

Learning healthy living skills—on the job

Had anyone glanced inside the Cataraqui Canadian Tire store one early morning last February they may have been puzzled by the sight: staff member's strength training on the shop floor!

"We were working out using resistance bands – it was great," said Diane Shafer, human resources manager, Cataraqui Canadian Tire store in Kingston.

The west end Canadian Tire is just one of about 21 workplaces that took advantage of KFL&A Public Health's Motiv8 program for workplaces. It's a series of five on-site presentations about behaviour change, healthy eating, and physical activity.

Participants receive a pedometer to encourage them to take more steps in a day, learn about strength training exercises, healthy meals and snacks, and how to interpret food labels.

"The program helps participants work toward achieving healthy lifestyles and weight, through skill building presentations," said Jane Thurston, staff member of the Motiv8 initiative. "We also hope to help workplaces to develop an environment and culture that promotes and supports their employees efforts to make healthy choices."

All of this is aimed at helping our community reduce our risk for chronic disease.

"One session people are still talking about is the one on the nutritional value of food and how to read food labels," said Diane of Canadian Tire. "We all found that really interesting and helpful. We also really enjoyed the strength training session. We sell resistance bands at the store so a few staff bought some and are using them now."

Another workplace that received the Motiv8 series was Benefits by Design, a Kingston company that specializes in group insurance for small businesses.

"All the sessions were great," said Susan Keyes, new business co-ordinator at Benefits by Design, and a member of the company's Wellness Committee. "I think they really did motivate people."

"I'm more aware of my fruit and vegetable intake, for sure," said Benefits by Design employee, Taryn. "Also, I've been using my resistance bands almost every night, along with the little booklet of exercises, lots of impact for sure." Staff member Anne admitted that, "keeping me motivated is not an easy task but the program has done a great job of making me more aware of what I eat, and how much exercise I get on a daily basis." And fellow employee Brad said that "Motiv8 has changed my eating habits in the way of watching my portion sizes. I have also trained myself to drink far more water than I usually would before Motiv8 inspired me, which has translated into weight loss."

Workplaces in KFL&A interested in getting the Motiv8 series can contact KFL&A Public Health Living Well Line at 613-549-1232, ext. 1180.



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