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LOCAL HOSPITAL GROUP NABS PRESTIGIOUS WELLNESS AWARD

American Heart Association says local program among best in nation

ST. MARY'S – Joint Township District Memorial Hospital and Grand Lake Health System have been recognized as a Platinum-Level *Start! Fit-Friendly* Company by the American Heart Association's *Start!* movement.

It's the second year in a row that the hospital system has received the award, which is given to companies that create and successfully implement programs that help employees eat better and move more. Grand Lake Health System was also one of 15 organizations nationwide to be cited for community innovation in fitness.

The hospital system was applauded for its year-long fitness challenge called *Road To Fitness*. The program encouraged employees as well as members of the Grand Lake community to increase their physical activity. Those who signed up for the program earned points by implementing personal exercise routines, participating in local exercise classes and doing community road races. Each activity earned participants points which were used to receive prizes.

The beauty of the *Road To Fitness* was that it was based on participation, not skill.

"That is what makes our program unique," says Anne Larger, community outreach director. "You don't have to be good; you just have to do it. I don't care if you walk a 5k or if you run it. The important thing is that you are out there doing it."

Program coordinators are convinced it is this approach that made the program such a success. *Road To Fitness* attracted approximately 300 participants who took part in 10 different races involving running, biking or walking. These same community participants signed up for classes at local YMCAs to earn points and better their health.

The reward was sweet for many. Those who racked up 100 points were entered into a drawing to win prizes like iPods, heart monitors, athletic wear and even a bike. And for many, that didn't take too long. Those who did the Oktoberfest Classic 10K, for instance, came home with 20 points as well as a sense of accomplishment.

Some, like Lisa Masonbrink, took full advantage of the challenge.

"The *Road To Fitness* program offered me the motivation to challenge myself physically throughout the year," said Masonbrink, who works as a lab phlebotomist at the hospital. "I was able to participate in six of the nine community events as well as attend daily fitness classes at the YMCA. I appreciate those who made the program possible and hope to see it return in 2010."

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Grand Lake was one of only 150 companies nationwide to be named as a Platinum Award *Fit-Friendly* company for workplace wellness. Platinum-level employers satisfied five different criteria including offering employees physical activity options in the workplace and demonstrating measurable outcomes related to workplace wellness.

However, it's not the title that has hospital executives filled with pride. It's the fact that Grand Lake has retained the title for the second year in a row. The hospital system received the same prestigious recognition last year for its *Grand Health Challenge*. The weight loss program, which also included wellness education and motivational sessions, had participation from 512 individuals, who lost nearly 6,000 pounds in six months.

Many individuals who started their wellness journey during the *Grand Health Challenge* were able to keep crucial weight off by participating in the *Road To Fitness* this year.

"That's probably what we are most proud about with this program," said Larger. "*Road To Fitness* is evidence that Grand Lake is serious about helping our employees get healthy and stay healthy for life, not just for a temporary challenge. We hope to only continue our role in helping the community live a better life."

About Joint Township District Memorial Hospital and Grand Lake Health System:

Proudly committed to serving the community with compassionate care, advanced technology and expertise, Grand Lake Health System is a comprehensive health system offering a wide range of primary, acute and therapy services to the people of the Grand Lake region. Joint Township District Memorial Hospital offers: modern facilities; state-of-the-art equipment; caring medical professionals; highly qualified, experienced physicians; the widest array of medical services and specialties — all with quality and convenience. JTDMH and Grand Lake Health System remain committed to our long tradition of serving you with skill, expertise, quality, care and compassion.



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