

# Tough love shows kids how to lose it

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**W**ITH 24 million obese and overweight people in the US alone, there is an urgency to find new solutions to the obesity epidemic.

Television is often quoted as one of the problems, but Channel 10's new reality show *Teen Fit Camp* introduces viewers to a solution.

*Teen Fit Camp* follows the eight-week journey of six Australian teenagers who are struggling with obesity.

The program is not simply about weight loss.

It's an in-depth discovery that reveals reasons some teenagers are obese.

Five years ago, troubled by the growing waistlines of American teens, Ryan Craig started America's Wellspring camp.

"Even five years ago you couldn't walk down the street without seeing a headline or a magazine cover with an overweight child on it," he says. "It was just so evident that something was needed."

Craig gathered a group of American experts and asked them to find a solution.

After identifying the most effective traits of other successful programs, they incorporated them into Wellspring's residential programs.

A team of nutritionists, dietitians and other experts all played a role in the formula responsible for Wellspring's success.

Craig says residents lose about 2kg a day.



**Doing it together:** Gemma, Christy and Leticha lost weight.

"We also make the kids look at the reasons for their overeating," he says.

"This is the key — finding out why, then giving them the skills to cope with life when they return home."

During the program the teenagers eat less than 1200 calories and 20g of fat and achieve at least 10,000 steps a day.

The non-surgical weight loss program delivers results and those taking part lose weight at an extraordinary rate and gain the tools to sustain the loss when they go home.

For 56 days, participants travel slowly up the Californian coast, camping, taking part in outdoor adventure, cooking and setting up and packing up their campsite every three days.

"There is nothing radical or revolutionary except the intensity of the program. It's never been done before," Craig says.

Cognitive behavioural therapy, which has been scientifically proven to aid weight loss, is what differentiates Wellspring from other traditional retreats.

**C**AMPERS set goals, monitor themselves, solve problems and learn stress management.

It's about changing motivations, habits and lifestyle — the keys to the success of long-term weight loss.

"The program at Wellspring has a proven track record of helping children, teens, and adults alike to change their diet and activity behaviours far bet-

## STEP ON IT

RYAN Craig suggests these two simple moves to help families encourage kids to lose weight:

**BUY** pedometers for the whole family and make your step count a game. Stick a note on the fridge listing everyone's daily steps. It quickly becomes competitive and fun. When the focus is on walking, not losing weight, the weight loss just happens.

**PUT** a piece of exercise equipment, such as a treadmill, in front of the television. If the kids are going to watch TV they may as well be doing some exercise at the same time.

ter than providing just education or advice," Craig says.

"Without true behavioural change, the weight loss will come right back when they return home."

Campers are responsible for their eating and exercise habits.

Along with the physical tests, the show's strength is that it also examines the emotions of the teenagers.

The group makes up the rules of the community and what is expected of person taking part.

They were placed outside their comfort zone, lost their mobile phones, make-up, money and other non-essentials.

*Teen Fit Camp*, a seven-part observational documentary, premieres on Channel 10 on May 31 at 7.30pm.



**Habit-forming:** overweight Sam takes a breather during a long hike in the new reality show *Teen Fit Camp*.