

# Summary of Fresno's Healthy Lifestyle Fitness Camp and its Journey

## Names and Success Stories-

**Antonio Flores(Camper)** is a two year camp veteran who has had an amazing success story due to what he has learned at camp and the unconditional support from his parents. Antonio has lost over 20lbs, and now is more confident than ever. He has participated in the Mayor's acting classes, and his self-esteem is through the roof! Mother's name is Patti; contact number is 453-1621.

**Toni Frank(Camper)** is a 12 year old that came to us last year that weighed 300lbs. She lost 10lbs during camp, and has now lost 25lbs total. Her parents bought her an elliptical machine at home, and Toni is determined to lose more weight before she starts high school next year. Currently, her whole family is losing weight, and they keep a tally at home, and are betting on the biggest loser! Contact info from mother Irene is 286-7707.

**Isabelle Warner(Parent)** is the parent of Isaiah Warner who attended camp last summer. Since camp Isabelle has lost 10lbs, due to healthy eating habits that have developed at home through what Isaiah has learned. For example, the other night she made nachos, but used baked chips, low fat cheese, low fat sour cream, and ground turkey to make it healthier. Contact info is 457-6522 or 579-4222.

**Martha Robles(Parent)** is the mother of Zeke and Briant. She has lost 40lbs since the summer of 2007, and has kept it off. Her children are also maintaining. She said the family tries to cut down on portions and tries to stay away from deep fried foods. Contact number is 227-4819.

## **Details and Timeline of the Healthy Lifestyle Fitness Camp**

### Brief Summary of Camp:

The City of Fresno's Healthy Lifestyle Fitness Camp is a program devoted to educating youth and their families about the importance of healthy living. This camp provides children a fun and engaging environment to learn about nutrition and physical fitness. Through education and outdoor recreational activities the staff empowers campers to eat well and exercise regularly. As a group, each child participates in numerous activities that create a fun and exciting experience. Activities include: exercise, traditional and non traditional sports, cooking classes, nutrition classes, science, water aerobics, bike riding, dance, and a number of exciting fieldtrips that stimulate the mind, body, and soul. This program provides campers new experiences, strengthens families, creates friendships and boosts self-esteem.

### When/How Did This Camp Start:

In the late spring of 2007, our director Randall Cooper came up with the idea of creating a Free Fitness Camp for overweight kids. In just six weeks we developed an

outline full of activities, lessons, and fieldtrips that would inspire Fresno's youth to lead an active and healthy lifestyle and combat Fresno's childhood obesity issue.

### **Our Story and Our Timeline:**

#### **The summer of 2007: The Healthy Lifestyle Fitness Camp Began**

- We had 25 of Fresno's youth Participate in the Program at Pinedale Community Center.
- We had children participate whose ages ranged from 9-14 years of age.
- In six weeks we lost at total of 134lbs as a group.
- Not one camper quit the program.
- We spent a total of \$18,000 in department costs, and raised \$26,000 in monetary and In-kind Donations.

**Fall of 2007-** We continued to meet with campers on Saturdays to offer additional support and to exercise.

#### **March of 2008- CPRS State Convention**

- We were recognized on a state level for having a successful, grass-roots program that anyone or agency could develop, so we were invited to speak at the California Parks Recreation Society Conference in Long Beach California.
- At our session called "How to Implement a Cost-Effective Fun Fitness Camp" we were very well received and shared with other recreation agencies how to create a cost effective camp.

**The summer of 2008- The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Healthy Lifestyle Fitness Camp-** This year we wanted to make more of an impact, we learned a lot from our first year and this is what we accomplished:

- We doubled our numbers and now had 50 children that participated in camp.
- We moved locations to Holmes Playground to have a larger facility.
- Realizing parents are a key component in their child's success we incorporated parent classes into camp this past summer. Those were held on Thursday Nights.
- As a group we lost a total of 234lbs in the summer of 2008!
- We also lost 78inches from our waist lines!
- Children who participated were ages 9-16 and not one camper quit!
- Even though we expanded and doubled in size, we only spent \$12,000 in department costs, and we raised a staggering \$90,000 in in-kind and monetary donations from our surrounding community.

#### **October 2008- Attended a National Convention in Baltimore, Maryland**

- We were invited to speak at our Parks and Recreation National Convention about our program. This was a high honor and very exciting for our department.
- Agencies from across the United States packed into our room to hear how we created a successful and cost effective Fitness Camp and how to do it in their own community.

- We are spreading awareness about childhood obesity, and ways that recreation agencies can come together to fight it. Four Agencies that heard us speak are now creating their own Fitness Camps with our guidance. They are located in:
  1. **Sacramento, CA**
  2. **Las Cruces, New Mexico**
  3. **Munster, Indiana**
  4. **Buckeye, Arizona**

#### **November of 2008 to Now- Fitness in the Parks Was Created**

- Sensing a need for year round fitness programming, we created Fitness in the Parks which is located at eight Neighborhood Parks throughout Fresno with the goal of offering free nutrition classes and physical exercise programming.
- Trained Staff goes out twice a week to each site to work with kids and teach them how to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.
- Kids from the past Fitness Camp participate and children from our community.

**March of 2009- We received the "Award of Excellence for Health and Nutrition"** The City of Fresno Parks, After school, Recreation, and Community Services Department has been acknowledged for having one of the best Fitness Programs in the State of California. We will be accepting our award on March sixth at the CPRS Convention in Santa Clara.

#### **The Future:**

- **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Healthy Lifestyle Fitness Camp will begin January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009.**
  1. We will be maintaining a camp of 50 youth despite budget cuts.
  2. We will be offering more parent classes that will be both in English and Spanish.
- **We have been invited back to speak at the National Conference again in Salt Lake City Utah this fall in October.**