

HEALTH BEFORE BEAUTY

By Amy Carst
The Next Page

Losing weight remains one of life's hardest challenges for millions of Americans - and that fact is unlikely to ever change. We live in a society that PLACES a great deal of importance on physical appearance. That may be why we all want to be thin and beautiful, but it's certainly not the *best* reason. Being healthy should be the driving force behind our quest for weight loss. Unfortunately, many of us have lost sight of that goal and replaced it with the goal of looking good in a bathing suit. There is nothing wrong with wanting to be attractive and healthy looking, as long as we make sure to actually *be* healthy in the process.

A woman (or man, for that matter) decides to have plastic surgery because she believes it will improve some aspect of her appearance. But even though some people might put this in the same category as buying COUTURE clothing or spending the day at a spa, we can't forget that surgery is, in fact, surgery. Now, while some procedures performed by a plastic surgeon are less invasive, such as botox, there is no denying the fact that undergoing surgery is a major choice. And any major choice requires preparation. It should be the job of all plastic surgeons to make certain that each of their patients are healthy enough to endure surgery. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case.

The doctors at Stratis Gayner Plastic Surgery have made it a priority to emphasize health before surgery with their patients. A perfect example of their commitment to this rule is in their use of Opti Fast with clients who are overweight. Part of being healthy enough for surgery has to do with maintaining a healthy weight. For patients that come to Stratis Gayner for liposuction, breast augmentation, or other surgical procedures, the doctors require them to be a healthy weight - and if this is not the case, they help them reach that goal. Weight loss is a hard thing to achieve - and often

we find that it's easier when there is an incentive for reaching our goals. Stratis Gayner realizes this, and has decided to make this work in the favor of their patients. In order to achieve their weight loss goals, the doctors provide their patients with the Opti Fast system. Once they have reached a healthy weight, the doctors will perform the requested procedure AND they will discount the procedure for having reached the goal weight. This incentive helps patients reach a healthy weight, reduces the cost of certain procedures, and - most importantly - ensures that the patient is healthy enough to undergo surgery. This is a wonderful program, and I think it casts a more positive light on plastic surgery as a whole. It is sometimes very disconcerting, especially with

young daughters, to live in a society that puts so much pressure on women to look perfect. Unfortunately, I don't think that is ever going to change. However, what we can hopefully change over time is the fact that health has taken a back seat to beauty and perfection. I believe that Dr.'s Stratis and Gayner are doing their part to change this value system. We can strive to be beautiful as long as we consider our health before anything else. A healthy mentality will help to ensure a long, healthy life. And a healthy woman is always a beautiful woman. ☺

For more information, you can visit their website at www.FocusedForYou.com, or give them a call at (717)728-1700.



AN UNEXPECTED OUTCOME

By Denise Gillin

A rescued greyhound, one awesome charitable organization, and three autistic brothers

Animals are my passion - horses first, dogs always; anything furry and four-legged. That's where the rescued greyhound, Riplee, comes into the story. Finding a way to spend quality time with this noble beast with the severe under bite; enter Keystone Pet Enhanced Therapy Services (KPETS), the best bunch of volunteers ever. After another KPETS volunteer shared her story of visiting three autistic siblings, one thing led to another, and the boys join the story.

Once a month, Riplee and I visited the brothers to offer animal-assisted pet therapy. The boys loved giving treats and sharing walks with a dog. Riplee enjoyed a car ride and attention. The children experienced the human-animal bond; Riplee and I shared an outing; everyone was happy. It was that simple.

Then the September KPETS calendar photo shoot occurred. I heard the boy's mother and the photographer talking about autism. I learned a lot. The mother talked about the boys' behavior before KPETS started visiting and changes in behavior now that animals are a part of their lives. The youngest brother couldn't even tolerate flies. Now he will pet Riplee and toss a treat to him! One boy always makes sure there is water for Riplee in case he gets thirsty. That same child has taken Riplee on a long walk, never relinquishing the leash. The

oldest brother can recite as many greyhound facts - maybe more - than I can at this point. And, all three boys participated in the local holiday parade.

Hearing this made me decide to learn more about autism. The boys' mother gave me a book to read about the benefits of animal interventions. I learned that autism is a spectrum of disorders - a complex disability. Symptoms differ from individual to individual. Presentations range from someone profoundly affected to someone with mild symptoms. I learned about splinter skills and the triad of symptoms: problems

with communication skills, impairment in social interactions, and the presence of restrictive / repetitive behaviors. I learned that specific symptoms may change over a lifespan and living with autism is a struggle to manage sensory integration difficulties and behavior impulses. Most importantly, I learned that dogs provide social and emotional support. They can

keep autistic children from eloping, or warn parents of an escape or injurious behavior. Dogs facilitate sensory integration and calming. Dogs let kids be kids.

Pursuing my passion produced an even better outcome than anticipated. Riplee and I shared our passion with someone who appreciated it in an unexpected way. Having Riplee as the focus makes it easier for these boys to socially interact. They have shared great stories about school, art projects, visits with relatives, trips they have taken, and NASCAR trivia with Riplee and me. They share in my passion, and my passion helps them to shine.

My suspicion is that Riplee knew what he was doing all along. ☺

I LEARNED
THAT AUTISM
IS A SPECTRUM
OF DISORDERS
- A COMPLEX
DISABILITY.

For Your Health



Not Your Typical Scavenger Hunt

By Jill Davies, RN

Greetings to all at The Next Page, and a happy spring to all. Spring is that time of year when you get out of the house, enjoy the fresh air and have some outdoor fun. You are also getting your kids into the spring time groove, with lots of activities - baseball, soccer, biking, and a little tic-tac-toe on the side walk. Spring is also a time for those memorable 'scavenger hunts' for innocent, imagined treasure. You remember when... those flower petals, that robin egg, those funny shaped rocks. Such innocence and joy when your child comes home to show off that special treasure.

