



bella VIVE

From your family at the Cleveland Center for Bariatric Surgery
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HOLIDAY PARTY BRINGS FUN END TO YEAR



CCBS patients, surgeons and staff members celebrated one more time in 2006 during the CCBS Holiday Party. More than 100 people attended the December 29 evening at Massimo da Milano in Cleveland to share a meal and fun activities.

During a social time, everyone enjoyed trivia and mixer games with prizes. A buffet featuring Italian foods, as well as fish and chicken proved to be popular. "The majority of people said the food was really good," noted Executive Director Karen Schulz, RN, MSN, adding that people also enjoyed the convenient parking and the candlelight décor.

The evening, which also included raffles and a disc jockey, drew people from as far away as Youngstown, Ashtabula and Sandusky. Mild weather and the later December date also helped attract people, Karen said.

The staff hopes to hold its holiday party around the same time next year. They are already planning support group meetings and special events to bring patients together this year. "In 2007, we really want to focus on community building and keeping our members connected to the CCBS," Karen explained. "What we learn is that people generally have the best results when they stay connected, attend support groups and social events".

Support Group Activities

Pre-surgical Readiness Support Group Meetings

Topic: Eating Triggers

What sends you reaching for food? Examine some of the common eating triggers that patients face and ways to overcome them.

Wednesday, February 14, 5:30 – 7 p.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at St. Vincent Charity Hospital

Topic: Psychological Factors

Learn more about some of the possible psychological changes and their potential impact on your life.

Wednesday, March 14, 5:30 – 7 p.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at St. Vincent Charity Hospital

New Patient Meeting

Topic: Early Stages of Recovery

We'll focus on tips to get through the early stages of recovery, including handling pureed foods.

Thursday, February 15, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Thursday, March 15, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at St. Vincent Charity Hospital

Transitions Group

This group provides support and diet tips to patients who have reached the three- to five-month post-operative point. Patients learn more about eating a regular, low-fat, low-sugar diet. A nurse and patient representative will offer a short presentation and answer questions during the meeting.

Thursday, February 22, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 22, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at St. Vincent Charity Hospital

Post-Surgery Support Groups

Topic: Getting Back On Track

With the holidays now over, program psychologist Dr. Anita

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RESOLVE TO KEEP A FOOD DIARY IN 2007

One of the most important habits of successful weight loss and maintenance is to record and evaluate what you are truly eating. You should keep a detailed record, for a minimum of 5 to 7 consecutive days per month, of all the foods and beverages that you consume. Be specific; measure or weigh foods to be accurate. Evaluate for total calories, grams of protein, total fat and total carbohydrate.

INSURER NAMES CCBS BARIATRIC CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Recently, the CCBS was designated a Medical Mutual Bariatric Center of Excellence. "That means that Medical Mutual is recognizing us as one of the premier places to have bariatric surgery," explained CCBS Executive Director Karen Schulz, RN, MSN. "The designation will be listed on the insurer's web site and will be featured in some additional publicity," she added.

The Medical Mutual designation is the latest in insurer recognitions earned by the CCBS. The program is also a Bariatric Center of Excellence for Anthem Blue Cross, Cigna, Medicare and United Healthcare. Before making a designation, insurers examine a program, looking at its services, safety record, weight loss outcomes, support services, and other important elements. Insurers want to know that programs follow patients over time and encourage people to stay with the program for long-term success.

NEW CCBS WEB SITE PROVIDES SAME SUPPORT

You can now find your favorite web site features in a new location. Beginning on December 1, the CCBS web site changed. Access information about the new site, which is being managed by Exemplo, was mailed to patients with the holiday party announcement.

On the new site, you will be able to find bulletin boards, the diet journal, exercise journal, calendar information and contact information for the CCBS. To reach the new site, go to www.exemploportal.net/pp_L172/default.asp. Type your Social Security number, without spaces or dashes, in the Patient ID box. Then, type stvinc1 in the Password box using all small letters. Make sure the "Numbers Lock" on your keyboard is "on" and the "Caps Lock" is "off." Then press the box marked "Existing Patient Log-on." DO NOT press "new patient registration" because you are already a registered CCBS patient; pressing this option creates a second account that will lack your personal information.

Once you sign on, you'll see a welcome page with links to the site's options. If you have problems accessing the site or questions about its features, send an e-mail to bariatricsupport@csauh.com with your name, date of surgery and a brief description of any error message you received.

