

Personal attention is part of the solution

BY BARR PEIT TEMPLETON
SPECIAL WRITER

Adopting a healthy-eating and exercise program can be a task most people aren't eager to embrace. Yet if the process included plenty of encouragement, understanding and personal attention most would be anxious to partake.

Providing those basic steps to healthier living is just what personal trainer Laura Waggoner loves to do. Waggoner, of Rochester Hills, has been heavily involved in personal training and nutrition since 1995. She completed an extensive educational program and had a sound home-based client roster before opening her own facility, Personal Fitness Solutions, in Auburn Hills last April.

"The basis of this business is to combine the exercise component and nutrition," Waggoner said. "I develop a program working with the client one-on-one. I design it for them based on their capabilities and the data I have obtained from their assessment."

That "assessment" includes a number of things including an interview, blood pressure screening and test to determine body fat content.

"We provide an extremely personalized and individualized approach," said Waggoner, who sets appointments to fit clients' schedules. "I explain exactly what we are doing and why."

There is no membership fee; the cost is determined by the length of the program. All new enrollees must agree to a minimum of 24 visits and must agree not to cancel more than three of those appointments.

"I can't provide them with an effective solution if they are inconsistent," Waggoner explained. A former sales person in the automotive industry, Waggoner says she has "always been passionate about health and fitness."

Her journey began after she gained plenty of weight following the birth of her son 13 years ago.

"I was extremely overweight and lacked self-confidence and didn't know what to do," Waggoner recalled. "That's when I went to the public library and started looking things up. I became self-taught in what was going to work for me as far as fitness and nutrition."

The experience also showed Waggoner that what may work for her own physical well-being wouldn't necessarily be the key to someone else's struggle. That point became a big factor in the philosophy she later adopted for her business.

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"I understand that my obstacles aren't yours and so each person that comes in for an assessment gets a program designed just for their needs," Waggoner said.

Part of the assessment process for each participant includes a food log. The journal gives Waggoner a true picture of what her client eats over several days. Once it's recorded she sits down with the client and they address the items listed.

"Many people are so busy that they find themselves eating fast food two or three times a day, particularly for lunches," Waggoner said. "I take a look at that and tell them what they can substitute for those meals. And it's not all cottage cheese."

In fact, most of the foods Waggoner offers as alternatives for her clients are what she calls "real foods."

"This is not dieting. We show them that with balance and moderation they can still eat the same foods," Waggoner said.

It's also important for people to realize that her program is not just about being overweight. Waggoner has had clients who exercise like crazy but eat junk food all the time.

"They are so nutritionally deprived that they lack energy, have sleeping problems and have headaches all the time," Waggoner said. "We make recommendations to them so they know where their inade-



Exercise enthusiast: Rochester Hills resident Laura Waggoner opened Personal Fitness Solutions, a health and fitness facility in Auburn Hills, last April. Encouragement and understanding are keys to her fitness approach.

quacies are and we empower them with the tools they need to adopt healthy habits."

Beyond nutrition, Waggoner sees the exercise component as one of the biggest aspects of the Personal Fitness Solution's program. Whether a client is a seasoned workout fan or someone who hasn't even been introduced to the equipment, Waggoner can provide an efficient personal plan to meet their needs. The semi-private gym includes bikes, treadmills and all the traditional workout equipment along with the attention and guidance of Waggoner or one of the other three in-house trainers. Providing a realistic approach to exercise keeps Waggoner's clients comfortable and anxious to return to her gym. Nobody is going to be expected to jump on a treadmill or bike for 90 minutes straight the first time out. Every client has a specific plan.

"Our job is to make them look forward to the next visit," Waggoner said. "And we provide a warm, non-intimidating environment and they are always with their trainer."

Noting that she has built much of her client base via word-of-mouth referrals, Waggoner said she initially worked with only women and children. Once her facility opened she made her services

available to the public and has picked up a percentage of male clients, too.

"Our success rate is incredible," Waggoner said. "Right now I'm not even taking any more new clients on Tuesdays and Thursdays." Despite the popularity of her programs, Waggoner doesn't take all the glory. She'd rather give the nods of praise to her clients.

"So many of them will say, 'I can't believe that you did this for me and I'll say no I didn't, you did it. You showed up every day I just gave you tools to achieve it.' And I feel that they respect the fact that we have the capabilities and expertise to help them out."

Not wishing to limit her expertise to her business, Waggoner serves on the Board of the American Heart Association and Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce.

And earlier this month she was named to Gov. John Engler's Fitness Council.

"I'm so pleased and honored to be named to the Governor's Council," Waggoner said. "My personal goal is to increase public awareness about nutrition and fitness and now all my hard work and efforts have been recognized."

To contact Personal Fitness Solutions, call (248) 340-9399.

HEALTHY LIVING

Healthy Living spotlights Oakland County-related health and medical news and information. To submit information, write: Healthy Living, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Or fax: (248) 644-1314.

HONOREES

West Bloomfield resident Henry Maicki, M.D., and Mary Lou Longeway, R.N., founders of the Family Birthing Center at Providence Hospital, are being honored by the National Association of Childbearing Centers (NACC) with the Professional Achievement Award.

Each year this award is given to professionals who foster the ideals and standards of the birthing-center concept.

"Dr. Maicki and Mary Lou not only foster these ideals but helped to develop and standardize birthing-center practices nationwide," said award nominator Kitty Ertz.

Director of the NACC Consulting Group, Dr. Maicki and Longeway founded the Family Birthing Center at Providence Hospital in 1979 and proceeded to create a national association by joining other centers to forgo

national standards and the Commission for Accreditation. Dr. Maicki has served on the Board of Directors of the NACC for the past five years and Longeway served as chair of the Commission for Accreditation from 1993-96.

