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Section

**LIFE**

Helping teen moms lose weight

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. LOUIS—Before she became a teen mom, Emma Richardson played high school sports and wore a size 8.

But 27 months after daughter Kayla's birth, Richardson feels stuck in a size 16 body, forced to wear "older people's clothes" instead of the hot styles for her generation.

"I feel fat," the 18-year-old high school junior said. "Like a bear in hibernation."

Richardson, 5-foot-4 and 180 pounds, would like to lose weight but said her busy schedule doesn't allow for basketball or for reading food labels, so her "belly and hips" aren't budging.

She'd use a gym membership, but can't afford it. She'd walk, but her urban neighborhood is too dangerous. She'd take her daughter outdoors more often, but Kayla's asthma keeps them inside during St. Louis' hot, humid summers.

Richardson also feels tempted by the high-calorie foods the rest of her family eats.

"They're all eating in front of me," she said in frustration. "My mom will say, 'That's all you're going to eat? Take more.'"

Researchers at Saint Louis University School of Public Health hope to help young women like Richardson lose weight gained during pregnancy. The school's Obesity Prevention Center has a five-year, \$3.5 million grant from the National Cancer Institute to study how best to do that. Avoiding obesity helps prevent future heart problems, diabetes and some cancers.

The university and its St. Louis-based partner, Parents as Teachers, will launch a five-year study to test the effectiveness of various strategies on 1,900 overweight teen moms in nine states—Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Delaware, Michigan, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas.

The strategies combine diet and exercise and emphasize how small changes in behavior can reap big results, said Debra Haire-Joshu, principal investigator and obesity center director.

The study—the first of its kind—will focus on overweight single moms of all racial groups, ages 15 to 18.

Each woman must be enrolled in Parents as Teachers, an international program that helps educate parents about early childhood development, health and other issues. The parent educators will make additional home visits to help moms change bad diet habits and make healthier choices.

The young women will be advised to drink water and low-fat milk instead of soft drinks, and to replace junk food with pretzels, fruit and fresh vegetables. They'll learn to limit portion size, read food labels, and to walk, take the stairs, and get up off the couch.

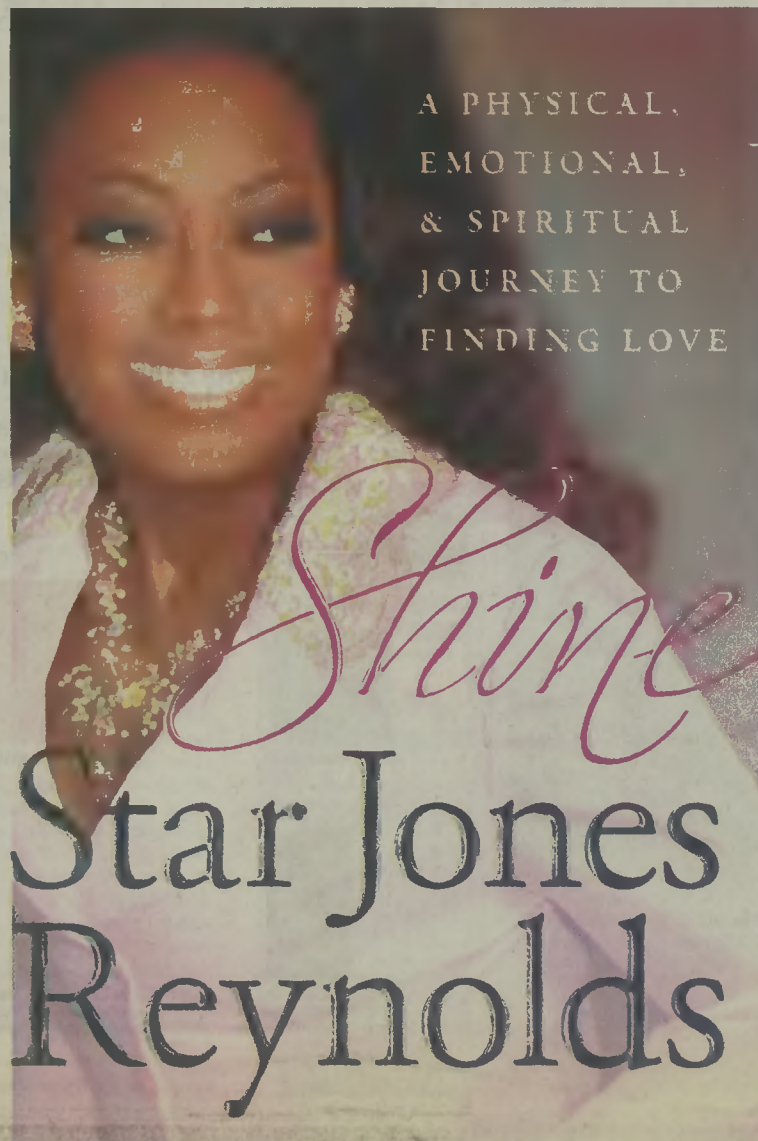
Internet chat rooms and message boards will be set up as a support network. The curriculum and strategies will be based in part on the obstacles teen moms identify in national focus groups set to begin in February, research coordinator Amanda Harrod said.

