

# Slim chance pays off at Obese and Risk Factor Clinic

By Michelle Odrobina  
special writer

IN HER entire life, Sue Crocker has never felt or looked so good. "People who have not seen me in a year have not recognized me. It's very flattering," said the 35-year old Bloomfield Hills resident.

Over a year ago, Crocker initiated a call to the Obese and Risk Factor Clinic at Wayne State University. Despite a six-month waiting list, she persevered and was eventually enrolled in their weight loss and maintenance program. She said she is "very, very happy with it" and her determination to stick to the fasting, exercise routines, and new eating habits.

When Crocker started the program last May, she weighed 258 pounds. She wore a size 24½ dress usually in a dark color. At Easter this year, she showed off her new self at 152 pounds and a red silk dress. She is determined to lose an additional 20 pounds, she said. Another

change has been in her value for herself as someone whose needs matter as much as any one else's.

When she talks, Crocker comes across as an alive, glowing and assertive woman. She said she never thought of herself as a shy, retiring person even when she was overweight. Now Crocker said she considers herself more assertive.

There was always an emphasis on food in her family's home as she was growing up, she said; so she was never thin and experienced a gradual weight increase. She doesn't blame her family. She simply admits the problem was hers.

THE PROGRAM she enrolled in at Wayne State began with a fast which lasted 365 days, she said. The regime consisted of protein mineral supplements she had to take five times a day. Nothing else.

She reported to the clinic's medical team once a week and blood work was done every two weeks. In addition,

Crocker received support from group counseling sessions that are a very important part of the treatment. Members, she said, would call and give each other support.

While on the fast, Crocker said she had some bad days when meal preparation was an overwhelming task. The smell of the food was to tell her husband, Steve, and two sons, Kevin, 11 and Sean, 4, "I can't handle cooking dinner tonight," or "Please do not bring pizza into the house. I prefer you go out and eat it."

Her family, she added, have been 100 percent behind her. They are extremely proud of her, too.

What motivated her to undertake the drastic program? The former dental hygienist said at age 34 she wanted to lose the excess weight before any major health problems could develop. She added that when she adopted a regular exercise routine her blood pressure went down.

"It was wonderful," she said. The closely supervised fasting lasted until Christmas of this year when it was replaced by a maintenance program which she felt she could handle. Now she follows a sensible diet of her own choosing from the Department of Agriculture.

"Taking weight off is the easy part. Changing the bad habits is the hard part." She is held accountable to a 1,500 caloric balanced food plan and records her intake, exercise and calories burned in a "checkbook."

She also checks in with her maintenance group which meets at Wayne's School of Medicine. Carole Rau, nursing administrator and a Farmington Hills resident, oversees the program. She describes Crocker as a "success story."

A WEEK'S exercise for Crocker consists of a 15 mile a day ride on a stationary bike, a work out on a rowing machine, and walking 2-3 miles at least three times a week in Oakland Mall before it opens. If she gets a craving for a Snickers bar, she decides if it's really worth it. If it is, she pays the price with extra pedaling time.

Crocker has re-educated her family's palate and changed their habits for the better. She likes to cook meals, cuts

down on the salt, and substitutes fish and poultry for red meat. If she goes to a fast food restaurant, which she does rarely, she limits herself to one Taco Bell and a diet pop, no burrito. Her food "do's" and "don'ts" include low sugar jam, no butter or margarine, no salt, no lunchmeats, including hot dogs, only light line cheese, no eggs, non-stick pans and no frying of food. Broiling is preferred, she added; and she's also against using food as a "reward."

Using behavioral modification methods, she avoids the kitchen except when preparing meals. She doesn't keep a pot of coffee standing, a sure temptation, she says, to having a cup of coffee with a doubt.

If it's a bad day, she calls one of her support group members. If all else fails, she said, she leaves the home and goes to the library. She said she now knows what triggers her propensity towards eating, feelings like boredom.

CROCKER ENJOYS people and being active. She is a busy member and past president of the Detroit District Dental Auxiliary and is planning the group's state convention next April at the Westin Hotel.

She also goes to luncheons involving her group, but calls ahead to say she

won't be eating. Instead, she orders a cup of tea. That way she enjoys their companionship and does not deprive herself of human interaction. She also acknowledges that her weight loss/maintenance program is not easy.

"It's a battle that I'll have my entire life." She also admits that everyone would like you to succeed, but there's a little bit of resentment from some people if you succeed too well. A fringe benefit was a recent television appearance on Channel 7 Action News in a medical matters segment hosted by Jerry Hoda.

"I don't think people can push others (to lose weight). You have to recognize a problem you have yourself," she advised.

"Never force another person to lose weight," she cautioned family members and friends.

When asked about society's message that "you're never too thin," she demanded to know, "Where is it written that everyone has to look like Victoria Principal? A whole generation of anorexic girls believe that."

Instead, she tells women, "Be comfortable with yourself." Repeating the phrase, she said, psychologically she's miles ahead of where she was a year ago. The contentment shows.

## Losing pounds the fast way

By Michelle Odrobina  
special writer

Dr. Charles P. Lucas, chief of endocrinology at Harper-Grace Hospital, organized the Wayne State University Clinical Nutrition Unit that has helped Sue Crocker become a success story.

Lucas derived his ideas for a local program from weight loss work done by Dr. Victor Verres and Saul Genuth in Cleveland and from others in the

medical field. He said he expanded on their ideas to include maintenance as the main thrust of the unit he started 3½ years ago.

His special interest is in the general field of metabolism and the effects of nutrition and exercise in curing medical problems such as diabetes, hypertension and high blood pressure, he explained.

Besides Lucas, who is an Ann Arbor resident, and Carole Rau, nurse admin-

istrator, the medical staff consists of a nursing and administrative staff, physical and behavior psychologists. Since the unit was founded the medical staff have treated a total of 1,500 patients using a protein-sparing modified fast and behavior modification. Currently, there are 172 patients enrolled in fasting and maintenance groups.

"Just about anyone is eligible," said

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