



# Together we stand...



## YWM<sup>2015</sup> **OUR JOURNEY** RESTORE. REFRESH. RENEW.

**O**ur journey isn't always easy. There are going to be twists and turns, setbacks and roadblocks. Sometimes we need a way to restore ourselves, to refresh our bodies and our minds and to renew ourselves, so we can continue ahead on our path.

### YWM2015 by the Numbers:

- Registrants: **575**
- Participants in the OAC's National Advocacy Training: **55**
- Attendees Who Discovered the "Power of Your Voice": **56**
- Advocacy March Participants: **100**
- Speakers: **38**
- Sponsors: **13**
- Exhibitors: **31**
- New OAC Members: **74**

"Our Journey – Restore. Refresh. Renew." was the theme of the OAC's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual *Your Weight Matters* National Convention in San Antonio, Texas. Attendees were not only motivated to progress in their individual journeys with weight and health, but they also felt empowered to share their journey with others — and to stand together.

There's no gathering quite like the *Your Weight Matters* National Convention. There's a sense of

"You can come here and it's like coming back home," Roberts said. "You see people who you met last year, and you meet people who you look forward to seeing again next year. It's like a family reunion."

YWM2015 also provided an opportunity for attendees to have some fun and relax. On Friday night, the OAC hosted its annual Welcoming Ceremonies Party, an event where attendees embraced the theme of, "the OAC's Wild, Wild West!" and entered the party decked out in western gear, such as cowboy hats, saloon outfits and even as some of the wildlife found in the west, like horses and armadillos.



*The winners of our annual costume contest, Chris Baily and Corinna Virgona, who dressed up as cacti to represent the dry desert of the West.*

community, an abundance of information and a variety of exhibitors all working to provide attendees with evidence-based tips and resources. There was something for everyone at YWM2015, and our 575 registrants walked out at the end of the weekend with new friends, useful information and a highly-fueled passion for the work of the OAC.

### Restoring Our Strength and Empowerment

There's strength in numbers, and with record-breaking attendance at this year's convention, it's not surprising that attendees enjoyed coming together to mingle and meet new people. Despite the different backgrounds and locations that everyone came from, attendees connected with one another while discussing their hobbies, interests and their personal journeys with their weight and health.

YWM2015 attendee Kathleen Roberts has made many friends throughout the years through her time at numerous *Your Weight Matters* Conventions. She said it's a place where she can come to and not feel judged, and every year, she feels inspired to take that feeling home with her and share it with her friends and family.

Michelle Mata, a convention attendee who has been at every *Your Weight Matters* National Convention since the inaugural meeting in Dallas, said she really enjoys herself

at the Friday night dance because the community of people who surround her is incredibly accepting.



*YWM Convention Attendee Michelle Mata holding her "Ban the F Word" banner at the OAC's Advocacy March.*

"I come here because the OAC is my second family," Mata said. "It's where I don't have to hide, and I don't have to worry about pretending and watching where I go and what I do. It's a safe place, a place where I don't have to worry about anything at all."

# Our Journey at YWM2015

## Refreshing Our Minds and Our Bodies

One of the key highlights of the *Your Weight Matters* National Convention is the evidence-based education and informational sessions that are provided to attendees throughout the weekend. This year we learned about everything from how to integrate activity into our daily lives to the science of obesity, and how to change our thinking.

"In what other disease, do we tolerate the abuse of people with a chronic condition? Health plans must stop it," said YWM2015 Convention Co-chair Lloyd Stegemann, MD, FASMBS, during his session on taking a stand together on our journey.

Attendees learned the facts, but they were also given motivating messages to help push them forward on their entire journey – not just during their time at YWM2015.

"Get back up. Make sure you try again, and if sometimes we fall so hard that we need somebody to pick us back up, make sure your team is strong enough to do that, because you'll need to do it for them," encouraged speaker Merrill Littleberry, LCSW, LCDC, CCM, CI-CPT, during her talk about learning to enjoy your journey through the progress, pit stops and potholes.



*Merrill Littleberry, LCSW, LCDC, CCM, CI-CPT, gives a motivating talk about how to enjoy your journey through the progress, pit stops and potholes.*

On Saturday, we opened the doors to the YWM Healthy Living EXPO Hall to the local San Antonio community, in a partnership with the YMCA of Greater San Antonio. The local community was able to get a free health screening provided by BMI of Texas, and learn more about the variety of exhibitors in the EXPO hall. Community members walked out of the convention saying they learned a great deal of information about the options available to them while taking care of their health.

