

Small Steps' Community Partner Celebration

ON NOVEMBER 13th 2019, the Diabetes Prevention Research Group at the University of British Columbia and the YMCA of Okanagan celebrated their second anniversary of the Small Steps for Big Changes program. This community partner event was held on the eve of World Diabetes Day and hosted over 70 diabetes prevention stakeholders from the academic, clinical and community contexts at the Laurel Packing House, downtown Kelowna.

Small Steps for Big Changes alumni and program ambassador, Lois Hourston, was the master of ceremonies. Dr. Rob Shave, the Director of the School of Health & Exercise Sciences and the University of British Columbia, kick started the event, followed by shared insights from Dr. Mary Jung, Director of the Diabetes Prevention Research Group & Small Steps for Big Changes. She shared program successes and discussed insights of next steps toward diabetes prevention sustainability within the Okanagan region and beyond.

The group then heard from Jason Nijjar, Health and Fitness Coach at the YMCA of Okanagan, who is a Small Steps for Big Changes trainer. He spoke of his experiences engaging in the training and delivering the program, including the value



of motivational interviewing as a tool in helping others make health behaviour changes. He also shared how he has been impacted by the program, in seeing individuals work toward and achieve their goals within the YMCA walls. Finally, Sharon Peterson, Chief Executive Officer and president of the YMCA of Okanagan reflected on how hosting such a program in the YMCA has been beneficial for them in achieving their organizational goals of reaching individuals who are ready to be fit in the community. This event also allowed for a

platform to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between these two partners to illustrate their commitment to the partnership and the program.

The evening finished off with door prize winnings donated by local sponsors, mixing and mingling over canapés and wine, pictures in the photo booth, and engaging in the annual Participant Advisory Committee and Stakeholder Advisory Committee meetings. This event was a tribute to the many achievements of clients' continuous dedication towards their health.

DID YOU KNOW...

For individuals with decreased glucose tolerance, even a 15 minute bout of brisk walking after each meal throughout the day can reduce levels of glucose in the blood for up to 24 hours! For more information, [click here](#).

The Importance of Self-Compassion

Everyone has 'slips'. These are the times when we get down on ourselves because we may not have been as active that week as we anticipated, or we treated ourselves to our favourite desserts over the holidays. It doesn't matter why or how these slips took place, the important thing to note is to have self-compassion when this occurs. Self-compassion involves: 1) being kind to yourself, 2) knowing that you are not alone in your feelings, and 3) viewing negative thoughts and emotions

in a mindful manner (Neff, 2003). Recently, self-compassion has been found to be helpful for those individuals who are living with type 2 diabetes (T2D; Strachan, Bean, & Jung, 2018). Specifically, this means that if you are having negative thoughts about being at risk for developing T2D, practicing self-compassion can help combat these feelings. So go easy on yourself! Want to learn more about self-compassion? Check out this [TED Talk by Kristen Neff](#).



At the Y—Savannah Frederick

SAVANNAH, an enthusiastic YMCA coach who is delivering the program!

I: What inspired you to become a trainer with Small Steps for Big Changes?

S: I've always enjoyed working with people and helping them achieve a healthier and more active lifestyle. The Small Steps program fits the bill for both! This program is dedicated to helping the whole community reach its potential and that's what really drew me to it. The program provides useful information and lots of tools to help aid the participants.

I: What is the most rewarding part of training with Small Steps for Big Changes?

S: The most rewarding part of training with the Small Steps program is the achievements that the clients make. Every little step that clients take to live a healthier lifestyle is a huge achievement and being there to celebrate and support them is a truly humbling experience.



I: Do you have any advice for participants to stay motivated and active?

S: Every little thing makes a difference!

I: What is your favorite way to stay active during the different seasons?

S: I love playing sports year round, especially soccer. Each season comes with its own activities. In winter, I enjoy skiing (both downhill and cross country), snowshoeing and skating, while in summer I engage in hiking, softball and biking. All year round I enjoy going to the gym or partaking in fitness classes. Each season brings its own joys and different ways to be active.

I: What is your favorite topic to discuss with participants?

S: My favorite topic is sugar. I find that this session is an experience for the participants, as we get to discover how added sugar is in a lot of food! Being able to use the [HealthWatch 360 app](#) and explore the food they eat as well as well as other common foods is an eye opener. In addition, many of the participants are super curious about sugar and these sessions usually run the full length as we learn and come up with different strategies together.

Recipe Kale, Beet & Chickpea Power Bowl



SALAD INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups cooked barley or brown rice
- 6 cups kale or spinach
- 1 cup grated beets
- 1 cup grated carrots
- 2 cups chickpeas (drained, rinsed)
- 1 cup chopped almonds

DRESSING INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp sodium-reduced soy sauce
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp natural peanut butter
- 6 tbsp canola oil

DIRECTIONS

- 1) In a bowl, top the cooked barley or rice evenly with all salad ingredients.
- 2) In a separate small bowl, whisk together water, soy sauce, apple cider vinegar, Parmesan cheese and garlic. Blend in peanut butter. Gradually whisk in oil until dressing is combined.
- 3) Drizzle each salad with 1 tbsp of dressing to serve!

For nutritional info, [click here!](#)

WEEKLY WALKING GROUP

Head to a new trail each week, followed by a visit to a local coffee shop. A great way to stay active and supported! Keep informed via our [social media avenues](#) or email Lois at lghourston@gmail.com.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Anyone is welcome to join the monthly meetings held on the last Tuesday of every month from 6-7 PM at the Downtown YMCA (1011-505 Doyle Ave)! This is a chance for current Small Steppers and alumni to share experiences, learn from each other, and even engage in a cooking class!

GET IN TOUCH

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