

Biggest Loser

By DONNA BARRETT CULTURAL CENTER OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY

The Biggest Losers challenge started as a fun way to help give our healthy living has just begun community an incentive to lose weight. This season is coming to an end, but

The first season, about 50 people participated in the challenge. Weighing in weekly for a chance to win money became the main goal for many.

During that first contest we learned what we could do at the Cultural Center to help the community with the weight loss struggle. We found partnering with other organizations allowed us to give the contestants additional tools and advice for their journey.

Now, as this season ends, there have been over 700 participants in the Biggest Losers Challenge at The Cultural Center. We are excited to announce that this season has been record breaking!

During this Challenge the participants lost the most weight ever in one season — over 3,000 pounds! That means that Charlotte County is more than 1.5 tons lighter than we were a mere 12 weeks ago.

There is no magic in this contest. No diet pills, no hidden camera tricks. The goal of this competition is to arm you with tools and information that help you to make better choices. The opportunity to win prize money is the proverbial carrot-on-a-stick — simple as that!

This contest is about helping you find the strength to make the best choices for you. You want to lose weight — we share with you the proper way to do so, while implementing a plan of tangible rewards. If you don't learn how to lose weight properly, the weight will come back to haunt you.

The question to contestants, now that your final weigh in is over, how many have binged at a buffet? How many have already skipped a visit to the gym, or made poor food choices now that it “doesn't really matter”? It never ceases to matter! You have been given the tools to make the decision to be healthy- now stay healthy and keep the weight off.

Jeff Louda, the certified fitness trainer at the Cultural Center is available for everyone after the contest to help guide you back toward your peak, wherein you were motivated, active, and making great choices. If you have been a contestant, and begin to sway from your positive results, please come by and see Jeff, so he can help you get back on track.

The Charlotte County Health Department has been a fantastic partner for this competition. Sharon Mays, MA, RD, LD, Coordinator for WIC, Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle Programs has been available to meet with contestants, offering tips and advice on how to be successful within the challenge. The Health Department promotes healthy living, and they will continue to be a source of good information as you continue your transformation.

Other partners, such as Port Charlotte Natural Foods, A Select Salon, Starbucks in the Port Charlotte Town Center Mall and Perkins understand how important weight loss is, and want you to know they are always available to help you continue on the path of success.

As we plan Season 5 of the Biggest Losers, we have added one more incentive: anyone who signs up before April 15 will receive a “Two Pound Pass” to be used during Season 5. (Anyone who has seen the TV show with the same concept knows how important those passes are!)

The next competition starts June 20. Prepare to change your life!

Be sure to pick up Feeling Fit in next Sunday's paper to find out the winner for The Biggest Losers — Season 4!

Donna Barrett is the Marketing Manager at the Cultural Center of Charlotte County, she can be reached by calling 941-625-4175 ext. 253 or send an e-mail to marketing@theculturalcenter.com.