

STEP BY STEP

Statewide tour focuses on healthy living

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

BB&T employee Diana Tuffin pedaled hard. She leaned forward on the stationary bike, her face a study in concentration.

"I can do this, I can do this," she chanted, ignoring the camera in her face, "I can do this."

Moments later, Tuffin had managed to successfully blend the pitcher full of smoothie that was affixed to the bike. She dismounted triumphantly, cheering and pumping her fists in the air.

The bike Tuffin had ridden was one of the innovative creations Blue Cross / Blue Shield of North Carolina brought to the front of the BB&T headquarters Tuesday as part as their Million Step March campaign. The MSM campaign is the company's newest wellness initiative.

"We're excited to have it; it's a great program and I think it fits very well into what BB&T does," said BB&T Benefits Manager Steve Reeder. "We've had a wellness program in place for about 20 years at BB&T; it gets employees informed about their health, their exercise, their eating habits, and this is a great way to get people out and involved."

As part of the MSM tour, Gary Marino and Kathy Higgins are traversing the state on foot. By the end of the 75-day-long journey, the two will have walked from Asheville to Wilmington - more than 600 miles and visited 60 cities and towns.

"It's a historic event to actually do a walk across North Carolina - we're not aware of anyone else who has ever done this," stated Higgins, vice president of community relations for BCBSNC.

All across the state, MSM participants are joining the effort, by logging on the Web site and recording their physical activities. Those who exercise at least once a week are entered into weekly drawings to win prizes like GPS systems and backpacks.

Railing against obesity and promoting healthy lifestyles has been a long standing objective for BCBSNC, Higgins says.

A 48-foot MSM trailer travels to every stop. The trailer is fully equipped, with a kitchen and seating area for healthy cooking demonstrations; the "workplace of the future," which features treadmills with wireless internet-equipped laptops attached; and of course, the smoothie cycles.

Administrative Assistant Ilene Dye ducked outside during a break to see what all the commotion was about.



Diana Tuffin peddles on the Smoothie Cycle.

Photos by Layla Farmer

"Just curious, just wanted to make sure that I am healthy, staying fit, eating right like I am doing, just want to continue what I'm doing," she said. "I'm 46 now so I'm kind of wanting to stay (feeling) like everybody says I'm looking - young."

"I want to be healthy - my kids are grown ... they're already gone on," she added. "I'm at the point in my life where I want to make sure I get out there and do the things that I want to do; I've been a mom, raised them, now it's time for me to do my thing."

Boston native Gary Marino has logged hundreds of miles in an effort to promote healthy living.

"I really started to get involved in childhood obesity back in Boston, where I'm from, you know, decided, what can we do? What contributions can we make as a small nonprofit in Boston? One concept was to do these walking campaigns all around the country," he explained. "Thank goodness the folks at Blue Cross in North Carolina took notice of what I've been doing and they decided to do it for these people and for this state - a state that's very much in need of it, frankly."

Marino, who describes himself as "a professional work in progress," says he became passionate about the subject of obesity five years ago, when he decided to pare down his then-297-pound frame.

"I made a decision that I hope that a lot of people do and that is to get vigilant about my health and embrace the ... radical concept of eating right and exercising," Marino said. "Through that, I have managed to lose 150 (pounds) so far."

While fighting to keep his waistline decreasing, Marino's thoughts turned to others.

"In the process of trying to fix yourself, you have to research the epidemic of obesity, so I spent a lot of time in bookstores, in libraries, doing that and really got passionate in the process," he said. "Anybody who knows me knows I am the type of person that I'm not going to just fix myself and move on; I'm going stay involved, try to prevent future little Gary Marinos."

The walk is a dream come true for Higgins.

"I've actually always wanted to walk across North Carolina ... so when we started talking about it at Blue Cross, I jumped at the chance," she commented. "I've always wanted to visit all 100 counties and I'm close to getting that done."

To participate in the Million Step March or for more information, visit www.betterhealthnc.com.



Reeder

News Clips

Initiative cites speeders

The Governor's Highway Safety Program has announced that state and local law enforcement officers cited 11,241 motorists for speeding during the No Need 2 Speed campaign, which ran March 31 through April 6, in conjunction with the State Highway Patrol's Operation Slow Down. A total of 31,928 traffic and criminal citations were issued statewide.

"Once again, state and local law enforcement have partnered to dedicate their time and effort to remove speeders from our roads," said Darrell Jernigan, director of GHSP. "I thank each officer who participated in this life-saving campaign."

Officers also issued 2,697 safety belt and 385 child passenger safety violations and 775 drug charges. In addition, they apprehended 175 fugitives from justice and recovered 51 stolen vehicles.

Local man completes Air Force training

Air Force Airman Joshua T. Whisenhunt has graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

During the six weeks of training, the airman studied the Air Force mission, organization, and military customs.



Whisenhunt

toms and courtesies; performed drill and ceremony marches, and received physical training, rifle marksmanship, field training exercises, and special training in human relations.

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the Air Force.

Whisenhunt is the son of Mark and Jannette Whisenhunt of Winston-Salem. The airman is a 2003 graduate of the Salem Baptist Christian School in Winston-Salem.

Legal scholar to discuss torture debate

David Luban, University Professor at the Georgetown University Law Center, will deliver the James Steintrager Lecture in Political Philosophy and Jurisprudence at 4:30 p.m. April 25 at Wake Forest University's Winston Hall in room 126. Luban's lecture, titled "Unthinking the Ticking Bomb: Fact and Fantasy in the Torture Debate," is co-sponsored by the Departments of Philosophy and Political Science and the School of Law. The event is free and open to the public.

Luban is a prominent figure in the debate over the use of torture in the war on terrorism, and is known for his work on legal ethics. His book "Legal Ethics" is currently in its fourth edition. Other books include "Lawyers and Justice: An Ethical Study" and "Legal Ethics and Human Dignity." His articles have appeared in magazines such as Harper's, as well as numerous philosophical and law review journals.

Luban is also an expert on international criminal law. He has written on the topics of crimes against humanity and preventive war.

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