Melanie Geraci, a first-time attendee of the Convention, said she learned so much from the speakers, the EXPO hall and the Lunch with the Experts session that she attended. Geraci



*YWM2015 attendees got active early in the morning during a Bokwa H2O group exercise session at the pool with YMCA of Greater San Antonio fitness instructor Sonya Reyna.*

said she has a goal to continue her success into the future and to stay healthy, and that YWM2015 helped her with staying on track.

"They said your surgery's a tool," she said. "I don't want my tool to go to waste. I don't want to put my tool in the garage, and leave it there to get rusty. I want to use it."

It isn't just about the information at YWM2015. Attendees also participated in group exercise sessions held throughout the weekend, with a variety of activities offered, such as Bokwa H2O, Tai Chi, Laughter Yoga and Hip-hop Fitness. The sessions offered at YWM2015 were new for many attendees, but after their experiences, they said they had a great time and planned to look into finding similar classes in their local communities.

Geraci, in the spirit of trying new things, joined in the Hip-hop Fitness group exercise session; a workout session presented by certified hip-hop instructor Robanne Robin, RN, BSN.

"It was different from what I'm used to because I've done a lot of bootcamp (fitness)," Geraci said. "I'm doing a lot of regular exercises and getting back into working out, but the hip-hop (fitness) gave me a new turn to the exercise world. So I'm learning a lot of new things."

## Renewing Our Commitment to Stand with the OAC

At the OAC, we've committed to providing education, advocacy and support for the individuals affected by the disease of obesity. We've made this commitment — and stood by it for the past 10 years. It will take more than just us fighting for these individuals, however. We'll need all of our members and supporters standing with us in our fight as well.



*OAC President and CEO Joe Nadglowski coaches advocacy trainees on how to prepare for their mock-legislative visits during the OAC's National Advocacy Training session.*

To stay true to our mission, the OAC hosts National Advocacy Training sessions for individuals who are interested in taking the next step toward learning how to be a voice for individuals affected by obesity. In the session, led by OAC President and CEO Joe Nadglowski and OAC Policy Consultant Chris Gallagher, trainees are provided with information and guidance on how to discuss access to care for obesity with their legislators, through understanding the lobbying process and learning about what to expect when they only have a brief meeting to make their case to their representatives.

At the end of the training session, trainees were given the opportunity to try out their skills on OAC volunteers, who acted as legislators possessing a variety of backgrounds

and understanding on obesity. Not every mock-legislator was as receptive to the idea of covering treatment options for obesity, and attendees learned a valuable lesson — that it's the power of your voice that will make all the difference.

"Teaching activism, especially legislative advocacy, is a cornerstone of the OAC," Nadglowski said. "Like most things, people get better at advocacy with practice, and the OAC's Legislative Advocacy Training was designed to help teach not only the fundamentals of legislative advocacy but also to help build confidence in the advocacy process. Nearly 60 trained advocates left with the skills to raise their voice and advocate on behalf of those with obesity."

For our newest advocates, the OAC offered a session on Discovering the Power of Your Voice, hosted by OAC staff members James Zervios and Lindsay McGhay. In this session, participants met with OAC staff and volunteers to discuss a variety of topics on how they can become more involved with the work of the OAC.



*OAC Board Member Tammy Beaumont BSN, RN, CBN, discusses with OAC members how to discover the power of their voice.*



*OAC President and CEO Joe Nadglowski (left) shows attendee John Ortegea (right) how to write to his legislators during the OAC's Advocacy March to Washington, DC.*



*OAC Board Members pose for a picture during the OAC's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Program.*

## Presenting the OAC Annual Awards

Each year at the *Your Weight Matters* National Convention, the OAC recognizes outstanding members and supporters who have contributed to our success. Award winners are recognized at the OAC's Annual Awards Program on Saturday evening of the Convention.

Our award winners have worked tirelessly for individuals affected by obesity, and the OAC wouldn't be where we are today if it wasn't for their work and support. Through their work with the OAC, they've not only given back to the organization, but learned for themselves that their voice is strong enough to make a difference.



*The OAC presented 13 awards during our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual OAC Award Program.*

"It's been a driving thing for me, especially as I get more and more involved with the OAC, to realize that I have power, we all have power," said Rob Portinga, recipient of the OAC Member of the Year Award. "It might be as simple as people at the tables we're at right now, or it grows. We all have that responsibility to use that power for something positive, and the OAC has given me that chance."