Unfortunately there is another kind of "scavenger hunt" these days. Our teens, and even younger children, know about them - although you probably don't.

Keep these thoughts in your head while I explain... *Prescription Medications, Scavenger Hunts and Trail Mix.*

OK, so you are wondering what prescription medications have to do with the other two? I'm going to tell you, but first let me warm you up with some facts.

Tom Hendrick, a founding member for The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, tells of a changing landscape among adolescent drug abuse. Remember those adolescent days of being invincible, risk taking, and feeling that aura of exploration that somehow protects you. Keep it in mind and remember how you felt then.

The good news - there has been an actual decline of illicit street drug use of about 40%, and young teen alcohol abuse of about 30%. The bad news - a sky rocketing rise of prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drug abuse by teenagers. I am not talking about 18 and 19 year olds. I am talking about 13, 14, 15, 16 year olds. The Partnership for a Drug-Free America reports that an alarming 1 in 5 teenagers have tried prescription drugs. Where do they get their hands on prescription medications? Well, it's pretty obvious...very easily from your medicine cabinet - your grandmother's, uncle's, or a friend's. I got firsthand knowledge of this behavior as I listened to the 13 to 18 year olds I work with who

are in drug or alcohol recovery. I listened with part shock and part amazement as kids told me how much easier it is to get high by stealing medications right from their homes than it is to get pot or alcohol. The hairs stood up on the back of my neck when one 13 year old told me how he and his friends used to get their 6 and 7 year old siblings to steal some of "mommy's pain medication." I'm not talking about street smart, troubled teen types. Many of these kids come from perfectly stable families. They often have good grades, and are good at sports. You know, middle class, upper middle class family situations.

Some of the medications that children and teens are stealing are common OTC's, like cold relievers. And some are more complex, such as pain meds, tranquilizers, stimulants, blood pressure and heart meds, anti-depressants, and anti-psychotics.

A scavenger hunt is when kids steal a few pills, not knowing what they are or what they are for, and take them to a party - a scavenger hunt party. Now imagine 12 other kids who have done the same. They all meet for a seemingly innocent party, and a big, popcorn type bowl appears. The kids then throw their 'treasures' into the bowl, mix them up into what is called "TRAIL MIX," and the bowl goes around the room, allowing the kids to pick which pill they want to take - obviously having no idea of what they have selected. Adolescent bodies react differently to medications than adult bodies do. Part of the problem is the notion that because a doctor wrote a prescription, it must be safe... well, as you can imagine - it's not. Serious side effects and deaths have occurred. I encourage you to go to <http://www.drugfree.org/NotInMyHouse/culture> to learn even more. ☺

JOIN THE TEAM FOR A CURE - THE ARTHRITIS WALK



Let's move together to fight for a cure this spring by participating in the Arthritis Foundation Central PA Chapter's 2009 Arthritis Walk on Saturday, May 2nd. The Arthritis Walk is a non-competitive, 5-kilometer (3.1-mile), or 1-mile course with varying distance options to accommodate all levels of fitness. The event also features several fun festivities and free health information.

Individual walkers, teams, and even dogs are encouraged to walk in honor of a loved one with arthritis, while men, women, and children living with arthritis lead the way, wearing special blue honoree hats to signify their action in taking control of their condition. Individuals who raise \$100 or more will receive a t-shirt and all dogs get a bandana.

Arthritis affects more people than you might imagine. There are 46 million men and women in the United States with doctor-diagnosed arthritis. That's 46 million reasons to care. That's 46 million reasons to walk. Children are also affected. Nationwide, there are over 300,000 children who suffer from a form of juvenile arthritis, 11,500 of which live in Pennsylvania.

Funds raised from the Arthritis Walk support hundreds of programs to help people prevent and control arthritis. It also funds promising arthritis research that is critical to finding new therapies, treatments, and eventually a cure for arthritis.

The Arthritis Foundation is the only nationwide, nonprofit health organization helping people take greater control of arthritis by leading efforts to prevent, control, and cure arthritis and related diseases. The Arthritis Foundation also provides a large number of community-based services located nationwide to make life with arthritis easier and less painful.

By joining our 2009 Arthritis Walks, you become a part of the *Let's Move Together* movement, a nationwide movement led by the Arthritis Foundation

that encourages people to move every day to prevent or treat arthritis. Make a difference in the lives of those with arthritis by joining the movement and signing up to participate in one of our five Arthritis Walks throughout Central PA on **May 2nd** in the following cities:

ALTOONA - ALTOONA CURVE STADIUM
BOALSBURG - PENNSYLVANIA MILITARY MUSEUM
HARRISBURG - HARRISBURG AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
LANCASTER - LONGS PARK
SUNBURY - SHIKELLAMY STATE PARK

REGISTRATION FOR THE ARTHRITIS WALK BEGINS AT 8:30AM WITH THE EVENT TAKING PLACE AT 10AM. TO REGISTER ONLINE FOR THE LET'S MOVE TOGETHER MOVEMENT OR THE ARTHRITIS WALK VISIT: WWW.LETSMOVETOGETHER.ORG OR CONTACT OUR CHAPTER OFFICE AT 800-776-0746 OR INFO.CPA@ARTHRITIS.ORG. TOGETHER WE CAN CHANGE LIVES AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ON MAY 2ND.

The Arthritis Foundation is the largest private, not-for-profit contributor to arthritis research in the world, funding more than \$400 million in research grants since 1948. The Foundation helps individuals take control of arthritis by providing public health education; pursuing public policy and legislation; and conducting evidence-based programs to improve the quality of life for those living with arthritis. The Central PA Chapter serves people in pain in 28 Central PA Counties.