

HealthWorks

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The Daniel Diet at Union College



Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see ... At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished ... and in the matter of wisdom and understanding ... he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom." [Daniel 1:12, 15, 20]

You remember the story. Daniel and his friends were given the "opportunity" as prisoners of war to become educational leaders in a foreign land. What a break—to be slaves, yet treated like royalty! Included in this "great deal" was the privilege of eating the best the country had to offer.

Even back then they knew that a good diet was important for peak performance. They just had their definition of "good diet" a bit confused. I wonder if much has changed? When we think of the "royal food" of today too often it probably includes significant portions of that which was not a part of the Designer's "original ideal diet."

When challenged to perform, Daniel knew that one of the first elements of success was to "resolve not to defile himself with the royal food and wine." [Daniel 1:8] So he asked for permission to eat the simplest of food and drink and then let the leadership decide if it helped them accomplish their goals for the young lads.

They really put a lot on the line. What if it hadn't succeeded? What if they were only a little better than the others? Or worse yet, what if they weren't as good after the 10-day test?

They *resolved*—that means to me they decided before the test what their commitments in life would be. They *asked permission*—that means to me they were not forcing their ways on others or being assertive in being right no matter what others thought. God *gave understanding*—that means to me that God honored their commitment and their approach, and we know the "rest of the story."

So does it still work today? Union College students have been testing the theory for years. And though we have chosen not to statistically document the results for fear of making a spectacle of those who try, its success is indicated by the semiannual request to continue the "Daniel Diet" idea before final exams and by the daily and ongoing affect it has had on health at our college. Here are the details.

If you look at our school calendar, you will notice 10 days before final exams there is a shaded area across that section with the words "Daniel Diet." Our CABL director (CABL stands for Collegiate Adventists for Better Living and is the Student Health Ministry program on all of our college campuses) works closely with the cafeteria director to be sure that there are ample supplies of fresh fruits and vegetables available, and the school newspaper, posters and e-mails encourage students to "test it and see for themselves." The challenge—cut out all sweets and "rich foods" for the ten days before your exams. Eat only healthy food and see if it makes a difference on test day.

continued on page 6



Camp Meetings



From its earliest history, the Adventist church has relied on these special meetings to bring inspiration and fellowship to its members. I can remember, as a little boy, preparing for Camp Meetings. We had to buy special food and have our clothes clean and the car washed. We started planning for it weeks in advance. Because my parents had to work we didn't attend for the entire ten days. We would get up early Sabbath morning and make the two and a half hour drive. Within three minutes of walking on the sandy road all of the special work we had put into shining our shoes and pressing razor-sharp creases into our pants was null and void. Dust was over everything.

In those days we went to the youth tent. I remember the special music—the quartets, the choirs, Walter Arties and other special soloists. I remember the sermons and the missionary stories. It must have been there that I decided that I too wanted to be a missionary. I also still remember the powerful temperance orations. Camp Meeting back then was a lot of fun.

As I look over the Camp Meeting schedule for 2002 I see that just about every conference still has a Camp Meeting. North Pacific Union Conference has 24. Most conferences now have a separate Hispanic camp meeting. Pacific Union conference has a retirees Camp Meeting and an Asia/Pacific convocation, a Cambodian, a Filipino, a Chinese, Samoa, Vietnamese and a Black camp meeting. There are not as many tents today as when I was a boy. There are lots of trailers and RVs. Many of the meetings are held in churches and auditoriums and schools. There is not as much dust and sand. But the basic ingredients are still there: good music, good preaching, good seminars, fellowship and inspiration.

I usually go to two or three Camp Meetings each year to give health seminars. This year I was invited to the Kansas-Nebraska Camp Meeting, where I gave a health lecture in the morning and repeated it in the

afternoon. The interaction with the people was good. I enjoy answering questions and trying to meet the needs of the people attending my seminars.

Three things really impressed me while I was there. These are the topics of my newsletter this quarter. I was impressed with the Lincoln Racket Club. The decision that the owners had made to close this sports facility on the Sabbath was a courageous one. I was also proud of CABL (Collegiate Adventist for Better Living) for encouraging the students to observe a Daniel Diet before exams. And I heard about the new employee wellness program that Union College would be starting in the fall.

