



PAULA ZAHN NOW

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ZAHN: This summer, we have been following the story of two teenagers who are fed up with being overweight and determined to change their lives. Last week, they told us about their hopes and their dreams and their hurt as they headed off to a camp to lose weight. There, they go through a merciless ordeal to change not just what they eat, but their behavior. But can they cut it?

Medical correspondent Elizabeth Cohen checks up on their progress in tonight's installment of "Four Weeks to Lose."

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ELIZABETH COHEN, CNN MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): In mountains of North Carolina, a family arrives and a young man's journey begins.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: How are you?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Good.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Who do we have here?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: This is Nathan Ruffin.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: OK, Nathan.

COHEN: It starts right here, on a scale.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Two-hundred-point-five.

COHEN: In the next four weeks, Nathan hopes to lose 30 pounds at Wellspring Adventure Camp. It's a serious place. They search luggage for hidden food. They weigh out portions. Campers have mandatory morning walks.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: All of our bodies are different.

COHEN: And counseling sessions four times a week.

LOUIS YUHASZ, WELLSPRING ADVENTURE CAMP: How's it going?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Good. How are you?

COHEN: This is the man who gave Nathan the chance to be here.

YUHASZ: How are you?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Good to see you.

YUHASZ: This is going to be a significant turning point in their lives. Their life will never be the same after this experience.

COHEN: Louis Yuhasz raises scholarship money for kids like Nathan. He does it to honor his father, who died from an obesity- related illness.

YUHASZ: His life was cut short because of fewer opportunities like this. So, when think about you can't do, just think of what you can do, as opposed to what you can't.

COHEN: So, can Nathan do it?

N. RUFFIN: Bye, mom.

COHEN: He's never been away from his family before.

S. RUFFIN: I love you.

N. RUFFIN: Love you, too.

COHEN: Nathan tests the waters. And campers who have been here before fill him in.

N. RUFFIN: Do they tell you that you have to lose a certain amount of pounds each week or...

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

(CROSSTALK)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Like, they're totally against that.

COHEN: What they're for...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You got it? You got it?

COHEN: ... is getting kids to move, move, move and making them more aware of what they eat by writing down every calorie.

SHAWNA RUBECK, WEIGHT LOSS CAMPER: Hi. It's nice to meet you.

RUBECK: Nice to meet you, too.

COHEN: Shawna is another scholarship student here at Wellspring.

RUBECK: I'm excited, too.

COHEN: We've also been following her in her quest to lose weight. She takes to camp immediately. Nathan does too, at first. Everything seems great. But then comes the initiation ceremony.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Are you ready to commit to becoming a tribe-ling and to stepping out of your comfort zone?

N. RUFFIN: Yes.

(CHEERING AND APPLAUSE)

COHEN: For the next four weeks, these campers will be Nathan's family. It dawns on him that this is going to be far different from life at home with his own family.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It's not always going to be easy.

COHEN: Nathan breaks down.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: What's wrong? Do you need a hug? UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes. He needs a hug.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Give me a hug.

N. RUFFIN: Thanks.

COHEN: The next morning, he writes a letter to his mother, begging to come home.

N. RUFFIN: The first night, I cried for four hours. Can you please come on Monday, mom?

COHEN (on camera): What is going to make you feel better, do you think?

N. RUFFIN: I think the only thing that could make me feel better would be seeing her.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Did everything get their beads?

COHEN (voice-over): Tiffany (ph), his behavioral counselor, strikes a deal with Nathan.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We'll give it a week. We'll see how it goes. I think he'll be OK.

COHEN: But, a few hours later, Nathan decides even a week is enough.

He wrote this letter to our producer: "I decided to go home. It's not working out."

(on camera): You have been very comforting to Nathan.

RUBECK: Yes.

COHEN: He's having sort of a hard time.

RUBECK: Yes. He is. And I feel like, I don't want him to go home, because, I know how hard it was to get in here. And I'm just trying to help him. Like, he says he that doesn't want to stay here and that he can't. But I feel like he really can, because I know that he really wants this that bad.

I wrote my dad a long letter, because I miss him, too.

COHEN (voice-over): She, too misses her family. But she's ready to give these next four weeks her all.

RUBECK: I'm scared. But I'm going. (INAUDIBLE)

COHEN (on camera): How does that feel for the first time in your life to be surrounded by other overweight kids?

RUBECK: Comforting. It feels very comforting, comforting to me.

COHEN: In what way?

RUBECK: Because I know that, because they're overweight and they have been teased, and they're struggling with it, and they're here for the same exact reason as I am, that they're not going to tease me or judge me because I'm fat.

COHEN (voice-over): This month is her chance to lose 40 pounds. Right now, she weighs 239.

(on camera): When she come back in two weeks, what changes do you think we are going to see?

RUBECK: I think you're going to see that I'm more confident, and I'm probably going to have lost some weight by then.

COHEN (voice-over): In two weeks we'll see. Is Shawna meeting her goal and will Nathan still be here?

(END VIDEOTAPE)

ZAHN: So, Elizabeth, we heard about some of the goals, 30, 40 pounds. I mean, it's -- you're talking about a lot of weight. So, what are the rules about the kind of food these kids are allowed to eat?

COHEN: The rules, like, Paula, are actually very basic. They have basically healthy food. It's nothing like what you would consider really diety.

For example, the day that they were there, they had fish and they had vegetables. You can see corn bread on that plate. Now, those foods that you were just looking at, those are called controlled foods. They're not allowed to have second helpings of those. They're allowed to have as much fruit, as much fat-free yogurt and as much fat-free soup as they want. Those are called uncontrolled foods.

The goal is to keep the intake down to 20 grams of fat or less and 1,200 calories a day or less. Now, it was so interesting to us that the kids said they were not hungry. Now, here you see, Nathan is writing down the foods that he ate. This is one of the ways that they get the kids just to be more aware of what they're eating. For a lot of these kids, they have just sort of eaten without really thinking much about what they're putting in their mouth. And they're really trying to do a dramatic change here.

ZAHN: As you know, there are so many best-selling books out there that show us so many different ways to eat. Does this camp subscribe to any particular philosophy, other than eating sensibly?

COHEN: You know, they really don't prescribe, subscribe to any particular philosophy.

Again, it just all about eating sensibly. But there are a couple of things that they tell the kids they have to do. Here you see they're handing out a book, "Nine Truths About Weight Loss," which is sort of the bible for this camp. They tell them they have to write everything down. And they don't give them a chance to indulge. Some diets will say, oh, go ahead and have that banana split if you really want it every so often. They don't get a chance to do that.

They're also supposed to walk 10,000 steps a day. And 10,000 steps is about four to five miles a day. So, that's quite a lot. Now, what you saw them writing down there is not just what they ate that day. But they're supposed to have goals, for example, a goal to lose 30 pounds or a goal to walk a certain number of steps. Those goals are evaluated all the time

in their behavioral sessions. And that's another thing that sets this camp apart, is that they talk to these kids four days out of the week to give them some kind of counseling.

ZAHN: It looks like they run a very tight ship there. I hope these kids are successful.

COHEN: They do.

ZAHN: Elizabeth Cohen, thanks.

COHEN: Thanks.