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From your family at the Cleveland Center for Bariatric Surgery

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GRADUATES CELEBRATE SUCCESS, DR. SCHREIBER



The CCBS honored its 2006 graduates at its annual graduation on Friday, September 29. Patients, staff members, family and friends enjoyed dinner, dancing, a special program for the graduates and a surprise recognition of Dr. Helmut Schreiber.

Dr. Schreiber gave an update on the state of the program, sharing the highlights from the past year, including the program's designation as a Center of Excellence. He welcomed the 101 graduates who lost a total of 13,500 pounds.

Dr. Aviv Ben-Meir shared a special inspirational message with the graduates. Using the letters in the word "graduate," he noted some things that they need to remember for a lifetime of success:

- G is for goal. Congratulations on achieving your goal.
- R is for remembering that your pouch is a tool. It won't work if you don't use it.
- A is for always include protein with each meal.
- D is for don't drink with your meals or an hour afterwards.

- U is for you should always get your calories from solids, not liquids.
- A is for avoiding grazing by always eating until you are full in 30 minutes or less.
- T is take charge, attend support groups and follow-ups.
- E is for eat to live, don't live to eat.

At the end of the graduation presentation, CCBS Executive Director Karen Schulz, RN, MSN, called Dr. Schreiber back onstage for a special honor. She explained his role as a pioneer in bariatric surgery; he developed the current form of the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass in 1996 and added surgeons to his practice to form the CCBS. Then graduates from prior years proceeded into the room. After a patient speech given by Phil Goldberg, a graduate of 2003, over 60 patients who graduated from 1996 to 2005 recited a poem together and presented Dr. Schreiber with a special award to show their appreciation for his dedication.

Karen noted that everyone had a great time, with people dancing until midnight. Many photographs capturing the wonderful evening are posted on a web site and available for purchase. If those attending wish to access the photo site and did not receive directions, please contact the office at 216-592-2801 for information.

OBESITY ACTION COALITION PROVIDES SUPPORT

Would you like to help others who are considering bariatric surgery or dealing with obesity? The Obesity Action Coalition is a group you can join to be informed and make a difference for others. According to CCBS Executive Director Karen Schulz, RN, MSN, "Their mission is to educate and advocate on behalf of the millions of Americans affected by obesity."

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Support Group Activities

Pre-surgical Readiness Support Group Meetings

Topic: Nutrition and Eating

Learn some nutritional eating and behavioral guidelines that you can follow now as you prepare for your life after gastric bypass surgery.

Wednesday, December 13, 5:30 – 7 p.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at St. Vincent Charity Hospital

Topic: Body Image

Undergoing bariatric surgery changes more than your physical appearance. It may affect how you see yourself and how others see you, too. Let's look at realistic approaches you can take with body image issues.

Wednesday, January 10, 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, December 21, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Thursday, January 18, 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at St. Vincent Charity Hospital

Transitions Group

Patients are invited to attend the post-surgical support holiday party on Friday, December 29 in lieu of November and December meetings.

Next Transitions Group: Thursday, January 25, 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at St. Vincent Charity Hospital

Post-Surgery Support Groups

Topic: Holiday

Topic: Plastic Surgery

A cosmetic surgeon will explain common procedures that bariatric surgery patients may undergo after significant weight loss.

Thursday, January 25, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

St. Vincent DePaul Room at St. Vincent Charity Hospital

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Health magazine reviewed over 500 food products and reported the top 25 award winners in its May 2006 issue. We agreed, and we found the following to be excellent choices after bariatric surgery. They are all appropriately low in sugar; lower in fat and higher in fiber.

