



### Jayne Brown Garden Delay

*We would like to thank those who donated a brick to the Jayne Brown Garden. Due to the recent drought, plantings and brick installation will not begin until the spring to ensure the new trees and flowers receive proper irrigation. Thank you for your patience and support of the Jayne Brown Garden.*

## Experiencing Success in Someone Else's Shoes

Dear Participants,

As we enter a new year, each of us will continue down our own individual paths toward weight loss success. While each of our paths may greet us with various obstacles, it is important to remember we are all traveling toward the same goal and can learn from those who have found great success along the way.

In this issue, we will share lessons from other Structure House participants who have achieved weight loss success. One participant, Ina Hirsch, will discuss the obstacles she faced and the experiences that helped her through her journey toward a better quality of life.

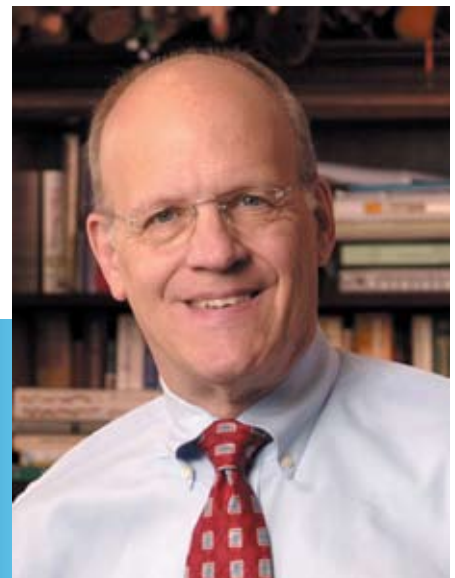
We understand that following the path on your own can be difficult without proper navigation. To help guide you through your journey, Lee Kern will share findings from an in-depth study conducted by the Structure House research team to evaluate the weight loss strategies of a group of highly successful weight losers. The 29 Structure House participants who were evaluated in this study will share their tips on how to lose weight and keep it off for good.

It is important to remember that while we all have our own unique path to follow, the staff at Structure House will always be here to offer the guidance and support you need to achieve your weight loss goals. We are excited to inform you that The Structure House Weight Loss Plan is available in a paperback version. For those of you who haven't read the book yet, I hope you will. The book reviews the lessons you learned at Structure House and provides the tools you need to maintain your weight loss goals.

We hope this issue will help guide and support you through your weight loss journey into the New Year. Congratulations on the success you have achieved and the inspiration your success has provided to others as they continue the course toward a healthier lifestyle.

Sincerely,

Gerard J. Musante, Ph.D.



Dr. Musante

## *Finding Yourself*

### *How one participant found weight loss success and a new love for life*

Ina Hirsh felt like she'd lost herself. The now 71-year-old retired teacher from Louisville, KY was thin all her life, but diagnosed with hypothyroidism very late in life, resulting in a 90-lb. weight gain and drastic change in her body and mind. People Ina knew for 20, even 30 years started treating her differently and made thoughtless comments about her weight.

Ina was an itinerant teacher for the deaf and hard of hearing and met lots of new people everyday. She noticed that as she gained weight, people were less enthusiastic about meeting her. Ina believed those who only knew of her distinguished, professional reputation were disappointed at her appearance. On top of that, Ina was physically unable to interact with her students. She could no longer sit on the floor to play games with them. Her weight also affected her sleep and was thought to cause fainting, which multiple doctors labeled as a seizure disorder or daytime sleep apnea.

"I couldn't even perform everyday tasks, like driving, because I was constantly afraid of fainting," Ina remembers. "My former good quality of life was non-existent."

Realizing she was no longer the active, attractive and confident person she once

was, Ina knew it was time to take action. She began researching weight-loss programs and after calling a long list of referrals, Ina was told about Structure House. Ina spoke with the staff and spent time reviewing literature and researching the facility online. Impressed with the credentials of the treatment staff, Ina decided that Structure House would be the best place to begin a positive lifestyle change.

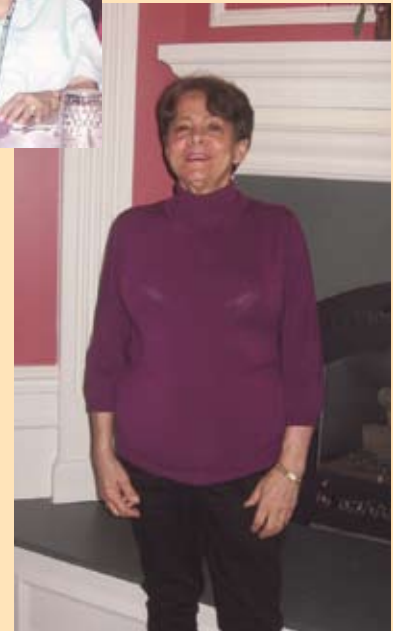
Since arriving in June 2007, Ina's successes at Structure House have been vast. After Structure House correctly diagnosed her fainting as an oxygen shortage, Ina was able to lose 55 pounds, reduce her daily medications and improve her stamina. She can now do volunteer community work and can easily exercise each day. Most importantly, Ina has a new lease on life.

"I'm no longer the person that walked through those doors in June," said Ina.

"Structure House provides all the ingredients for success at your fingertips. The support, acceptance and companionship I have found with the staff and other participants is overwhelming and has permanently changed my life for the better."