GET BACK ON TRACK

Former bariatric patients are finding help in making healthy changes to meet their weight loss goals through the LEAP Back On Track Program. Peter Valencic, MS, RD, LD, who is the program's dietitian, reported, "We had good success in the fall and have two full classes in January." Small groups meet for 12-week sessions to work on dietary, nutritional, psychological and exercise issues. The next session is taking enrollment now. If you are interested in joining the classes beginning in April, please contact Peter at 216-592-2801 ext. 33711.

RECIPES FOR SUCCESS!

SPICY BEEF NOODLES

This sweet and hot Asian pasta has been adapted from a Laura's Lean Beef recipe.

- 1 lb. Laura's 92% Lean Ground Beef or 96% Lean Ground Round
- 1/2 c. diced red bell peppers
- 1/2 c. shredded carrots
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp. grated fresh ginger
- 1 c. low-salt, fat-free beef broth
- 1/4 c. peanut butter, crunchy preferred
- 2 T. soy sauce
- 1 tsp. dried crushed hot red pepper
- 1/2 lb. vermicelli, cooked. Whole wheat recommended
- 1/4 c. sliced green onions
- 2 T. sesame seeds, toasted

Cook beef until browned. Add red pepper and the next 7 ingredients; sauté 6 – 8 minutes until vegetables are tender. Toss beef mix into hot pasta. Top with green onions and sesame seeds.

Nutrient Content: Makes 6 servings.
Nutrition information per serving

Calories: 340	Protein: 23 grams
Fat: 13 grams	Carbohydrates: 34 grams

Support Group Activities

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Maximin will help patients refocus on healthy lifestyles for weight loss success.

Thursday, February 22,
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at
St. Vincent Charity Hospital

Topic: Cooking Demonstration
Explore healthy foods when dietitian Peter Valencic presents a cooking demonstration.

Thursday, March 22, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at
St. Vincent Charity Hospital

Patient Profile: Michelle Ketler

It's been over five years since Michelle Ketler had her gastric bypass surgery on June 29, 2001. It has been over five years since she has committed 100 percent to a new life choice. "I think I am more happy with my life right now than I ever have been," she said.

Close to 400 pounds before her surgery, Michelle admits she just wanted to get below 200 pounds. Dr. Sonpal believed her goal weight could be between 180 and 200 pounds. "Just to be under that 200 mark, I would be happy for the rest of my life," she recalled. "I ended up at 167." She wore a size 12 dress on her 2003 wedding day.

After surgery, her blood pressure became normal and her problematic ankles felt fine. "I have the most energy I have ever had in my life. I can do everything that I couldn't before," said Michelle, whose current weight is about 173 pounds. "I have become a little more daring without the weight. I climbed up on my roof this year and put up Christmas lights on it that, at 400 pounds, I never would have considered."

Since age 8, Michelle avoided wearing jeans, but about eight months after her surgery she tried on her first pair. Initially, she was afraid to head into the dressing room, worried that she would be depressed if the clothes didn't fit. But she decided to give them a try and was ecstatic when she fit into the jeans. She recalled, "My mom was playing bingo and I ran into the bingo hall in tears thrilled that I bought jeans off the rack."

Working in her family's direct mailing business in Cuyahoga Falls, the 27-year-old has had the support of her husband Rob, her family and co-workers. Now, she gives support and advice to others considering bariatric surgery. She encourages people to consider the surgical possibility if all else has failed. If they have the surgery, she urges them to make the lifestyle changes and dedicate themselves to making the surgical tool work on a daily basis.

Michelle is a recent winner in the "Tell Your Story" contest. Below, she shares her experiences with Bella Vive readers.

My name is Michelle Ketler (formerly Buwala). I had gastric bypass surgery at CCBS in June of 2001. Since that day, my entire life has changed. I was only 22 years old at the time, and by that point, had spent almost 15 years battling my weight. Here is my story.

I spent the majority of my childhood overweight. I struggled from the age of six being the big girl. No matter what I ate, or how much I exercised, the pounds stayed with me. At the age of eight, I was in Weight Watchers. It was a humiliating experience, both for me, as well as my mother. I was laughed at for being fat, and my mother was ridiculed for not taking care of her child. I lost 10 pounds and I gained 20 back.

That was followed by a series of weight loss attempts. Between the ages of 10 and 16, I tried every diet you can imagine. There were weight loss pills, a program supervised by my doctor, fad diets, Jenny Craig, Weight Watchers a second time, Slim Fast. You name it, I've tried it.

I always succeeded at losing some weight, but then I would plateau and end up gaining back twice as much. I spent my entire school career coming home in tears from being picked on. Both students as well as teachers ridiculed me. My nickname in high school was "wrecking ball."

