

Biggest Losers 3 produces numerous winners

By **DONNA BARRETT THE CULTURAL CENTER OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY**



Figure 1- Congratulations team TNT +Me - Winners of the Biggest Loser 3 Challenge

Two thousand four hundred and fifteen pounds — 2,415! That is how much weight was lost during the Biggest Losers 3 Competition. Over one ton, and so many lives have been changed to include a healthier lifestyle.

To celebrate their success, a ceremony was held for the contestants in the banquet facility of the Cultural Center on September 15. Many contestants showed off their new, healthier figures as music played and wine, cheese and fruit were served. Pictures from the beginning of the challenge were hung to show everyone how much they've changed.

The President of the Cultural Center of Charlotte County, Rufus Lazzell, opened the ceremony by discussing his childhood weight struggle.

"My mother offered me a dollar for every pound I lost," he said. As he lost the weight, it was just the incentive he needed to live a healthy and active life.

"I never put the weight back on," Lazzell explained. "It wasn't about the money, but to make me realize that I needed to make better choices."

Sharon Mays, RD, LD, coordinator for Charlotte County Health Department, was amazed at how much healthier Charlotte County is becoming.

"I congratulate you all on your healthier lifestyle," Mays said. "Remember that this competition ended, but don't change what has been working for you. Keep on making healthy choices."

And now — the awards

The award for the highest percentage of weight loss during the competition went to Tom Callan. In the course of 12 weeks, Tom lost 32.2 percent of his starting body weight. Tom still can't believe that the man in the "before" photo was him and said, "I feel like a new man!"

Persistence does count, and New Hope Healing Center sponsored an award for the most persistent contestant in The Biggest Losers 3. There were 18 contestants that never missed a weigh-in. Each of these people, no matter how their team was doing, came each week.

Persistence counts. That's what this competition is all about. It's not just about winning money, or losing weight. It's about pushing through the obstacles that life puts in your way and maintaining a healthier lifestyle.

We asked each player to draw a card from a deck of cards. Gail Ethridge picked the high card, a King and won a half-hour

massage from New Hope Healing Center. Accolades went out to the top five teams: Beauties & the Beast, Big & Sexy, No Pain No Gain, Plus Size Divas and TNT+Me. The top three teams were then called to the front.

The second place and third place teams were so close — there was a mere .02 percent difference in their weight loss. The third place team, Beauties and the Beast (Adrienne York, Sheila Ulp, Jason York, and Kimberly Davis), lost 14.35 percent.

The second place team, Big & Sexy (Nicole Rescigno, Debby Centanne, Kelli Morris, Sheila Jones), had a total weight loss percentage of 14.37 percent. They were awarded a free month at the Fitness Salon at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County as a tool to help them continue their healthy journey.

The winners of The Biggest Losers 3 Competition were TNT+Me who lost a whopping 21.2 percent. Team members Tom Callan, Tee Callan, Nicholas Callan, and Melissa Ellison were introduced a few weeks back, and took the lead early on.

“This contest wasn’t about winning” Tee said. “This was about giving me my life back.” TNT+Me lost a total of 210 pounds, and Ellison was shocked to hear the final number, “210 pounds! That is like losing a person — that is like losing me,” she laughed.

During the three seasons of the Biggest Loser, over 500 people have taken the challenge, almost 3-tons (6,000 pounds) of weight has been lost, and many lives have changed forever. If you are interested in finding out about The Biggest Losers 4 Competition, please visit www.theculturalcenter.com for information. The next contest starts January 4, 2010.

If you desire to start before then, join the “200 Mile Marathon” contest. Participants will be racing to see who will be the first to reach the 200 mile mark on the treadmills at the Cultural Center. The winner will be awarded half of the money raised. Call 941-625-4175 ext. 263, or visit the Web site for more details.

The Cultural Center of Charlotte County would like to thank our community partners for this event: Port Charlotte Natural Foods (who donated a gift bag of healthy products for the weekly winner as well as to the season winners), AllPro Home Health (who hosted the Walk-N-Talk and gave weekly prizes), New Hope Natural Healing Center (who donated two 1/2 massages), and the continued partnership of the Charlotte County Health Department in making Charlotte County a healthier place.

The Cultural Center of Charlotte County is a non-profit organization that caters to the needs of the community. To find out about how you can partner with the Cultural Center and encourage Charlotte County to become healthier, please call 941-625-4175 ext. 253.

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Photo provided After 12 weeks the Biggest Losers 3 contest is over, and the contestants weigh in 2,415 pounds lighter — the winning is team TNT+Me.

