



## Biggest Losers are the Biggest Winners

The City of Perris this week announced the winners in its "biggest loser" competition—with the most successful resident shedding more than 10 percent of her body weight.

Biggest winner Julie Loffer lost 19 pounds in just three months beginning when she weighed in June at the start of the Live Well Perris initiative. That's 10.56 percent of her body weight. She was all smiles when she heard that in her case, losing equaled winning.

"Live Well Perris really motivated me," Loffer said. "I feel a lot better, my mood is better and my energy level is through the roof!"

Loffer was one of about 75 people who took part in a last-minute boot camp so "Biggest Loser Perris" contestants could take off that final pound or two before the last weigh-in.

The boot camp and final biggest loser weigh-in mean that nearly all Live Well Perris events have concluded for the year. Other events included a community health fair, a walk with Mayor Daryl Busch, a hike and short bicycle ride at the Lake Perris State Recreation Area with Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Yarbrough and twice weekly "Step Out to Work Out" training sessions with members of the City Council.

The one remaining Live Well Perris event is a history walk down D Street scheduled for Oct. 19.

Loffer and the other biggest losers will be honored at the upcoming Perris City Council meeting at 6 p.m. on Sept. 24. They will receive prizes that include trips, gift cards, bicycles and gym memberships.

Loffer took part in several Live Well activities—including the mayor's walk, the Lake Perris hike and the boot camp. She also joined the gym and worked out three times a week, lifting weights and cardio-training on the elliptical. The combination worked.

"When I first started out I couldn't do one lap around the park walking," she said. "I ran out of breath, my knees and back hurt. But I kept pushing myself just a little more each time and now I can run almost two miles. My body does not hurt anymore. And most important I feel good to play with my little girl. I have energy. My husband seems to think I am cute. Life is good."

Mayor Busch watched the boot camp Saturday morning at Mercado Park.

The camp included various stations where people had to negotiate an obstacle course, lift tires, complete sit-ups while balancing large balls, power through crab walks and bear crawls and complete other gut-busting exercises. Trainers from the Tone Zone fitness center encouraged every participant to push a little harder, go a little farther to complete the workout.

"This community has really embraced the Live Well Perris program and I am most pleased," Busch said. "People really are interested in getting physically fit and eating healthier. We are providing a structure where people can exercise under the instruction of trained professionals."

Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers arrived early for the final weigh-in. She said that throughout the three months of the biggest loser competition, she has spoken to many Perris residents who say they plan on continuing to exercise regularly and eat healthy after the program ends.

"We've had a tremendous response and I am pleased and proud that the City of Perris was able to offer a program that so many people have taken advantage of. Live Well Perris has been more than successful. It has been very, very successful."

Tone Zone owner Will Thomas credited the City with "kick starting a good habit" by encouraging active living and healthy eating.

Veronica Gama offered another take on the boot camp.

"Fun and pain," she said. "It's great working out and trying to get in shape. This is like my son's football practice. It's a really good workout. Everybody should come to this workout!"

Sisters Maria and Stephanie Sanchez also participated in the boot camp. Marie Sanchez is a high-school sophomore who plays soccer. She found the intensity level of the boot camp "not too bad."

"It's hot out here and you have to challenge yourself," she said. "It's a great motivation to help you improve your health and become a better person."

Her older sister liked that boot camp came at no cost to the participants.

"Free is good, no it's great," Stephanie Sanchez said.

Another boot-camper, Monica Chan, trains regularly through aerobics classes offered at the Bob Glass Gym. She also joined the Step Out to Work Out program for a tabata class.

"I really appreciate the City of Perris for having the vision to make this happen," Chan said. "They are promoting fitness and wellness. The classes and boot camp are great for socialization and since they are outside, you get your daily dosage of Vitamin D. It's all positive. It's free. It's a great thing—and you can't beat that."

Jackie Ramos lost 17 pounds and finished third in the women's section of the biggest loser contest. So did her husband, Jose Ramos.

Jackie Ramos said she gets up before dawn and is at the gym by 4 a.m., where she hits the treadmill and stationary bicycle. She's replaced meat with lettuce and broccoli so all the family is eating healthier.

"I feel great and healthy and I appreciate the City's efforts to improve peoples' lives," she said. "They have organized events that are great for the whole family and we appreciate it."

Biggest loser winners, the percentage of body weight lost and the prizes they earned include:

Women 16 and over:

Julie Loffer—10.56 percent body weight lost; two tickets to Disneyland.  
Chineze Ndukwe—9.03 percent body weight percent lost; one-year membership at Fitness 19.  
Jackie Ramos—8.37 percent body weight lost; \$50 gift card from Big 5.

Men 6 and over

Ruben Paz—2.42 percent body weight lost; two tickets to Disneyland.  
Chris Malone—1.85 percent body weight lost; one year membership at Fitness 19.  
Jose Ramos—1.12 percent body weight lost; \$50 gift card from Big 5.

Juveniles 14 and 15

Jose Estrada—4.86 percent body weight lost; bicycle and helmet.

Brianna Brown and Janessa Brown took top honors in the 11 to 13-year-old category. They both received a bicycle and helmet.



Julie Loffer steps on the scale for the final time at the conclusion of the "Biggest Loser Perris" competition on Sept. 14. Loffer was declared the biggest loser of the contest, and she won two tickets to Disneyland as her prize.



Boot campers go through their paces at Mercado Park. The boot camp drew about 75 participants.



Perris resident Veronica Gama completes a gut-busting exercise during the Sept. 14 boot camp at Mercado Park, part of the Live Well Perris healthy eating active living initiative.



Monica Chan rolls her way to success at the Sept. 14 boot camp. Chan: "City promotes health and fitness."



Boot camp participants make their way through an obstacle course as part of the Sept. 14 boot camp at Mercado Park.



This t-shirt says it all.