*Ina, before*



*Ina, after*

Ina has lost more than 55 lbs. and hopes to lose 30 more before leaving Structure House. Dreading the idea of leaving the place she has called home for nearly eight months, Ina decided it was time to make another life change. Last month, Ina purchased a second home in Durham so she can always be close to the people and the place that helped her take her life back.

### *Reach those New Year's goals by attending one of our Successful Participant Weeks!*

The Successful Participant Week program is a weeklong set of classes that recognizes and honors participants who are achieving their weight loss goals. All eligible participants are encouraged to enroll in one of our Successful Participant Weeks. Additionally, participants who have lost 10% or more of their starting weight and are on campus during the program can enter a drawing to receive \$250 off his or her next visit.

Congratulations to Virginia Thorpe of Barnegat, NJ who won \$250 off her next visit to Structure House. We look forward to seeing you soon, Virginia!

The 2008 Successful Participant Weeks will begin on April 28, July 28 and October 27.

### *Graduate Week Winner!*

We are pleased to announce Nancy Kader of Vienna, VA is the winner of a complimentary one-week Graduate Visit at Structure House.

Each quarter, the names of all participants who return their follow-up Participants Report are entered into a drawing for a complimentary one-week Graduate Visit. We appreciate your participation in our ongoing research designed to track the health changes of our participants.

Congratulations, Nancy! We look forward to seeing you back at Structure House soon.



# Weight Loss Tips from All-Star Losers

By Lee Kern, L.C.S.W.

At NAASO, The Obesity Society's Annual Scientific Meeting, the Structure House research team presented findings from an in-depth study that evaluated a group of highly successful weight losers. "The Skinny on Super Losers" study probed the weight loss strategies of 29 Structure House participants. Our findings concluded that "masters" of weight control have a lot to teach us about how to lose weight and keep it off. Study participants ranged from a weight loss of 11% - 51% of their starting weight, with the average participant having lost from a weight of 271 down to 205 pounds over a 3-year period. Below is a highlight of tips from the super losers.

**Simplify eating.** 97% of participants ate three meals a day, and most had no snacks. They also tended to narrow the scope of meal choices. "My breakfast is the same every day, and my lunch seems to repeat as well. Dinner varies but is always planned out," noted one of the participants. Regular meals and simplified choices tame the battle of urges and cravings.

**Plan ahead and control the surroundings.** Meals are more controlled when planned a day or two ahead of time, especially for grocery shopping and social outings. Eliminate surprises by having a plan and controlling your eating environment: eat at regular times, at a table with no TV, and with tempting foods out of sight.

**Be mindful of healthy diet choices.** Diets shifted toward more filling but lower calorie items: more fiber, fruit and vegetables, less fast food and buffets. Food should be seen more as fuel, not love, reward, or numbing.

**Get active.** 89% of participants did some form of cardio exercise (walk,

treadmill, elliptical) and 59% did strength training (free weights, weight machines). One all-star commented, "Find a physical activity you enjoy, enlist the help of a personal trainer, and vary your workout." Exercise burns calories, tones the body, and boosts the metabolism.

**Change the lifestyle.** Structure House views lifestyle change as necessary to building the platform for success. Participants urge, "don't go it alone" - elicit help from friends and family, attend a support group, talk to a therapist or nutritionist. You must be willing to



change potentially risky food routines; if eating out or social events are triggers then reduce their frequency. One participant noted, "I keep busy at social events and avoid temptation by asking my husband to fix my plate at the buffet line."

**Monitor yourself.** Studies suggest we eat twice as much as we think we are eating. Success requires honesty and self-awareness through tools that give you



Lee Kern

feedback and track your activity. Participants wrote down everything they ate in a food diary, weighed themselves regularly, and maintained exercise logs and graphs of weight trends.

**Keep motivated.** Surprisingly, the desire to improve appearance was not always the top motivator. Participants were driven by the wish to be healthier and enhance daily functioning, have more energy, shop for smaller clothes, and improve social confidence. It is helpful to pay attention to small signs of progress like improved blood pressure and body measurements, or indicators of better fitness. For some, changing on the inside, such as gaining a greater sense of control, was more important than changing on the outside. "The biggest relief I've had is finding a sense of peace and control about food. I feel like I got a monkey off my back," noted one participant.

**Maintain a positive attitude.** Participants stressed that having the right mindset was critical to success. Even if it is uncomfortable, tell yourself you are worth it and that you have to put yourself first. Accept that your plans won't go perfectly and if you make a mistake, forgive yourself and get back on track. Have the courage to look within and address your inner motivations for eating. Lastly, remember that long-term weight loss is not just a diet; it is the process and result of living life in incrementally healthier ways.

## Structure House in the News...

Structure House was featured in the following news outlets this winter:

- **Family Circle** - Dr. Musante's tips in the January article, "Outwit Your Appetite."
- **USA Today** - Dr. Musante quoted on study about reaching your ideal weight on January 6.
- **Triangle Business Journal** - Dr. Musante quoted in Lessons Learned feature on December 14.
- **The Hog Blog Health Journal** - A reader summarizes each chapter of The Structure House Weight Loss Plan on this blog started on December 10.
- **CNN.com** - The *Health* magazine article, "Sneaky Little Slim-Down Tricks," including quotes from Shula Lazarus ran on CNN.com on November 18.
- **Shincho 45** - The Japanese magazine included Structure House in an article about Durham as the Diet Capital in the November issue.
- Dr. Musante was interviewed as a guest for radio shows on **KXYL-FM** in Texas and **WBTC-AM** in Ohio on December 27.