I was so embarrassed by my weight and the assumptions of everyone around me that all I ever did was eat, that I ended up taking correspondence courses over the summers during high school. By doing that I could get the credits I needed to graduate and limit the time I had to spend in school around other people.

I lost a lot of experiences from my childhood because of my weight. I didn't go to amusement parks with my friends because I didn't fit in the seats. I went to two dances my entire school career. Both were a disaster, and I never got to go to my prom. I was even left out of my yearbook as a sick joke by the yearbook staff. When I got my yearbook and questioned why my picture and info was not there, I was told that my picture was too large and would take an entire page. At the time of graduation, I was a hefty 265 pounds.

By the time I graduated, I gave up completely. I sank into a deep depression and resigned myself to the fact that I would always be "fat and alone." I enrolled in college, and after a month of ridicule there, I stopped going to class. I started drinking heavily, and spent almost two years in a bar. The more I drank, the more weight I gained. But I didn't care because I thought there was no hope for me.

I tore apart the relationships I had with my family and the few friends that I had. I drifted from one strange house to the next day by day just so I didn't have to go home and be alone. Finally, I realized that this was no way to live. With the help of my family, I got sober. I started working for the family business and put my life together. I moved into my first apartment and before I knew it, I was on the right track. But I was 347 pounds.



Patient Profile: Michelle Ketler

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Finally, one day in September of 2000, I read an article about bariatric surgery. I immediately started doing research and found the Cleveland Center for Bariatric Surgery. By January of 2001, I had my first appointment. I was terrified, but I was determined that this would be the last chance to change my life.

I had my surgery on June 29, 2001. The day of my surgery I weighed in at 395 pounds; 22 years old and a size 32/34. The surgery was the easy part. The recovery and the significant diet change were very difficult. But nothing seemed that bad once I had that first weigh in and I had dropped 27 lbs.

Less than a year after my surgery, 150 pounds lighter, I met my husband. One month after we met, he proposed, and I said yes. A year later we were married. Getting married was exciting, but buying my dress was even better. I purchased my dress in September of 2002 and it was a size 18. One month before my wedding I took my dress in for the alterations. Mind you, I had not put the dress on since the day I purchased it. It fell off. Literally, we zipped it up and it fell to my knees. We had to scramble to order a new dress that would fit. I ended up with a size 12.

My husband and I now own our own home and we're looking to start a family. I can go anywhere and feel comfortable. I work with a few non-profit organizations. I have the most self-esteem I have ever had in my life. I can buy clothes off the rack. All the health problems I suffered are gone. I feel great and nothing can stop me now. I lost a total of 225 pounds (or the equivalent of two supermodels).

It has been 2½ years since my marriage and now my husband is considering gastric bypass. He has seen how much my life has changed, and he wants to experience everything with me. And I'm ready to walk him through it and be the support that everyone gave me.

My birthday is August 7th, but I celebrate a birthday on June 29th every year as well because I consider that my birthday. That is the day that my entire life turned around. That is the day I was given a second chance at life. Don't get me wrong. I still get ridiculed; mostly when I wear shorts or sleeveless shirts because I have a lot of extra skin. But I don't care anymore. One day I'll have plastic surgery and get that removed. Until then, I'm happy just being me — extra flab and all.

Some people tell me that I took the easy way out by having surgery. They say I didn't have the willpower to do it on my own. I can understand why some may think that way. However, those are the people that I would like to put in my shoes for just one day of my previous life. They don't understand and probably never will.

Gastric bypass is not just a surgery. It is a lifestyle. It can fail if you don't live your life properly. If you don't eat right, if you don't exercise, if you don't make an effort every day of your life, you will fail. I'm not perfect. I cheat. I eat a few things here and there that I probably shouldn't. And I usually end up paying the price for it later. But I work hard every day to eat enough, to get enough vitamins and nutrients. I get blood work done every few months and take supplements and I exercise regularly.

I thank God every day that I found CCBS. I think about how much of my life that I missed, and how short it could have been if not for Dr. Sonpal, Dr. Schreiber, and the entire staff there. I'm asked all the time, if I had it to do over again, would I? My answer: If you won the lottery, would you turn in the ticket and claim the prize?

The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers. They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself. The important thing is this: To be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.

For a very long time I regretted what my life had become. Now I realize that I simply sacrificed more than I can explain here to achieve the best life I could wish for. If you're going to start asking yourself life-changing questions, be sure to do something with the answers. I finally did, and look at me now!



ST. VINCENT CHARITY HOSPITAL
CLEVELAND CENTER FOR
BARIATRIC SURGERY

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