Camp Meeting was special for me this year. I still have two to attend. I hope I was a blessing to someone. I was inspired by good preaching, good music and by these three health initiatives. My hat goes off to the Kansas-Nebraska Conference. Keep up the good work!

by DeWitt S. Williams, EdD, MPH, CHES
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Union College launches “Every Body Matters”

In August, Union College employees and their spouses will have the opportunity to stretch, stroll and step into a comprehensive year-round wellness program.

The concept of an employee wellness program had been tossed around for several years with some progress in recent years. Since 1999, the campus has celebrated National Employee Health and Fitness Day in May. The event has included health booths, fitness screenings and guest speakers. For the last two years on the health day, Union has hosted the alternate date Lincoln/Lancaster County American Heart Walk in conjunction with the American Heart Association.

Although participation has increased for the annual health event and walk, without a system for tracking and promoting health changes, the benefits of the day were not continued throughout the year.

In August of 2001, a wellness planning committee for developing a program was set into action. After much study of successful employee wellness programs, including the system used by Southern Adventist University, Union's 12-person wellness committee developed a proposal for a year-round plan. The proposal was designed to include all employees and spouses who are insured through Union College.

“Knowing the administration's support of this program, we aimed high,” said Deborah Bogdon, committee member and Union's Career Center director. “Our college president, David Smith, and vice president for finance, Gary Bollinger, are to be commended for their support of this wellness program.”

Administrators approved the proposal and work began on implementing the wellness plan by addressing three primary goals: introduce a system for health assessment that allows participants to track progress; inspire behavior modification for specific health goals; and provide on-going health education opportunities for faculty, staff and their families.

“I have dreamed of an employee wellness program for the 20 years I have worked at Union,” said Nancy Petta, committee chair and physical education professor. “I continue to be excited about the possibilities of this program for helping our campus family make positive lifestyle changes.”

The initial focus of the year-round program is to introduce a comprehensive wellness assessment system. During this year's colloquium pre-semester meetings in August, the wellness committee will introduce the “Every Body Matters” program and assessment plan to faculty and staff. Appointments for blood work including glucose and cholesterol tests will also be available.

One afternoon of the meeting session has been reserved for health screening activities. Participants will begin by filling out a 75-item questionnaire designed to create a profile of an individual's health history and habits. Next, participants will engage in a series of health screening activities ranging from vision and hearing tests to body fat percentage and flexibility measurements.

The data gathered from the questionnaire, lab work and health screenings will be compiled and processed through the Wellsource computer system. The result is a 21-page individual health assessment profile report outlining health strengths and weaknesses along with action steps for improving problem areas. In addition to the summaries provided to employees (individual results will not be available to anyone else), the college will receive a composite report outlining the collective health of the participants. These results will be used to help determine seminar and program topics for the year. At least two seminars are slated for each semester.



continued on page 4

“Every Body Matters”

continued from page 3

During colloquium, employees will also be given the opportunity to map out a wellness action plan for the semester. All participants are encouraged to focus on exercise plus one other wellness area such as nutrition, rest, spiritual growth, addictions, stress, etc. Wellness program participants will first benchmark their behavior and then set weekly goals for improvement and document their progress.

Program participation incentives will include a mix of on-the-spot cash for attending events, money bonuses for completing behavior modification plans and prizes sporting the program logo. The committee has also planned some surprise prize packages including a drawing for a weekend getaway trip.

“Launching an employee wellness program is an investment in our two most valuable resources—our employees and students,” said David Smith. “Through the faculty and staff, Union students already see many examples of healthy balanced Christian lifestyles. We hope this program will continue to enhance those examples while also adding to the quality of life for Union employees.”

Long-term, the wellness program has the potential to make a difference not only for the physical health of employees, but also for the financial health of the college. Rising medical rates coupled with tentative projections from the insurance industry make opportunities to reduce health care expenses worth exploring. While initially the program is a significant investment for the campus, the increased health of Union employees and their families could eventually lower medical costs.