*YWM2015 continued on next page*



*The OAC had more than 100 advocates join in our Advocacy March to Washington, DC.*



One of the activities at the Advocacy March to Washington, DC was participants charting where they're from, showing the OAC's voice is nationwide!

*YWM2015 continued from previous page*

To wrap-up the weekend and empower our attendees one last time, the OAC held its virtual March to Washington, DC, an event consisting of a variety of stations that attendees march to that provide activities they can do to support the OAC.

Stations varied from emailing legislators to signing petitions to designing banners in support of the OAC's Ban the F Word movement. At the end, our Advocacy March participants were inspired to take everything they've learned throughout the weekend back into their communities, spreading the word about the OAC in ways such as passing out materials, responding to weight bias alerts and sharing their story with others.

"The OAC is valuable, it gives people hope and the connection that we need," Mata said. "It gives people the chance to start living a life and it gives people the chance to know that somebody cares about them and that somebody is fighting for them, for their challenges and for the things that they need when they can't get them in their own community. The OAC is here — for us."

The OAC thanks all of the attendees, exhibitors, sponsors and other supporters who helped make the 4th Annual *Your Weight Matters* National Convention a roaring success. We hope to see you next year at our 5th Annual Convention in Washington, DC!

# THANK YOU

## to our 2015 National Convention Sponsors

### Platinum



### Gold



### Silver



### Bronze



*Save the Date*



OAC's 5th Annual  
*Your Weight Matters*  
National Convention

August 25-28, 2016  
Washington, DC

Gaylord National Resort  
and Convention Center

[www.YWMConvention.com](http://www.YWMConvention.com)



# OAC Membership Application

**Why Join the OAC?** The OAC is a nearly 50,000 member-strong 501(c)(3) National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to the individual affected by the disease of obesity and helping individuals along their journey toward better health through education, advocacy and support. Our core focuses are to raise awareness and improve access to the prevention and treatment of obesity, provide evidence-based education on obesity and its treatments, fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination, elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health and offer a community of support for the individual affected.

## 1. OAC Membership Categories *(select one)*

- Individual Membership: \$20/year
- Institutional Membership: \$500/year
- Chairman's Council Membership: \$1000+/year

Are you joining for the first time, or are you renewing your OAC Membership?

- I am joining for the first time *(never been an OAC member)*.
- I am renewing my membership *(have joined the OAC in the past)*.

## 2. Donation Add-on

### Add-on Donation: Make a General Donation

Make a tax-deductible donation to the OAC when joining as a member. Your donation helps the OAC's educational and advocacy efforts.

- \$5
- \$10
- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Membership/Donation Add-on Totals:

Membership Fee: +\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Add-on *(optional)*: +\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL PAYMENT:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment Information

- Check (payable to the OAC) for \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- Credit card for my TOTAL, including add-ons, of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- Discover® Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_
- MasterCard® Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Visa® Billing Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_
- Amex® CV Code: \_\_\_\_\_

## Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**JOIN ONLINE!** To join the OAC online, please visit [www.ObesityAction.org](http://www.ObesityAction.org) and click on the "Get Involved" tab.

**Mail:** OAC  
4511 North Himes Ave. Ste. 250  
Tampa, FL 33614

**Fax:** (813) 873-7838

MagMembership-Spring2015



# BUILDING A COALITION OF THOSE AFFECTED

The OAC is the **ONLY** non-profit organization whose sole focus is helping those affected by obesity. The OAC is a great place to turn if you are looking for a way to get involved and give back to the cause of obesity.

## Why YOU Should Become an OAC Member

Quite simply, because the voice of those affected needs to be built! The OAC not only provides valuable public education on obesity, but we also conduct a variety of advocacy efforts. With advocacy, our voice must be strong. And, member is what gives the OAC its strong voice.

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

## BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP



- Official welcome letter and membership card
- Annual subscription to the OAC's publication, *Your Weight Matters*<sup>SM</sup> Magazine
- Subscriptions to the OAC Members Make a Difference and Obesity Action Alert monthly e-newsletters
- "Bias Buster" Alerts, alerting specifically to issues of weight bias
- Immediate Advocacy Alerts on urgent advocacy issues and access to the OAC's expert advocacy team
- Ability to lend your voice to the cause