

Win tickets to see Wizard of Oz - pg 21

# Diet eased depression

by Helen Clifton



A YEAR ago, Susan Haworth weighed 21 stone and ten pounds – and after being forced to take four months off work with depression, she says she was at an all-time low.

But she knew she didn't want to go on medication. As a former research chemist, Susan, 51, of Hopwood, understood that diet and exercise could be as effective at tackling depression.

"I knew the GP was looking at Prozac, and the more I read about it, the more I knew I didn't want to do it," Susan, now a civil servant, explains. "One of the side effects was putting on weight! My blood pressure and cholesterol was going up as well, and they were talking about medication for that too."

After seeing a dietician, she was put on the Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale Primary Care Trust (HMRPCT) weight loss referral scheme. She has since lost an amazing 100 pounds, and now weighs 14 stone and three pounds.

Under the scheme, HMRPCT pays for people to go on a Weight Watchers or Slimming World weight loss programme and Susan attends a weekly class at Siddal Moor College, Hopwood.

The weight referral scheme is free for 12 weeks, and if you lose weight, the next 12 weeks are also free. After that, it costs £5.50 a week.

"It was about lifestyle choices, not a diet, and changing my entire way of life," Susan explains.

"I went into it thinking, this has got to work. I had a very strong commitment. When I first went along, I found that they were a team who really understood the difficulty of making these choices. They don't look down on you if you happen not to have lost weight. Instead, they look at finding out why that has happened, and come up with ideas to help. They celebrate what you do achieve."

"I am schizophrenic with food. When I am stressed, I tend to eat fatty foods, like pizzas and takeaways. It's a way of dealing with the stress."

"But there is no such thing as bad stuff, just the amounts. It is up to me to plan ahead if I want to have that chocolate bar. But I am gradually losing the taste for such foods, and that is down to making these choices."

Exercise has been an essential part of Susan's weight loss. She gets up at 5.20am



SUSAN HAaworth, right, celebrating with her weightwatchers leader Suzanne Woodiwiss

everyday to go to a gym near her Wilmslow office, but also attends Total Fitness in Whitefield, as well as a tai chi class every week at work.

"I was a member of a gym and I think I went three times in three years. They would not allow me to use the facilities because I had an Achilles tendon injury. It got to the point where I was begging to be allowed to exercise, and eventually they said yes in January this year."

"When you are that overweight, it is very scary. But I would say to anybody, don't stop yourself from doing it. I was made to feel very welcome, and I discussed what my needs were."

"If you are eating the right foods you are going to feel better about yourself. I don't feel sluggish anymore. The fact that

I am doing this and succeeding makes me feel good about myself. I can look at myself in the mirror and not go "Aaah!" I was carrying the equivalent of another person 24/7. No wonder I was feeling knackered!"

Susan is passionate about the benefits of her lifestyle change but warns that self-discipline is essential for success.

"The rewards are unbelievable but there is no easy way, there is no quick route. You have to know that this is what you want to do, and that anything is possible."

"I have had so much positive reinforcement, the ego can't help but lap it up!"

To find out more about HMRPCT's weight loss referral scheme, call 0161 655 1470, or visit your local GP.

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## Don't risk your career by committing fraud

NHS staff who carry out frauds often put their careers at risk for very limited potential financial gains, according to a senior counterfraud expert.

Sue Smith, the local counterfraud specialist for The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, issued her warning following Counterfraud Awareness Month, a national NHS Campaign. Sue leads any fraud investigations at the hospitals run by the Trust, including Bury's Fairfield General Hospital, The Royal Oldham Hospital and Rochdale Infirmary.

She held roadshows at the hospitals, which were attended by more than 200 staff and patients.

Sue said: "Fraud drains much-needed funds from the NHS. What surprises me the most is how some staff risk

their careers for a sum which equates to less than a pound for each hour they worked. Yet that can mean a criminal record and cost that individual their career."

"It's not just about the conviction, the fine, the potential civil action and the disciplinary action. People lose friendships they have had for years, because their colleagues feel so betrayed."

Three common frauds by NHS staff are working while off sick, making false claims on timesheets and falsifying CVs.

Anyone who suspects fraud against the NHS can report it on the confidential freephone hotline 0800 028 4060. More information about the work of the NHS Counter Fraud Service is available at their website [www.cfsms.nhs.uk](http://www.cfsms.nhs.uk) or by writing to them at.


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