellness role models at home, be more physically active as a family, and includes dietary guidelines, advice and tools.

Children's-Sponsored Events

Children's sponsors employee participation teams for many different types of races throughout the year. Here are a few upcoming events, including walks, runs, bicycle races and triathlons, so employees can register and start training early:

Sprint for Cancer, April 27

2013 Peachtree International and SuperSprint Triathlon, May 18

Walk Now for Autism Speaks, May 19

KP Corporate Run/Walk, September

24 Hours of Booty, Oct. 5-6

Spin for Kids, Oct. 19-20

Kids II Strong Legs Run, November

Visit [Strong4Life on Careforce Connection](#) to learn more about what's new with Strong4Life in 2013.