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### MAKE A SPLASH WITH WATER FITNESS

TUPELO, Miss.—Butch Bastian of Tupelo enrolled in the Water POWER class to lose weight, but he gained a lot in the process.

The POWER in Water POWER is an acronym for People Over Weight Exercising Regularly. Jeffrey Bailey, who has lost more than 270 pounds by watching what he eats and faithfully exercising at the Wellness Center for several years, launched the class in April 2008. His goal with the class is to help individuals like him who are at least 100 pounds overweight with a body mass index of 40 or greater. Bailey's success has been featured on several occasions on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

#### **A Life-Changing Accident**

Bastian was a meat cutter for 25 years in Philadelphia, Pa., before moving to Tupelo. "I weighed 230 pounds and had a 30-inch waist. I was a football player and a bouncer," he says. "I lifted sides of meat for a living and I was in great shape." Then tragedy struck in 1987 when a severe electrical shock did substantial damage to his left arm, and his thyroid and pituitary glands. Over the next 18 months he continually gained weight, reaching more than 580 pounds.

Trying every diet program imaginable, he finally lost about 100 pounds. But at 479 pounds, Bastian easily met the criteria for Water POWER when he joined the class in November 2008.

"I was suffering with bad knees," says Bastian, 68. "I had been getting cortisone injections for the pain in my knees every six months. Then it got to where I was having to get a cortisone injection every 30 days, plus take pain medicine." His physician recommended trying water aerobics instead.

Besides adding exercise to his routine, Bastian also changed his eating habits. His hard work paid big dividends. "I've lost 149 pounds so far and I can walk a lot farther now," he says. "My knees don't hurt. I haven't had a cortisone injection since I started the class, and I no longer need the pain medication."

#### **Fitness & Friendship**

But Bastian gained a lot more from Water POWER than he ever could have imagined. "The class is more than just people doing water aerobics together," he says. "It's friends doing

things we enjoy together.” Water POWER participants and their families get together outside of class at least once a month for a healthy lunch or picnic at a local park.

When Bastian recently had a health scare and underwent tests on his heart, he was overwhelmed by the class members’ outpouring of concern. “They volunteered to sit with my girlfriend, they offered rides and anything they could do to help,” he says. “Everybody has such a good attitude. The class is one of the best remedies there is for all kinds of problems.”

Water POWER meets for one hour three mornings each week. The class is free to Wellness Center members, and nonmembers may attend for \$100 per quarter. Interested individuals are encouraged to call 1-800-THE DESK (1-800-843-3375) for a free trial class.

### **Move It or Lose It**

Retired realtor Molly Thompson, 70, joined the NMMC-Tupelo Wellness Center more than four years ago. At the recommendation of three doctors and a good friend, she tried the Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program and has been hooked ever since.

Water is an ideal environment for relieving arthritis pain and stiffness because Thompson can exercise without putting excess strain on her joints and muscles. Under the guidance of a trained instructor, the gentle exercises improve her strength and flexibility.

“We walk in the water, we jog, stretch and do arm and leg exercises,” she said. “The class really helps my joints and my balance.” While Thompson joined the class because of her arthritis, it also helps relieve the symptoms of Parkinson’s disease, which she was diagnosed with in 2008.

She tries not to miss class, which meets at 10:30 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. “It’s an effort to get there sometimes, but I can certainly tell when I don’t go,” she said. “I am more fatigued when I don’t go.”

Another perk is the social interaction, which helps decrease feelings of depression and isolation that can accompany arthritis and other chronic diseases. “It’s a group of people I probably wouldn’t have gotten to know otherwise,” Thompson said. “Everyone is interested in each other. I really enjoy the fellowship.”

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### **Sidebar:**

#### **Water Exercise Classes**

NMMC-Tupelo offers a variety of water exercise classes, including:

- AFYAP (Arthritis Foundation YMCA Aquatic Program)—This class will help increase range of motion and flexibility.

- Lite H2O'robics—This low impact class incorporates cardiovascular and strength training with the use of hand weights.
- H2O'robics—This class will include an aerobic and strengthening workout that is sure to get you energized!
- Sunrise Splash—Wake up to this great aerobic and sculpting workout.
- H2O Explosion—Treat your body to this super cardiovascular workout.
- H2O Camp—This fun class will take you through different drills and intervals of exercise.
- Water POWER—This class is designed for individuals who are at least 100 pounds overweight with a body mass index of 40 or greater.

To learn more about water aerobics and other available fitness opportunities, call 1-800-THE DESK (1-800-843-3375) or visit [www.nmhs.net/wellness\\_centers.php](http://www.nmhs.net/wellness_centers.php).

### **Sidebar:**

#### **Benefits of Water Fitness**

- Non-weight bearing exercise
- Improves muscular endurance
- Improves core strength and endurance
- Great exercise for pregnant women
- Improves flexibility
- Improves cardiovascular conditioning
- Burns an enormous amount of calories
- Keeps the body cool during exercise
- Fun and enjoyable exercise
- Great way to modify or spice up normal routine