

WDC Champions Testimonials

Reflections from Champions at 5 Months after Training:

At five months after the WDC training, Champions were asked for their reflections and experiences in their role as Champion to date. Champions were asked for their reflections on their experience as being Champion; the changes they have made to their club; any individual success stories; and the effect that the WDC or Champion involvement has had on their club. Champions provided some valuable insights into how their role and the WDC have impacted on them and their Rotary Clubs. Overall Champions provided a majority of positive feedback, noting enjoyment in their role, personal gains and positive changes in their clubs in terms of awareness and healthy behavioural changes. Champions have expressed some challenges in their role, though have remained persistent and optimistic, giving a valuable real-world reflection of a community based peer-leader program; comments are below.

Experience as Champion of WDC

- ✚ I have enjoyed the opportunity to act as Champion of the WDC in our club and I felt a sense of responsibility to convey the message of a healthy lifestyle and an awareness of how that can be achieved.
- ✚ Most of the verbal feedback I received was encouraging and positive. Many members were surprised at how much unhealthy lifestyles cost our country.
- ✚ I am enjoying my involvement, and it has certainly helped me to think about my own weight loss.
- ✚ I enjoyed the training program, and the opportunity it gave me to meet other Champions
- ✚ My Club members have been very interested in, and cooperative about the program.
- ✚ Even members who have chosen not to participate have listened to the presentations with interest.
- ✚ I am pleased that the Club has 2 Champions as it is a help to take the required measurements and to complete the presentations.
- ✚ Initially I saw the program as an achievable and valuable project. A way to help myself be motivated, and also my fellow Rotarians, some who obviously needed some help.

- ✚ It isn't a short term thing but a life time philosophy we are trying to get across. It is always pleasing to get the positive comments and see the joy on people's faces as they see improvement and get encouragement.
- ✚ As our club has been involved for a few years now the other positive is that there has been a gradual overall decrease in the BMI but also many people have actually not increased their weight which is the tendency.
- ✚ It's been quite interesting and also challenging in getting the message over to members. The initial reaction from members was quite positive generally but it's been necessary to keep firing them up to keep them motivated in some cases. There have been some negatives from some members (generally females) but nothing we can't handle in the scheme of things!

Changes made to the Club by Champion or WDC

- ✚ The catering firm that provides our meals has made some changes to the weekly menu by providing brown bread rolls, less fatty dishes and more fruit platters as dessert.
- ✚ Some members were keen to compare their previous month's "weigh-in" and reacted accordingly.
- ✚ Members became more acutely aware of their weight and a need for closer attention to food intake versus exercise. The finer points and the benefits relating to better health, especially as we grow older, came into clearer focus.
- ✚ WDC has given them the opportunity to understand these complexities of food and exercise choices and the interrelationship between them.
- ✚ We have given a lot of thought to the meals being served at the Club, and work with the caterer on a regular basis to ensure that healthy options are available at every Club meeting.
- ✚ We plan to take part in several early morning walks.
- ✚ Early on with negotiations with the catering staff we have asked for healthier food choices. One in particular is no chips which we were having about every 2nd or 3rd meal.
- ✚ It's created a very definite awareness of health issues and what we should be doing about what we eat and how or whether we exercise. Members now talk about their weight and what they are doing about it!! Members are now tuned into what is required to keep healthy and that's a good thing.
- ✚ At our Club, one Champion took on the 'diet' part and I took on 'exercise'. Apart from our initial presentations there have been small changes observed of

participants e.g. leaving the bread roll untouched with the meal. The meals offered have not been any 'healthier' than prior as there appears to be a large number who want a large, meaty feed. Our meal is very low cost (\$15 for 2 courses) and it seems a lot to ask and coordinate for low fat meals to be available for willing participants. However, a number of participants have talked about dietary changes made at home.

- ✚ We have a regular group of 4 participating in pool walking (including myself). This has been very successful for those four, with everyone reporting feeling healthier with pain reduction for those with pre-existing conditions. Personally, I am convinced that pool walking is responsible for the shedding of my kilos. I have been a regular participant of BodyPump for the past two and a half years so had already set a routine for regular exercise. Now I add any spare time to at least an hour of pool walking. Another small group have attended a Personal Trainer introduction with all expressing their enthusiasm to take this on. They have decided to do this during the week in work hours so this limits a number of members joining in. My concern is that they will only do it one day a week and minimise the benefit.

Individual Success Stories

- ✚ Two members lost a considerable amount of weight towards the end of the trial period. One with surgical assistance, the other, newly diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, by diet and exercise balance. These two members highlighted the need to monitor their weight/exercise balance more closely.
- ✚ We currently have 26 members participating in the "weigh-ins, three of those joining in February". 12 members have reduced their weight between October and February with one member being top of the list with a 5.4 kg loss during that time.
- ✚ Most of our members have had a small weight loss. This occurred in the lead up to Christmas, and immediately after Christmas. Interestingly a number then put some weight back on in February!
- ✚ One member has lost a considerable amount of weight - 5.8 kg from November to February weigh-in. He and his wife have taken a combined lifestyle decision to be healthier.
- ✚ There are two standout participants both in the extremely obese category. Both (one man, one woman) are regular pool walkers and remain committed to improving their health. I have great admiration for their tenacity as, the more overweight you are, the more pain you are likely to experience in getting going. Both have pre-existing conditions but remain committed to regular exercise with changes to dietary habits.

The Effect the WDC or Champion have had on the Club

- ✚ An awareness of and the importance of being healthy and how each individual needs to accept responsibility for their own health has been brought to the fore.
- ✚ Members often discuss food particularly in terms of what should be avoided. There is much jibbing of what and how much people are eating.
- ✚ Four Members took the opportunity to “Climb for a Smile” in an attempt to increase their exercise regime.
- ✚ Personally as Champion I have tried to model goal-setting and an awareness of the need for balance between food intake and exercise. I am often the brunt of jokes and reprimands and see this as a positive result of this awareness campaign.
- ✚ The Club as a whole is interested in good health, and the welfare of all Club members and their families.
- ✚ As excess weight is such a problem for our country in the increasing health budget and chronic diseases I’m pleased to be involved. I’m sure this needs to be an ongoing project and some facts to continue to motivate Rotarians to act positively is important. Some stubborn members may gradually change their habits. No instant fixes.
- ✚ Personally I have focused closely on my weight and implemented my own program to reduce it. I now follow my action plan and it’s working although not as fast as I’d like.
- ✚ The Club members are very much aware of what they should be doing about their health and most are taking some action.
- ✚ The Club has informed our caterers at our weekly meeting venue of the WDC and they have revised the menu for us.
- ✚ The WDC has created a real talking point amongst members and with weigh-ins it has now become a case of “what gets measured gets done” and hence attention to weight by our members.
- ✚ Although I’m now regarded as the “food police” and recently at a morning tea, members tried to hide from me the fact they were having biscuits, the good thing is that they know it’s not in their best health interests to eat such items!!
- ✚ For me, the WDC has been a great motivator to take off some of those extra kilos and I feel confident that I will achieve the targeted loss. In terms of the overall program, I feel that I could be doing a lot more in supporting and mentoring.