	Servg size	Calories	Protein
Best Breakfast Foods			
Bagel: Sara Lee Heart Healthy 100% Whole Wheat Bagel	1/2 bagel	110	5.5 gm
Frozen Waffle: Van's All Natural Hearty Oat Waffles	1 waffle	100	2 gm
Oatmeal: Quaker Weight Control Instant Oatmeal	1 pkg	160	7 gm
Sausage: Al Fresco All Natural Country Style, Chicken	1 link	60	6 gm
Ready to Eat:			
South Beach Denver Style Breakfast Wraps	1 pkg	180	16 gm
Lunch Foods			
Bread: Earth Grains Honey Whole Grain	1 slice	110	5 gm
Cheese: Horizon Organic Colby Cheese Stick	1 stick	110	7 gm
Soup: Campbell's Select Savory Lentil Soup	1 cup	140	8 gm
Lunch Meat: Starkist Albacore Tuna Filet	1 pouch	110	22 gm
Wrap: Tumaro's Gourmet Tortillas, Multi Grain	8" round	100	7 gm
Snack Foods (if you must)			
Ice Cream: Edy's Dreyer's Slow Churned Light Ice Cream (Beware-has 11gm real sugar/serving.)	1/2 cup	100	3 gm
Crackers: South Beach Diet Whole Wheat Crackers	1 pkge	100	2 gm
Chips: Kettle Brand Bakes Hickory Honey BBQ	1 oz	130	3 gm
Savory: Snyder's of Hanover EatSmart Malt Vinegar & Sea Salt Café Fries	18 sticks	75	2 gm
Dinner Foods			
Frozen Pizza: Amy's Mediterranean Pizza with cornmeal crust. Beware! (Calories, carbs and sugar are near the limits)	1/3 pizza	360	12 gm
Quick and Easy Dinner Entrée: Laura's Lean Beef Pot Roast au Jus	1/5 pkg (3 oz)	110	17 gm
Pasta/Grain: Uncle Ben's Ready Rice Whole Grain Brown Rice	1/2 cup	110	2 gm

STAFF PROFILE: MEET MARY STOCKERO

There's a new friendly face at the front desk. Mary Stockero joined the CCBS in July as the new receptionist. She moved to Cleveland to work at the CCBS and attend school to become a nurse.

Previously, Mary worked at a Toledo hospital as a patient customer service representative. When she saw a job ad for the CCBS in a newspaper, she packed up and headed east.

"I just thought bariatrics seemed so interesting," she said. "It just seemed like the type of people I wanted to help with their lives and their transitions."

Mary's responsibilities include answering phones, scheduling patients, billing, work release paperwork, pulling and filing charts and collecting payments. She also handles Dr. Salomone's practice office work.

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LAP-BAND PATIENTS SEEING SLOW, STEADY LOSSES

While it's too soon for their graduation, about 60 CCBS patients who have undergone the adjustable laparoscopic banding procedure are seeing their own successes. "They are losing slowly but surely. It's a much more gradual weight loss, anticipated to take two to three years to get to your goal," explained Karen Schulz, RN, MSN, adding that the first patients are about 18 months out from surgery now.

Adjustable laparoscopic banding (LAP-band) is another weight-loss surgery option offered by the CCBS. Like gastric bypass surgery, the procedure creates a smaller stomach. However, a plastic band is used to squeeze the top of the stomach to create a pouch, leaving the bottom of the stomach as a passageway. The implanted band contains a strong balloon that is filled with saline injected through tubing in a permanent abdominal port. Patients return to the CCBS regularly for these injections. Karen explained, "If you think of the stomach as a funnel, the band adjusts the size of the bottom of the funnel. You have to do that slowly and you can't always do it at one time."

The LAP-band appeals to people who don't want gastric bypass surgery. While implanting the band requires a less-extensive surgery, patients must be committed to a lifetime maintenance schedule. "Our patients are coming back on average every four or six weeks the first year, maybe two to three times the second year, and then an estimated once a year for life," Karen said.

To succeed, LAP-band patients must be motivated. They must avoid sweets and high-calorie liquids that travel past the band easily. They don't suffer "dumping" from sugar like many gastric bypass patients do so they have to have willpower to skip unhealthy foods. They also must be willing to lose weight more slowly since it takes longer to reach goal weights.

