



Success Stories

Healthy Living Matters. Prevention Works.

John's Success Story

VETERAN JOHN CRAGO DISCUSSES HOW MOVE! HELPED HIM END HIS LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH 'JUMBO JOHN' AND LOSE 142 POUNDS

"Four days after my discharge from the U.S. Navy, I enrolled in college...and shortly thereafter, I met Jumbo John, aka 'JJ.' He was friendly and agreeable, and we became virtually inseparable. He introduced me to the college diet—hot dogs and beer—and as a result, I graduated a 'bigger' man. JJ and I started a friendship that would last for decades.



After graduation, I went to work, got married, and raised a family. My relationship with JJ continued, and would've gone unnoticed if not for the high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes I developed from carrying the excess weight. But because these problems could be managed with medication, our relationship continued.

Sadly, after 42 years, my wife passed away, leaving me alone with JJ. Without her healthy cooking, I discovered that JJ filled the void in my life. Our relationship grew, and within a few years, I developed untreatable joint pain.

I finally realized that my relationship with JJ had been wrong, all the way from the start.

But ending a 55-year relationship wasn't so easy. I'd been obese for 30 years, and tried everything—but the weight I lost always returned quickly. My son wanted me to split from JJ surgically, but that seemed too severe. A book on gastric-bypass surgery and an interview with a happy patient didn't make me want to jump on the operating table. In fact, learning that the surgery required a strict lifetime diet and came with a multiplicity of side effects scared the hell out of me! The only thing I knew for sure was that my relationship with JJ had to end, quickly.

Then the 'hero rode in on a white horse'—but in my case, the hero came with a swimming pool! To treat severe back pain, I was doing aquatic therapy at the Battle Creek (MI) VAMC with kinesiotherapist Ann Greiner. She asked if I'd be interested in joining MOVE!, then enthusiastically explained it to me. I had nothing to lose, so I accepted her offer.

When I entered MOVE! , I weighed 337 pounds and suffered from several weight-related conditions. I started losing weight immediately, and got an energy increase that allowed me to start exercising. The better I felt, the more incentive I had to lose weight—it was like having my own cheerleader. In 50 weeks, I met my original goal of 220 pounds, and I continued to lose weight until I finally hit 195 pounds.



“MOVE! really works...The only thing a Veteran needs to bring to the program is the motivation to put into practice the advice offered.”

– John Crago

Now, over 2 ½ years later, JJ is gone forever, and with him, 142 pounds, high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes...and all of the required medications. My neck size has gone from 20 to 15 inches; my waist size from 54 to 38 inches. Losing weight has been wonderful, but keeping it off has been the real blessing. I now exercise daily and carefully control my calories. I've been able to hold my weight for 3 years with the help of the MOVE! Maintenance Program. I'm enjoying doing things I couldn't do before, and weight loss has given me a new lease on life!

Thankfully, I still have my original stomach, and my only food restrictions are self-imposed. Except for some permanent damage from my relationship with JJ, I am in excellent health.

Looking back, I have only two regrets: that I ever started a relationship with Jumbo John in the first place, and that I didn't meet Ann Greiner and learn about the MOVE! Program sooner!”