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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE WITH PHOTOS
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**LIVES RENEWED:
*AT ANY AGE, EXERCISE IS A PRESCRIPTION FOR GOOD HEALTH***

TUPELO, Miss.—Though born at less than six pounds each, it wasn't long before twins Haley and Holly Fike of Ecpu began battling their weight.

The 10-year-olds also struggled with a thyroid condition, and Holly's blood pressure was creeping up to a dangerous level. "Last September their doctor was considering putting Holly on blood pressure medicine," said their grandmother and guardian, Joyce Wilson. "He told us the weight had to come off."

Thankfully, the family found help at Pontotoc Wellness Center. Although they were too young for a regular membership, their doctor's prescription for exercise qualified the twins for a medical membership. To begin with, they worked out with personal trainers three times a week for several weeks. They learned to enjoy walking on the inside track, doing cardiovascular exercise and using the weight machines. Their grandmother also participated so that she could take over once their personal training sessions ended.

The family met with the Wellness Center's dietitian to improve their eating habits. "The girls limit their calories to 500 each meal and 100 calories twice a day for snacks. I thought they would have a problem cutting out fast food and junk food," Wilson said, "but they have done so well."

Since September 2009, Holly has dropped 46 pounds and Haley has lost 37—and Wilson is one proud grandmother.

"Before we started at the Wellness Center, the girls would come in from school and sit down in front of the TV," Wilson said. "Now that they have lost the weight, they love to go outside and play, go swimming and do other activities. They are a lot more active now."

The family still goes to the Wellness Center at least three days a week, and more if homework allows. "I bought a treadmill for home so that on days we can't make it to the Wellness Center, they can at least get on and walk 15 minutes or more a day," Wilson said.

Wilson said she recently compared last year's school photos to current photos of the twins, and "they don't even look like the same girls." The weight loss offered added benefits for the North Pontotoc Attendance Center fifth-graders. Holly's blood pressure continues to decrease

and Haley's self-confidence continues to increase. "I'm glad they feel good about themselves," Wilson said. "I wouldn't take nothing for them."

Exercise is Medicine

Jeanie Dale, a 30-year fitness industry veteran who currently supervises Pontotoc Wellness Center, says, "The best part of working in the hospital fitness industry is working with doctors, nurses and other health care professionals to improve the health of people in our care." Dale and other NMMC fitness experts follow the American College of Sports Medicine guidelines in developing individualized exercise regimens for each member.

"Some medications that people need to take to improve their health may cause unpleasant side effects," Dale says. "The great thing about exercise is that its side effects are improved aerobic capacity, increased energy, better bone density, more muscle strength, fat loss, an improved feeling of well-being and more."

An Amazing Difference

About five years ago, Shelia McGee, 46, of Baldwyn was diagnosed with breast cancer, then type 2 diabetes. McGee underwent a lumpectomy and 36 radiation treatments. She takes four insulin shots a day plus oral medication for her diabetes.

In October 2009, McGee joined Baldwyn Wellness Center, which happens to be next to Baldwyn Police Department, where she works as a dispatcher and secretary. "I just decided I was going to do something to help me, to benefit my health and make me feel better," she said. A fitness instructor designed an exercise regimen specifically for her that includes cardiovascular exercises and weight training. She visits the Wellness Center five days a week for 30 minutes to an hour.

At the same time she started an exercise program, she also starting cutting back on what she eats. Not only has she shed 20 pounds, but she has also lowered her blood pressure and been able to decrease the amount of insulin in each shot she takes.

She also feels better. "Diabetes makes you tired, and I still get tired some," she said. "But I feel a lot better, and I have a lot more energy. I don't know why I waited so long to join."

"Shelia is an example of someone who decided to do this for herself. She has been an inspiration to many of our members who are trying improve their health through a regular exercise program," said Henry Daniels, a fitness specialist who supervises Baldwyn Wellness Center. "An exercise program isn't always just about how much weight is lost—it can have a lot

of hidden benefits, such as regulating blood sugar in people with diabetes, regulating blood pressure, decreasing stress levels, and improving a person's general well-being."

Sidebar 1:

A Simple Plan

Follow these guidelines from the American College of Sports Medicine to meet the basic activity recommendations after consulting your physician:

Adults (18-64)

- 150 minutes a week of moderate*-intensity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous**-intensity aerobic physical activity.
- Muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups on two or more days per week.

Older Adults (65+)

- Follow the adult guidelines, or be as physically active as possible. Avoid inactivity.
- Exercises that maintain or improve balance if at risk of falling.

*Moderate-intensity physical activity means working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat, yet still being able to carry on a conversation. Examples: brisk walking, ballroom dancing or general gardening.

**Vigorous-intensity physical activity causes rapid breathing and a substantial increase in heart rate. Example: jogging.

Sidebar 2:

NMMC Wellness Centers are located in:

- Baldwin
- Eupora
- Hamilton, Ala.
- Iuka
- Pontotoc

- Tupelo
- West Point

Nutrition and fitness experts at each location can design a program just for you. To learn more, call 1-800-THE DESK (1-800-843-3375) or visit www.nmhs.net/wellness_centers.php.