"A birth center focuses on a wellness model of maternity care and

fosters family knowledge and control of the birth," Maicki said. "It is the model of care, and not the name, that is the real difference." Providence Hospital's Family Birthing Center is the only nationally accredited, free-standing birth center in Michigan. It offers low-risk mothers an alternative to home birth or to a traditional hospital setting.

Families and staff approach the birthing process as a normal, natural experience not routinely requiring medical intervention. Families including siblings may participate in the birth in a home-like setting.

The care is rounded out with an examination for the baby, one-to-one patient teaching, follow-up calls and a home visit by a Family Birthing Center nurse.

Should it be necessary or preferred, Providence offers the choice of medical child birth at its two New Life Centers in Providence Hospital (Southfield) and Providence Medical Center-Providence Park (Novi).

PERSONNEL
Robert W. Amussen has been appointed vice president of strategic planning and provider network working for Providence Hospital and Medical Centers.

Holidays can mean healthy choices

Well it's that time of year again.

Many people are sitting in front of their TV sets watching football and sipping eggnog while a rich, hearty Thanksgiving feast is being prepared.

It seems like food and the holidays are inseparable. Statistics indicate that people gain an average of 5-7 pounds over the Thanksgiving and New Year's Day!

And I know that for many of us it's not hard to gain that 5-7 pounds on "turkey day" alone! With so many tempt-

ing sweets and traditional recipes loaded with fat and calories, what's a health-conscious person to do? You need to make healthy substitutions.

Don't worry, "healthy substitutions" do not mean substituting steamed broccoli for chocolate cheesecake or a salad for stuffing. You don't have to deny yourself every indulgence. But you should cut back some fat grams in your cooking.

Actually, it's easy to cook using healthier options. I have some fabulous secrets for cooking your Thanksgiving meal that may surprise you! And I promise that the taste won't be compromised a bit.

Here are some delicious

alternatives for your holiday fiesta, straight from my kitchen to yours.

When: basting the turkey; Instead of: butter or margarine; **Substitute:** cooking spray or low-sodium chicken broth or diet ginger ale.

When making: gravy for the turkey; **Instead of:** pan drippings; **Substitute:** orange sauce, chicken broth, orange zest, bell peppers, leeks and seasonings.

When making: mashed potatoes; **Instead of:** mixing in butter and cream; **Substitute:** roasted garlic, chives, skim milk and herbs.

When making: leftover turkey; **Instead of:** gravy; **Substitute:** put pan drippings in refrigerator overnight, skim off fat, put remaining juice on.

When making: stuffing; **Instead of:** butter or margarine; **Substitute:** equal amounts of applesauce.

When making: sweet potatoes; **Instead of:** butter and marshmallows; **Substitute:** apple or orange juice, low-fat pancake syrup, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg.

When making: vegetables; **Instead of:** cheese sauce; **Substitute:** low-fat Hollandaise sauce, egg substitute, margarine, lemon juice, Dijon mustard and ground red pepper.

When making: salads; **Instead of:** oily dressing; **Substitute:** balsamic vinegar and spice mix.

When making: bread or rolls; **Instead of:** butter; **Substitute:** spread roasted garlic.

When making: dips for veg-

etables or crackers; **Instead of:** cream cheese; **Substitute:** strain yogurt over cheesecloth overnight. Yogurt will have the consistency of cream cheese or use fat-free sour cream.

When making: cheesecake; **Instead of:** cream cheese; **Substitute:** mix low-fat ricotta cheese and low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt. If using fat-free cream cheese for baking, you must use blocked not tub cream cheese.

When making: breads, muffins or cakes; **Instead of:** oil or shortening; **Substitute:** applesauce — equal parts for all or a portion of what the recipe calls for (may need to adjust flour amounts) or 50 percent buttermilk and 50 percent applesauce.

When making: chocolate Christmas cookies or brownies; **Instead of:** oil or shortening; **Substitute:** use pureed prunes for a portion of the oil.

When making: pie crust; **Instead of:** flour and butter; **Substitute:** graham crackers and either apple, white grape or orange juice to moisten.

When making: pie filling; **Instead of:** rich chocolate; **Substitute:** sugar-free pudding, skim milk.

When making: drinks with alcohol; **Instead of:** wine of champagne; **Substitute:** mix 1/2 cup of seltzer or juice with 1/2 cup of wine and lemon juice to taste.

(Low-fat or non-fat substitutes can always be substituted for the full-fat option!)

Give these a try. You'll love the results on your waistline

and your taste buds will thank you, too!

With an abundance of food on many tables, the Thanksgiving holiday encourages overeating. That's why it's so important to think about these options ahead of time.

On top of making healthy substitutions in your cooking, I suggest you plan a few family activities for the day such as a brisk walk, ice skating, sledding or exercising together to a great music video. Then let yourself enjoy your main meal more by choosing lower-calorie foods for breakfast and lunch.

The bottom line, the holidays are centered around food. But that doesn't mean that is your sole responsibility, too. Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks and to share warm memories with family and friends. So make your company and conversation the center of attention instead of the cream cheese and cookies. After all, do you want to become a statistic so early in the holiday season?

I read every one of your letters and I love your comments. Please keep writing me with any questions, inspirational stories or suggestions for upcoming articles to "Talk to the Mirror." Weight Watchers Corporate Communications, P.O. Box 9072, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334-2974 or fax: (248) 553-7106.

(Florine Mark is also an appointee to the Governor's Council of Physical Fitness and the Michigan Fitness Foundation.)



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