

Get Fit!: Weight-loss contest takes aim at waistlines

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Is your waistline still recovering from those big holiday meals? Is the scale coming up short on that New Year's weight-loss resolution? Have you been trying to get the baby weight off but the baby is now 10 years old?

If you answered yes to any of these, then the Central Valley's Greatest Loser contest may be the right challenge for you. It's a 12-week program started in Fresno that is going on its fourth year but is including Tulare County for the first time this year.

The contest pool includes residents in Tulare, Fresno and Madera counties, all of whom will have their initial weigh-in Saturday at the McDermont Field House in Lindsay and their last weigh-in is June 11 followed by a final on June 18 in Fresno. Angela Nash, who owns the company that organizes the challenge, said she wanted to start in Tulare County to show support for the new geographical addition to the Greatest Loser.

"We tried to expand to the south last year and it didn't work out, and this year we

made some contacts with the McDermont Field House and we have a trainer in Visalia who will go between Visalia and Lindsay," Nash said.

Nash and her personal trainer husband, Lamont Nash, own Get a Better Body Fitness in Fresno. They started the contest four years ago after Lamont Nash was inspired by the reality television contest "The Biggest Loser." He wanted to do something similar, but the twist would be that anyone who desired to lose weight would be able to enter.

The contest is sponsored entirely by businesses, with the registration fees covering the cost of a T-shirt and to pay the personal trainers. Participants are asked to donate a \$1 for each pound they lose to either American Red Cross: Central Valley Region, Imagine U Children's Museum or a Fresno non-profit called Break the Barriers.

"We don't do this for a profit, by any means. It's a community thing and a way

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for people to make new friends," Angela Nash said.

She said that, for many past contestants, the contest was the boost that got them on their way to lifelong fitness. Last year's overall winner, Theresa Lennon, lost 19.7 percent of her body weight and went from a pant size 22 to size 10. For her efforts, she won an elliptical machine worth \$3,000, a one-year membership to LA Boxing and \$2,000 in cash and other prizes.

Every three weeks contestants will weigh in, and the person at that point who has lost the most will win a smaller prize. There will be a separate overall grand prize for the south and north Valley areas, as well as for a family of five and a group of 10.

Contestants shed the weight by working in groups of 25 people three times a week with a trainer. In Tulare County, that trainer is Tony Trujillo.

"Trainers are a part of this, but we're just a supporting factor, we're not the whole thing," Trujillo said. "There are major rewards here. They'll win cash prizes and stuff like that, but they also are accomplishing what they set out to do. There are some people who, if they get with a trainer, it can be limitless."

People participating in the challenge will also get meal planning and nutrition help. They can also refer to the Central Valley Greatest Loser website, www.cvgreatestloser.com, for more such

information, or ask their trainers for exercise plans to do on their own.

How to attend

- > What: A 12-week program that pairs groups of people with personal trainers so they can lose weight. Those individuals, families or teams who lose the most will win prizes along the way, and at the end there will be a grand-prize winner.
- > When: Weigh-in starts Saturday, but contestants can join up to a week after weigh-in.
- > Where: Weigh-in is at McDermont Field House, 365 N. Sweetbrier Ave., Lindsay; training in the South Valley will be at the Field House and at Toddle Fitness, 309 W. Oak St., Visalia.
- > Cost: \$95 for new contestants, \$80 for returning contestants, and \$75 per person for a team of 10 or family of five.
- > Information: Register online at www.cvgreatestloser.com, e-mail gabbfitness@yahoo.com or 930-2312.

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