

CANCER: THE ULTIMATE WAKE-UP CALL



DEB JONES

Deb Jones' quest for a healthier lifestyle kicked into high gear with an abrupt wake-up call 2 ½ years ago: breast cancer.

It's difficult to see an upside to breast cancer, but if there was one in my case, that was it," says the 45-year-old Lincoln woman who's since been declared cancer-free.

The diagnosis occurred just four months after she was married, during a mammogram exam that she thought was going to be a routine procedure. It led to surgery in September 2012, seven weeks of radiation - and a realization that she needed to take better care of her body.

Following treatments, she embarked on developing her own fitness program. Wanting to shed weight and reduce her

body-fat percentage, she lost 20 pounds on her own and reduced her body-fat percentage by 5%. When she plateaued, she turned to Fit4Lincoln in May 2014. Developing a rigorous schedule of Boot Camp classes at the gym north of 33rd and A streets, she lost an additional 15 pounds and lowered her body-fat percentage by another 8%. She's dropped three pant sizes in the process.

After 20 years of trial-and-error, she's found a workout regimen that's effective and fits her busy lifestyle.

"I'd been a yo-yo dieter for 20 years and tried about every fad diet there is," including four-month weight loss challenge that resembled the "Biggest Loser" challenge, she said. "They all seem to focus on taking the weight off, but not on keeping it off."

Deb loves the camaraderie at Fit4Lincoln and works out 4-to-5 times a week, catching the 6 a.m. workouts en route to work at B&R Stores headquarters, where she's a full-time computer programmer. She's not only an avid member of Fit4Lincoln, she's a great recruiter: 11 of her friends have now followed her there.

Her elevated energy level has also allowed her to enter and complete half-marathons in Lincoln and Las Vegas. She's signed up for a half-marathon in Lincoln in November, and plans to run some 5- and 10-kilometer races this spring and summer.

She's such an advocate of fitness that she dove into online classes to become a certified personal trainer, finished the courses and passed the test March 15.

They say, 'What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.' I truly believe that and am so thankful God gave me another chance to be my best, and inspire others along the way," Deb reflected.

**by Dennis Buckley / Star City Sports editor - Apr 2, 2015*