The program will be evalu-

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**Star treatment**

Reynolds shares ups and downs in her new tell-all



By Cheris F. Hodges  
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TV personality Star Jones Reynolds could have kept the secrets of her 150-pound weight loss and finding love to herself, but that isn't her style.

Reynolds, a co-host of ABC TV's "The View," wrote "Shine: A Physical, Emotional & Spiritual Journey to Finding Love" to help other women facing the same struggles that she tackled.

"I went from full-figured to fat, from fat to obese, from obese to morbidly obese," she says. "I am healthier than I've ever been. When I say the words 'morbidly obese,' it says to me it's something I will never be again."

Reynolds will be in Charlotte on Jan. 28 at Joseph Beth Booksellers at South Park signing copies of her book at 1 p.m.

"Shine" is divided into three parts. Part one focuses on the physical: weight loss, beauty tips and fashion. Part two probes the reader's emotional preparedness, including a look at past relationships, previous mistakes and wants and desires. Part three delves into spiritual life and focuses on strengthening your relationship with

See **STAR LIGHT/2B**



Can you be fat and healthy?

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO—Middle-age people who are overweight but have normal blood pressure and cholesterol levels are kidding themselves if they think their health is just fine.

Northwestern University researchers tracked 17,643 patients for three decades and found that being overweight in mid-life substantially increased the risk of dying of heart disease later in life—even in people who began the study with healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

High blood pressure and cholesterol are strong risk factors for heart disease. Both are common in people who are too fat, and often are thought to explain why overweight people are more prone to heart disease.

But there is a growing body of science suggesting that excess weight alone is an independent risk factor for heart attacks, strokes and diabetes.

The new study fits with that evolving school of thought and contrasts with a controversial government study published last year that suggested excess weight might not be as deadly as, previously thought.

"The take-home message would be pay more attention to your weight even if you don't have an unhealthy risk factor profile yet," said lead author Lijing Yan, a researcher at Northwestern and Peking University.

The study appears in Wednesday's Journal of the American Medical Association.

Participants were Chicago-area men and women in their mid-40s on average who had no heart disease or diabetes when the study began. They were followed for an average of 32 years. The researchers tracked deaths from cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and hospitalizations for those conditions, starting at age 65.

A total of 1,594 heart disease deaths occurred, 31 of them in people who started the study with normal blood pressure and cholesterol.

Among participants with normal blood pressure and cholesterol at the start, those who were obese—or grossly overweight—were 43 percent more likely than normal-weight participants to die of heart disease later on. They were also four times as likely to be hospitalized for heart disease.

