

TESTIMONIALS

What follows are testimonials from parents and children who have taken part in other Committed to Kids programs throughout the country.

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

At first, Tyler was reluctant to start the program. But his grandmother really pushed it, so he finally gave in. He's matured so much since he began losing weight. He has more self-confidence. His feet and knees don't hurt him anymore, and he has more energy to do things.

The first four months were hard. The family complained a lot. But now we shop together and eat together, I'm back into cooking, and it made me take back time for my family. Now Tyler reads food labels and knows what's good for him. We go out to eat once a month, but he orders what's healthy for him to eat. It's been good for all of us, and I've lost 36 pounds!"

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

When Tim started the program, he did really great, but in no time we were back to where we started eating fast food almost every night and totally vegging out on weekends. Then one day we had a long family talk and decided to recommit to a healthier lifestyle. It was easier to get back on track than we thought. We were most aware of our strengths and weaknesses as individuals and as a family. We just picked up where we left off, and we've been losing or, rather, winning-ever since."

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

I started getting up early and driving to the local track to walk each morning. I tried to get Kurt and Sam to come along, but they really weren't very interested. Kurt, my younger son, kept running up ahead of us; then he'd do tricks in the middle of the track while we caught up. One day, instead of going to the track, I took them walking along the Bayou side near our home in south Louisiana. Along the way we saw turtles, egrets, and even an owl, and the boys tried to catch dragonflies. Before we knew it we had walked for one hour and still had an hour to get back to the house. The next morning when I said, let's go for a walk,' Kurt was the first one out the door."

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Every year we invite our program graduates to attend our holiday party. This year we were thrilled to see Jack-one of our very first patients-now twenty-two, a ten-year veteran. He was healthy, trim, and very handsome to boot! He brought his girlfriend and was excited to introduce us to her. We, of course, took the opportunity to let Jack act as a role model for our current patients. What he said, though, surprised us most of all:

Ten years ago I was 65 pounds overweight. My mom brought me to this program and I lost all the weight before the year was up. I started playing football and then I hurt my knee. I couldn't exercise, so I gained 40 pounds back, but after my knee healed I still kept playing sports. I knew I could look better but I just didn't want to commit to losing the weight again. Then I started college and I wanted to be as fit as all the other guys. I pulled out my old books and started eating right again. I joined the gym and started working out. Every day I could hear Ms. Heidi saying, 'if it's under 5 grams of fat or 15 grams of sugar, go for it,' and Dr. Melinda saying, 'Don't forget to warm up, and don't go too fast. Increase a little each week.' Or Dr. Kris saying, "Stay positive and focus on your accomplishments." And you see it worked!

The beauty of teaching children healthy nutrition and fitness habits now is that even if they get that "glazed" look as if they're not listening, don't worry. They are, and they're soaking it all up. They'll remember later when they're ready.

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"I was glad to start the program with my child because it took the pressure off of me to be the bad guy for trying to change my daughter's habits. I knew I would do the program with her so I could support her, but I didn't think I would stay with it very strictly. Well, I've gotten into a pretty good exercise program, but more than that, I'm excited to know about nutrition. I'm much more of a health advocate now. It's not as though I didn't know about this stuff before, but now I've experienced it. I feel much, much better, and that makes me want to do it even more. I feel better about myself, both because of what it's done for me and because of what it's done for my daughter."

A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

'People were mean to me. They told me I was the fattest dude in the world, and they always picked on me. I felt pretty bad. I wanted to go into the program, but I was very nervous. I was afraid I wouldn't lose weight and afraid I might gain some. But my sister told me I have more willpower than anyone else in the family. So I told myself I wouldn't sneak food. I do standing push-ups against the wall and stomach crunches, and I ride my bike at east twenty or thirty minutes twice a week. I've lost 25 pounds and I feel different. I used to be shy because I was afraid people would call me names, but I'm not nervous anymore. So I have more friends. I didn't know I had strength until I did the program."

-Benjamin, age ten

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"My thirteen-year-old daughter walked into my bedroom one day and asked, Mom, do you think I'm fat?" I was caught completely off guard, but managed to answer, Honey, you're probably somewhat overweight but you're certainly not fat." That was the first time I had to actually face the problem head-on. But I didn't really know what to do. I tried bringing her to an adult weight-loss program, but she was bored and felt out of place. When she came home crying from school one day, I thought, That's enough! I'm taking her to the pediatrician!