According to Petta and the wellness committee members, although saving the college money through improved employee health could be a valuable byproduct of the program, the biggest payoff has little to do with finances. Petta concluded, “If at the end of each semester some employees see an increase in their energy level, improvement in their concentration or added enjoyment from recreation time with their families, we will have done our job.”

by Jacque L. Smith
Director of Public Relations
Union College • Lincoln, Nebraska



More than 100 walkers including faculty, staff and guests from the Lincoln, Nebraska, community participated in the one-mile American Heart Walk around Union College's campus on May 15.



In addition to raising money and awareness to help combat heart disease and stroke, the Heart Walk helped Union College faculty and staff focus on wellness.

Health Club Closes on Saturdays

Stays in business for more than 20 years!

Kids running circles around their moms, the smell of chlorine, phones ringing. At first glance, the Lincoln Racquet Club seems like any other health club, but the sign on the front door distinguishes it: “Friday closing—4:45 p.m. Saturday opening—5:15 p.m.”

Marlyn and Sharon Schwartz, owners of the Lincoln Racquet Club and Union College alumni, are Seventh-day Adventists. Because of their beliefs, the Schwartzs have chosen to close the Racquet Club during Sabbath hours—a half-hour before sundown Friday until a half-hour after sundown Saturday.

In spite of this “disadvantage,” it has still been voted “Lincoln’s Premier Health Club” and hosts approximately 5,000 members. Why has the Lincoln Racquet Club been so successful under the ownership of Marlyn and Sharon Schwartz?

When Marlyn Schwartz bought the club twenty-one years ago, in 1979, it consisted of only six indoor tennis courts and a bar. Schwartz purchased the nine-year-old club from a partnership of investors because he “felt the land and facility were a good value” and a good real estate investment. At that time he had no intention of going into the health club business.

After talking with several “tennis people,” however, Schwartz decided to continue using the building as a health club. He also decided to remove the bar and



They stepped out in faith and were rewarded! Marlyn and Sharon Schwartz outside of the Lincoln Racquet Club.

convert the club into a full-service facility, including indoor and outdoor tennis courts and swimming pools, a gym, aerobic and strength equipment, racquetball courts and a children’s area. Under his ownership, the club has undergone nine expansions, the latest an 8,000 square-foot addition a year ago. The club now holds over 87,000 square feet.

When Schwartz first purchased the racquet club, there were only 175 members. Today it has 2,500 memberships—approximately 5,000 members—including 25 of the original 175.

The Schwartzes believe that one reason for their success has been because they market to families. Family memberships have largely supported the club’s growth. “Many times, we

believe that kids bring their parents,” says Sharon Schwartz.

The Schwartzes believe, however, that the main reason for the Racquetball Club’s success has been God’s blessing. “God has honored and blessed us,” says Marlyn, “because we have chosen to honor Him.”

by Amanda Sauder

Communication and marketing major • Union College
Summer intern at the *Adventist Review*

The Daniel Diet

continued from page 1

The results have been amazing—though I’m not sure why we still classify them as “amazing.” Shouldn’t we be assuming that God’s plan works?! Students continually and voluntarily report back that they feel better, more alert, and have a clearer mind to study and take their tests. They say they plan to do it every year. One year we forgot to put it on the calendar and we had a lot of students wonder where it was and why we weren’t supporting the idea any more! We quickly did some extra advertising so others could be involved and supportive of those who planned to do the “Daniel Diet” even if we hadn’t officially promoted it that year!

But the better part of the “Daniel Diet” is not just the ten-day experience before exams. It’s the fact that it has changed the eating and overall health habits of many of our students for the rest of the year as well.

Again, our cafeteria director has been very supportive, as she has the unenviable task of providing choice for the wide variety of people who eat there. Every meal there is a vegan option as well as fresh fruit, salad bar and all the necessities to maintain the concept of the “Daniel Diet” throughout the school year.

In addition, our CABL directors through the years have always sponsored a social time after vespers called CABL Cafe where students have a place for spiritual fellowship and enjoy light refreshments. Change has also occurred here. By the request of the students I have watched as those refreshments have changed over the years from donuts and soft drinks to fruits, vegetables and breads. Another illustration of the long-term impact of making wise choices on diet.

The “Daniel Diet” has served our campus well as a reminder and a challenge that following God’s plan for our health is a better option. It’s made a difference at Union College.



by Rich Carlson
Chaplain, Bible teacher and CABL sponsor
Union College • Lincoln, Nebraska



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