The LAP-band support group meets the first Thursday of every other month. And some day when patients reach their weight-loss goals, Karen said that they will be part of the CCBS graduation, too.

WELCOME BACK, DR. SALOMONE

Patients are seeing a familiar face at CCBS again. Dr. Mark Salomone returned as the director of bariatric medicine in September. He sees bariatric patients prior to surgery, in the hospital after surgery and in follow-up visits. He also works with medical weight loss patients in LEAP and bariatric patients needing weight-loss help through LEAP Back-On-Track.

"I am so happy to be back. I really missed the people who work in the hospital and patients and people who work in the center," said Dr. Salomone. "Bariatric patients are very appreciative of the things you do for them. I think you get a special feeling to be involved with patients who really lose a significant amount of weight and it improves their medical issues."

Dr. Salomone tries to keep in contact with patients' primary care physicians regarding patients' health issues. In addition, he has his own primary care practice so people who need a physician can come to him.

With Dr. Salomone's return, waiting time for surgery follow-up visits has decreased. Now when patients call to make post-surgical appointments every six months, they can get in to see him for an assessment and the dietitian for a nutrition class quickly.

Away from work, Dr. Salomone and his wife, Karen, spend time with their daughters, Sarah, 9, and Emily, 7. Much of their time is spent at area skating rinks for the girls' figure skating practices and competitions.

Dr. Salomone's practice is accepting primary care patients. Call 216-592-2801 for your bariatric medicine or primary care needs.

SUPPORT GROUP EXAMINES "PAY IT FORWARD" APPROACH

Remembering what life was like before bariatric surgery can spur people to reach out to others. Patients who attended the October 26 support group meeting focused on how they can "pay it forward" to give others the support that has been given to them.

Moderated by Dr. Courtney Holbrook, the well-attended group discussed how other patients or family members supported them through their surgeries. "They were really grateful for the support they had received," Dr. Holbrook said, adding that several spouses and friends attended the meeting, too.

Those attending shared their support with each other as various topics came up. Newer patients voiced concerns about who to tell about their surgery. The group agreed that people have their own levels of comfort with sharing their experiences. Some noted that telling others had led to co-workers or friends undergoing bariatric surgery, too.

While patients may be excited about their surgical success, some obese people may not be interested in learning about it. Deciding to have bariatric surgery is a personal choice that people must reach alone. Patients need to accept their own choices. Similarly, patients don't need others' approval or criticism.

Dr. Holbrook noted that patients need to remember why they had bariatric surgery. Losing weight won't make life perfect so keeping perspective is important. Writing down reasons, such as being able to walk comfortably or breathe more easily, can keep people focused.

OBESITY ACTION...

The Obesity Action Coalition provides written resources, including information on gaining insurance approval for bariatric surgery. Its newsletter tackles a variety of topics, such as health, nutrition, education and childhood obesity. The group reaches out on local and national levels, targeting issues affecting obese Americans. Its efforts have challenged obesity discrimination, health insurance and Medicare coverage. It organizes people through letter-writing campaigns and specific efforts as it works to empower obese people.

For more information on the Obesity Action Coalition visit www.Obesityaction.org or call 1-800-717-3117.

Support Group Activities

Seminars Head South

Due to increased interest, the CCBS will hold informational seminars in Akron for area residents considering bariatric surgery. The first two seminars were scheduled for October and November. Additional seminars will be held every other month during 2007 at the Tadmor Shrine Center, 3000 Krebs Dr., Akron off of I-77. For more information on the Akron seminars, call the office at 216-592-2801.

STAFF PROFILE

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"The (CCBS) staff is incredible," Mary said. "I really like the small office environment where you know everything and the people are always there to help you."

Her hospital work has prompted her to switch college pursuits from business administration to nursing. The Northern Michigan native is currently taking nursing classes at Cuyahoga Community Hospital and plans to become a registered nurse with a Bachelor of Science degree.

HOLIDAY PARTY PLANNED

Join your surgeons, CCBS staff members and support group friends for a special evening of festive fun. Enjoy a delicious buffet and dance the night away!

