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Residents Drop Pounds in Biggest Loser Competition

Hundreds of people took part in the first of three weigh-ins as part of the City's "biggest loser competition," a total that organizers say reflects the incredibly popularity of the program and reinforces the community's desire to shed excess pounds and improve its overall quality of life.

"It's obvious that many people who signed up for the biggest loser competition are taking it very seriously and many of those are seeing really encouraging results," said Perris records clerk Judy Haughney.

"It's overwhelming—and most gratifying—to see so many Perris residents showing so much concern about their health."

The 2014 version of the Perris biggest loser contest kicked off Jan. 11 and resulted in 602 residents taking part in the initial weigh-in. That's more than tripled the 187 who took part in the inaugural 2013 competition.

The first interim weigh-in began Feb. 15 at May Ranch Park and the Bob Glass Gym at City Hall. But contestants were still coming in three days later to have their weight checked. Interim weigh-in contestants receive a month pass to the Glass gym to help them stay on track until the next weigh-in on March 22.

The final weigh-in takes place on April 26 during a community-wide health fair on the City Hall Campus that concludes the biggest loser contest.

Husband and wife Ruben and Louise Rico are seeing positive results already. Ruben Rico lost 15 pounds in the first month since his initial weigh-in. Louise Rico saw her bad cholesterol plummet from 200 to 84. They attribute their improving health to eliminating chips, donuts, candy, soda and bread and replacing those foods with cabbage soup. They also bike, walk and jog for exercise.



Perris resident Nancy DaHaro works out at the Bob Glass Gym in Perris as part of the Live Well Perris health initiative.

"Coming to the weekly workouts takes a lot of willpower," said Ruben Rico. "But they have really motivated us to get into shape."

Louise Rico agreed.

"I feel so much better," she said. "I have so much more energy."

Ray Miller, who weighed in at the Glass Gym, shed 10 pounds in the first month of the biggest loser competition. He attributes most of the reduction to a daily regimen of riding his bicycle.

"Seven days a week," Miller said in reply to a question about how often he rides. "I enjoy it."

He also credits a change of eating to include healthy sandwiches to replace peanut-butter and jelly offerings.

"I'm happy," he said. "I think this is great. I can't believe I lost 10 pounds. The City of Perris is doing a great job by committing to making its people healthier."

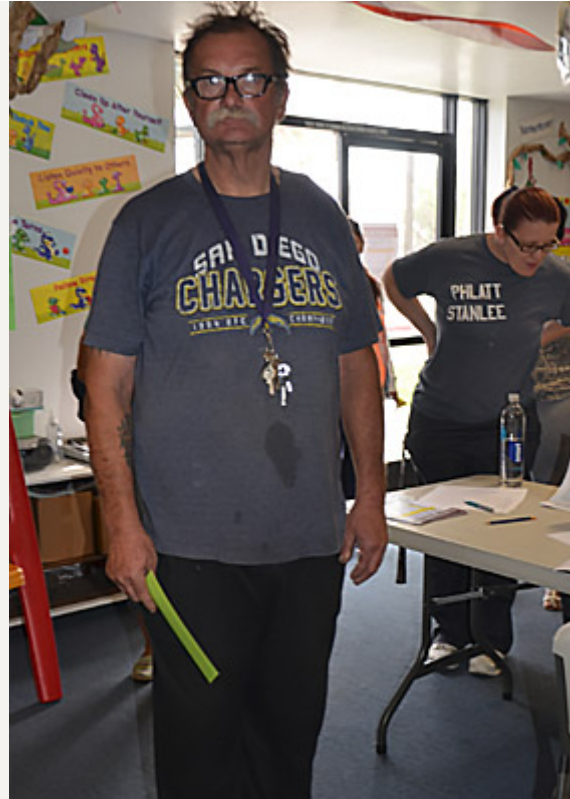
Recent college graduate Nancy DeHaro said she's lost five pounds in the past month and has become a regular at the City gym, where she works the treadmill and stair-stepping machine. Since beginning her workout routine, DeHaro said her endurance has improved. She sleeps better at night following her workouts.

But making a total lifestyle change is tough. DeHaro acknowledged that her diet hasn't changed that much, which she attributes to the reason she hasn't lost more weight.

"I need to eat more salad and less burgers," she said.

She said the biggest loser contest, as well as the entire Live Well Perris healthy-living initiative, shows that government initiatives can work when they provide access and incentives for people to participate. The national rate of obesity is 35 percent. The rate for Riverside County is about the same.

"It's great that the City of Perris has taken on this initiative," she said. "It's a small investment but it will produce big payoffs later."



Perris resident Ray Miller has lost 10 pounds in a month as part of his efforts in the 2014 version of the Biggest Loser competition.

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