Participants who were modestly overweight but had normal blood pressure and cholesterol still ran a higher risk than the normal-weight people.

A total of 1,187 participants—494 of them overweight or obese—had normal blood pressure (120 over 80 or lower) and cholesterol levels (under 200) at the outset. Standard body-mass index categories were used to define weight • BMIs of 25 to 29 were considered overweight and 30 and above was obese.

Yan said it is possible that some overweight participants developed high blood pressure and cholesterol problems during the study, which could have contributed to their deaths. But she said researchers increasingly believe that being too fat causes other cardiovascular problems, too.

Fat tissue "is not like an inert storage depot—it's a very dynamic organ that is actually producing hormones and chemical mess-

Please see **CAN YOU/3B**

Shed holiday pounds with these few tips

By Cheris F. Hodges  
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It's time to undo the poundage of Christmas past.

If you're experiencing 'Dunlap' as in, your belly has "done lapped" your belt buckle, it's time to rev up your body.

Healthmarkmultimedia.com has three tips to insure that you lose weight in 2006, control diabetes or prevent it.

According to the site, following the three R's will make 2006 a healthy one.

Reduce calorie intake:

- Increase the amount of fresh vegetables in your diet
- Decrease amounts of meats,

sweets, starches and fats in your diet

- Explore low-fat, fat-free and sugar-free substitutes for your favorite foods

- Eat small nutritious meals throughout the day.

Revive your stride:

- Introduce bits of exercise each time

- Work up to three one-hour sessions per week

- Add weight-bearing and flexibility to your regular routine

- carry two-pound weights or add stair climbing to your usual walk around the block

- include stretches of the arms and body from head to toe

- Find a workout buddy and

motivate each other to keep going

- Enroll in a wellness center to find the right exercise program for you

Reward yourself:

- Give yourself treats to stay motivated.

- Exercise three times a week-buy yourself a comfortable pair of shoes

- Stay on your plan all month-take yourself out to dinner.

- Also reward and celebrate as you reach key goals:

- Lose 10 pounds-take yourself and a friend on a healthy retreat

- Lower blood pressure or cholesterol to healthy levels-throw a party with healthy food and lots of dancing.

WIRELESS STUDY

Women text more messages than men

By Cheris F. Hodges  
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Women may have the gift of gab and according to a wireless company's survey, they also have the gift of texting.

Alltel wireless completed a survey last month that found that Charlotte women send about 10 text messages a day.

Charlotte men send only six per day, and most of these messages are sent from work.

Sixty-two percent of text messengers who responded to the survey send and receive messages during work hours, according to the study. However, it isn't likely that they're texting a co-worker. Only 28 percent of respondents are sending messages to coworkers. (Bosses relax, your work day isn't being interrupted.)

"The benefit of text mes-

saging in business has integrated text messaging into accepted business practices," said Wade McGill, vice president of wireless product management at Alltel.

McGill added that text messaging allows communications without noise.

"With continued advancements in technology, text messaging will only become easier and more convenient for Charlotte residents looking to keep in touch with colleagues and friends," he said.

Though text messaging is convenient, it also increases your cell phone bill. Most carriers don't waive fees just because you didn't know. In general, a wireless subscriber can receive a text message for free, but it costs between 4 and 10 cents to send a message. Text messaging is just



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Texting is a woman thing according to a new study by Alltel wireless.

one of many ways in which wireless carriers are looking to find new sources of revenue, primarily to offset the cost of building new cell phone networks - projects that have run into the billions of dollars, according to CNET.com.

Alltel's survey also found:

- Sixty-eight percent of participants use text messaging to stay close with

friends.

- Forty-one percent use texting to flirt with potential suitors and 51 percent would consider initiating flirting via text message.

And surely much to the chagrin of the Carolina Panthers' Jake Delhomme, the quarterback area texters would like to message is New England's Tom Brady.