Where: Massimo da Milano
1400 W. 25th St. Cleveland

When: December 29, 6:30 p.m. to midnight

Cost: \$19 – send checks (made payable to St. Vincent Charity Hospital) to Andrea Horvath, Cleveland Center for Bariatric Surgery, 2322 E. 22nd Street, Suite 207, Cleveland, Ohio 44115

RSVP by December 22 • Call Andrea at 216.592.2801 x33893 with questions.



Patient Profile: Michelle Toth

"Shelly with the Big Fat Belly." Classmates tagged Michelle Toth with that nickname in first grade. She admitted, "I have always been overweight, and I think you could even categorize me as obese in middle school, high school and college." Her nickname no longer fits since her gastric bypass surgery on June 1, 2005.

At 5'8", Michelle says her weight rose to 375 pounds. With both knees affected by arthritis, she began walking with a cane. As a 34-year-old doctoral student in counselor education and supervision at the University of Akron, she recalls taking forever to walk with her cane to her car, getting winded halfway there. When her orthopedic surgeon told her she needed to lose 200 pounds to have surgery to help her right knee, she said, "The thought of losing 200 pounds was really overwhelming to me so I started seeing a psychiatrist."

Michelle examined her food issues with the psychiatrist and had some success losing weight with two prescription drugs. Usually trying well-known weight-loss programs helped her to lose some weight that she easily regained. Several years after working with her psychiatrist, Michelle read a newspaper article on bariatric surgery. "I started researching it from there," she said. "I really felt as though with the bariatric surgery I had a chance at getting my freedom back. My idea before surgery about freedom was being able to walk without a cane, but the idea of freedom now is just completely open to me."

A fall several years ago made Michelle hesitant to pursue surgery. What began with a badly twisted ankle ended up with a blood clot that traveled from her calf to her lung. She found herself hospitalized in intensive care for a week through the crisis. After exploring different bariatric surgery programs and meeting various surgeons, Michelle was pleased with her interview with Dr. Aviv Ben-Meir. He took her concerns seriously, bringing in a cardiologist and vascular surgeon. "I think it just was his genuineness," Michelle recalled. "I can't say enough positive things about him and his staff. I really felt that I was being cared for rather than just being a consumer."

Since her surgery, Michelle no longer needed knee surgery, and she put away the cane. She doesn't need pain medication, arthritis medication or cortisone shots either.

Her husband, Bill, is an athlete, and now Michelle can work out with him. The couple exercise at the natatorium in Cuyahoga Falls where Michelle does water aerobics, weight training with Nautilus machines and walking. She credits exercise and a strict diet with helping her succeed in losing 192 pounds. Weighing 183 pounds, Michelle was able to celebrate her CCBS graduation in September. She hopes to hit the 200 pound weight-loss mark by her November birthday.

Michelle admits that she is very strict with her diet. Since she never feels hungry, she sets her cell phone alarm to remind her when to eat. Michelle avoids breads, pastas, rice, carbonated beverages and sugars. On Sundays, she prepares food for the week, cutting up and storing healthy choices for the week. She continues to keep a food log detailing food choices, amounts and nutrient contents. When people tease her about her diet or cell alarm, she explains that she does what she needs to do. "Why would I do something that could potentially erase everything I have already done?" Michelle said. "I need to make sure that I count out everything I need for the day and that I have it prepared so that I can make sure that my body gets the fuel that it needs."

Michelle urges people interested in bariatric surgery to uncover their relationships with food and deal with these issues. Also, learn more about bariatric surgery before having any procedure. "And interview as many surgeons as you can because I just feel you will have a connection with the one you trust the most," she added.



 ST. VINCENT CHARITY HOSPITAL
CLEVELAND CENTER FOR
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EDITORS

Karen Schulz, RN, MSN; Publisher
Patsie Dionise, Editor; patsie@akhia.com
You can post comments, concerns, questions,
ideas and notes of encouragement on our
Web site at www.stvincentcharity.com.