

Motivated to Move

By Kemia Countess Irving, Insurance Verifier, Patient Access, The Park

I remember Nov. 19, 2011, vividly. I was on my way to visit a client and found out that my mother had suddenly passed away from a heart attack. She was my only family left, and I wanted to curl up in a ball and shut out the world. I know it's not what my mother wanted for me, so I started going through the motions of life, but not really living.

My mother was not aware she had a heart condition, but years of high blood pressure ultimately caused her heart attack. Hypertension runs in my family, and my mother struggled with it for years. During the last year of her life, she lost more than 60 pounds and told me, "One day you will find the motivation you need to lose weight."

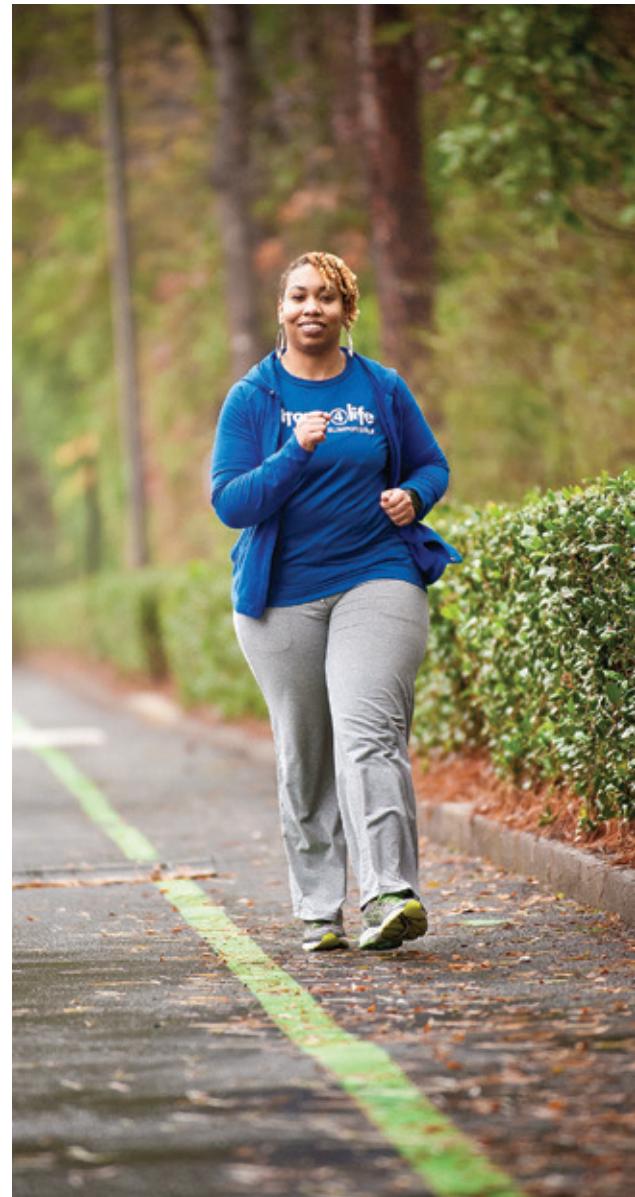
I started at Children's last April and wanted to take advantage of all the wellness opportunities offered, but I didn't know where to start. I applied for Mission: Slimpossible, hours before the deadline and was blessed to be chosen. I thought to myself, "This is it. This is exactly what I need!"

As captain of team Indigo, I took the competition seriously and wanted the best for my teammates. To support my team, I sent out an "INDIGO Chronicles" email every Monday to start the week off right with tips on what helped me the previous week to succeed, including different apps and gadgets I found. Encouraging others kept me focused on the end goal. It was like holding a mirror up, and I found I gained a lot from helping others succeed.

It was tough to stay motivated throughout the entire 12-week competition. My mother's words rang in my head every time I became frustrated or wanted to walk when I needed to run. I could hear her cheering me on. In each of our 30-minute sessions, I gave it my all because I didn't want a little pain to get in my way. I discovered that when you challenge yourself, it will be definitely worth it, and my efforts have been rewarded.

Since the beginning of Mission: Slimpossible, I've lost 34.2 lbs., nine inches from my waist, three inches from my hips and one inch from my neck. My resting heart rate was 72 in August and is now 60.

More importantly, I started to live again. As part of Mission: Slimpossible, I expanded my family to include my new teammates, and I succeeded in starting a journey to a healthier me. I still miss my mother every day, but I know she would be proud of all that I have accomplished. ☚



► Kemia walks the trails at Children's as a way to stay active throughout the day.