



Austin, Texas

In Depth

May 8, 2007 10:43 pm US/Central

Wellspring Camps Help Kids Live Healthier Lives



[Leslie Coons](#) Reporting

(CBS 42) For millions of Americans, the battle of the bulge is often a never ending fight.

Factor in the added pressure of being a teen or a pre-teen who's overweight or obese and the pressure and isolation it can cause can become almost unbearable.

CBS 42's Leslie Coons looks at a new program that promises to help teens emerge more confident, more determined, and healthier overall.

For years kids and summer camps have gone hand-in-hand. Some camps offer outdoor adventures, while other camps offer kids a glance at a side of life they may have never seen before.

At Wellspring Texas, located on the campus of San Marcos Baptist Academy, campers are taught to take it one step further.

On day one of camp, each is given a pedometer and is required to record 10,000 steps a day.

Program director Ondrej Jurik says it sounds easier than it is.

"They don't realize it is quite a bit of exercise," Jurik said. "The first time they get on the

scale they think, 'Oh that was fun, but I'm also actually losing weight'."

In addition to recording every step they take, campers also have to keep a food journal. They are taught how to calculate and track their fat gram intake and calorie intake.

"We basically give our campers skills to learn so they can go home and continue weight loss in the long term," Jurik said.

The life-altering lessons aren't lost on the campers. Patricia, a former camper, says she followed the steps and saw the weight fall off.

"I started at 260 and now weigh 160," Patricia said. "That's 100 pounds I lost wearing a pedometer and self-monitoring. Both helped me."

On average, kids lose four pounds a week at Wellspring camps across the country. Kids can only enroll once, but the skills they acquire stay with them for life, helping them transform themselves body, mind and waistlines.

As campers who'd been enrolled in other programs and saw few results, Alex and Bryan can't say enough about Wellspring.

"I went to a diet camp in Massachusetts and my experience was fun, but didn't teach me how to be a longtime weight controller," Alex said.

Bryan agrees.

"I went to a camp in up-state New York and the camp was fun, but when I left all the weight came back on," Bryan said.

Even Evan had his doubts, but was amazed with Wellspring.

"I think the best part of being there was the day I stepped on the scale and found I lost so much weight," Evan said.

Throughout the program, teens work one-on-one with behavioral coaches and also attend group counseling sessions to help them understand why they choose the foods they do.

By the end of the session, whether it's four weeks or eight weeks in length, close bonds between campers develop.

Trista considers her fellow campers family.

"I was really nervous before I came here because I didn't know if I'd make friends," Trista said. "But everyone is in the same boat. Either it was their first time away from home or their first time at camp. That made us close friends, like a little family."

In a world where teens and adults are often obsessed with their weight, it's estimated each year more than \$36 billion is spent on weight loss products.

The Wellspring camps hope to step in, showing teens that if they are obsessed with anything it should be healthy living.

It provides a well rounded program designed to give teens the skills they need to become the fit people they've always wanted to be--one pound, one step, one journal entry at a time.

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