

Ormond's biggest loser feels like a new man

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ORMOND BEACH — Bob Coleman was just trying to please his wife by going to a health fair in January.

It ended up changing his life.

"This is a change I should have made several years ago," he said.

Nearly 40 pounds later, the 66-year-old is feeling better than ever after winning Ormond Beach's inaugural Mayor's Fitness Challenge by losing the most pounds.

Coleman said he had no plans to lose weight when he attended the health fair with his wife, Bobbi.

"I just went there to pacify my wife," he joked, later crediting her encouragement with helping him get involved in the event. Coleman, a retired Florida Power & Light executive, got excited as he started envisioning the benefits of slimming down.

"I saw the possibilities of what could be," he said.

Coleman started out small, giving up his love for pizza and eating only until he was full. Then he quit desserts.

"If you have no plan, you end up going nowhere," he said.

Soon Coleman's shirts didn't fit anymore; he had to resort to drilling holes in his belts to keep his pants from falling down. He's even gotten back out on the basketball court.

"I'm just taking it slow," he said.

Coleman wasn't the only one to lose weight in the challenge.

Mayor Ed Kelley had hoped to come out victorious but shedding 21 pounds wasn't enough.

At Tuesday's City Commission meeting when Coleman was announced as the winner, Kelley joked that Coleman drank a gallon of water before weighing in at the start of the challenge.

"It's the only time that I lost that I feel like I really won," Kelley said.

In all, 383 pounds were lost during the 90-day event among the 50 participants who completed the challenge. The challenge also helped raise \$350 for Family Renew Community, which helps less fortunate families. More than 16 bags of clothing items were also donated to the organization.



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Bob Coleman, 66, lost nearly 40 pounds in the inaugural Mayor's Fitness Challenge in Ormond Beach.



Coleman, who won another category for losing the largest percentage of body fat, won \$1,000 that would have weighed down his wallet. But he was quick to shed that, too, donating it to Family Renew Community

"I should pay (the city and health professionals) for helping me make these changes," he said before receiving the award.

City staffer Christina Maguire, who organized the fitness challenge, said the city was pleased with the response from the community. Planning for next year's event will start soon, and the city hopes to have activities throughout the summer for those who participated in this year's event, she said.

The mayor certainly isn't finished with his challenge to citizens. Commissioner Rick Boehm at the end of Tuesday's commission meeting quipped that Kelley has already committed to lose more weight during the next challenge.

"Of course, if he's stays mayor for the next three, four or five years, there won't be any of him left."

Kelley said he hopes more people will consider taking part in the next challenge.

"All you had to do was make a decision to change your life," he said.

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