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These women lose weight, find friendship during Kidney Foundation pre-diabetic program



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There are few things sweeter than good friends.

A group of women found that out when they joined the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan's diabetes prevention program in 2019. All eight women, who live throughout Farmington Hills, Wayne, Inkster and Dearborn Heights, were pre-diabetic at the time and used the program to lose weight.

Some of them knew each other beforehand and some did not, but they all left the program close friends. When they get together now, greetings come in the form of happy shouts, teasing jokes and pandemic-friendly elbow bumps.

"It's really a lifestyle change," Octavia Smith, of Inkster, said. "It takes time to change a lifestyle, so a year-long program is really beneficial to doing that."

Throughout the year-long program, which teaches participants how to live a healthy lifestyle and avoid a type two diabetes diagnosis, the women found motivation through their friends.

"Some people — I won't say who, Cynthia — would pick on people — that would be me — to get up at 5:45 in the morning to go to boot camp," Liz Walker, of Dearborn Heights, said jokingly. "I've never even went to my job that early."

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One way they kept each other accountable was walking in the parking lot of the Western Wayne Family Health Center in Inkster. Now, they primarily keep in touch over texting and Zoom.

“We started walking right here in this parking lot,” Cynthia Hicks, of Inkster, said. “When we got to week five of the program, it was about fitness. So, we started walking in this parking lot.”

The program has moved online during the pandemic. People can register for an upcoming online class at readyssetprevent.org.

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