That's where I should have started. Dr. Graham evaluated her and told us exactly how overweight she was-which wasn't very much, when we considered her height. He then discussed the many options that were available to us. He assured us her problem wasn't a medical one at this point, but if we didn't address it now, it would inevitably become one. We scheduled a follow-up appointment before leaving his office and got started looking into appropriate plans the very next day."

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

My eldest son has a weight problem, but his brother, Chad, is a beanpole. Chad's only seven years old, so it was hard for him to understand why we began eating more healthfully. One night he said, "What happened to our three-thing dinner? We're only having a two-thing dinner." I didn't realize what he meant until someone pointed out that before we started the program, we'd have three things on the plate: a meat, a vegetable, and a high-calorie starch. I no longer serve high-calorie starches all the time, and Chad didn't understand that. From then on, I always prepared two vegetables so he could have his three-thing dinner. And now Chad reads food labels and understands fat and sugar grams. Still, we take him out to have a hamburger once a week so he doesn't feel deprived.

A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

"I was nervous at first. I didn't know what I would have to do. But I started losing weight in the first week-3 pounds. That's what made it easy for me. Losing weight made me want to stay on the program. The hardest part was eating new foods. I'd bring stuff to school-tuna fish and salads and stuff like that-and my friends kept asking me what I was eating. Pretty soon I discovered the new foods weren't so bad. And since I stopped eating school lunches and started playing more outside, I've lost 39 pounds. So the program is a lot easier for me. I really feel so much better about myself. It's not as hard as you think it's going to be. I have a lot of fun with it."

-Graham, age eleven

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

There may be family members or grandparents who refuse to do the program. One of my relatives told me she thought I was getting carried away. But I told her I didn't agree and asked her to please not minimize our effort. It doesn't matter what other people think, really. And I wouldn't allow them to fool with me or with the health of my child. In the end, my child is thinner, healthier, and happier. Now she's patting me on the back."

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"Think of this program as a new way of life that will benefit and extend your child's life, as well as your own. Don't think of it as a diet program so much as the right way your body works. You'll live a better life, improve the quality of your life, and have more energy, and you won't feel deprived. It's energizing. You're happier with more positive goals."

A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

For a long time, I didn't want to admit I was fat. I kept calling myself extra-muscular. I didn't want to go on a diet, and I didn't want to make changes. My parents tried a few things, but they didn't work. Plus, I figured I was OK because I was really active.

Then one day, I saw myself in a photograph with my friends and I realized that I wasn't just heavyset. I was fat. It upset me, but my mom said it was OK, and that I should start this program.

"I lost weight in the first week. It made me so happy and gave me self-assurance. And I started thinking about the fact that if I stayed heavy, it could affect my health. So I kept with it and now I know I can do just about anything. Before, I didn't think I could, but now I know I can."

-Robin, age fourteen

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"I didn't cook much before starting the program. I worked late most of the time, and I wasn't sure how I was going to be there for my daughter. But, step-by-step, I began making changes. I told my boss I was going to leave the office by five o'clock each day. I started taking the kids grocery shopping with me. And now we eat together every night.

We also spend more time together on weekends. Mostly we swim, play baseball, and ride bikes. I don't yell at them anymore when they're running around the house having fun. All these changes were worth it because my daughter's health and future were at stake. I've also changed as a parent-I'm now a better one."

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"I just don't know what happened. Jimmy did so well on the program last year. I was sure he would stay in the Blue Level and maintain his goal weight. But my dad was hospitalized, and we had to start eating out a lot. Then soccer season ended and softball just didn't seem to be giving Jimmy much of a workout. He started watching a lot more TV. I was so busy at work and with my dad that I guess I just didn't notice those extra 15 pounds until Jimmy was almost back to where he started. We're ready to commit again, and I know we can do it. After all, we did it once before."

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

"I got into the habit of giving in to my daughter when we'd fight about her eating too much or not being active enough. I took Dr. Kris's advice and started establishing new household rules each week with my daughter's and my family's input. When the arguments began to escalate again, I would call an immediate halt. Everyone would take a ten-minute break. I'd spend mine reassuring myself that as the parent I would negotiate a reasonable solution to the problem. When we got back together, I would reiterate the rules, choices, and consequences we'd been talking about-and it started working. It took a few weeks, but things are much easier now for everyone."

A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

Doing this made me realize I could do more than ever before. My grades went up. Guys are talking to me. I have more friends. I got more confidence when my dress size dropped. It felt so good."

-Nancy, age fourteen