

Education Matters  
Advocacy Matters  
Support Matters

OAC MEMBERS  
MATTER

# My JOURNEY

by Jason Krynicki



Jason visits Washington, D.C. to share his journey and talk about improving obesity care with members of Congress!

“I’ve gotten the chance to meet so many new friends through this organization, and those friends have in turn become my new family for life.”

I first learned about the OAC in October 2015 through my participation in the Kennedy University Bariatric Support Group in Stratford, New Jersey. In February 2016, I visited the OAC headquarters in Tampa, Fla., and spoke with several staff members. I immediately fell in love with the OAC because of its educational and empowering work in the field of obesity. I truly believe that the OAC is an amazing organization, and I got the chance to experience that first-hand while attending the 2016 *Your Weight Matters* National Convention in Washington, DC.

At the Convention, I learned how to advocate for legislation to be passed in the United States Congress. As a result, I contacted several New Jersey State politicians, urging them to recognize the obesity epidemic by creating National Obesity Care Week. I highly recommend the OAC to everyone because they are a well-rounded organization and the individuals leading it are a very professional group of people. I also urge OAC members and supporters to attend the *Your Weight Matters* National Convention because I promise that you will learn so much and meet so many great people as well!

I sincerely believe that the OAC is the best organization in the world. The community that the OAC fosters is a family, it’s life-changing, and I’m so glad that I have become a part of it. I’ve gotten the chance to meet so many new friends through this organization, and those friends have in turn become my new family for life. Through its leadership and its mission, the OAC has taught me so much, and I owe a lot to this incredible cause.



Jason shows his determination to advocate for better obesity care by speaking with legislators on Capitol Hill!

## My Journey with Advocacy

As a passionate advocate for the OAC, I constantly share all of the wonderful and helpful information from the OAC social media channels to my own personal pages. I also pass on the OAC's information and educational resources to people I meet at the Kennedy University Bariatric Support Group and on their social media pages as well. Additionally, I talk about the important work that the OAC does when I speak to groups of people who are beginning the bariatric surgery process through the Kennedy Health Alliance in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and I discuss the value of the OAC with the doctors' monthly seminar.

## Writing My Story – and How the OAC Helped Me Get Here

Since choosing to have bariatric surgery, I have turned my life around and I'm eager to share my journey with the general public. So many individuals struggle with obesity, and I want them to know that there are options available to them for a healthier and happier lifestyle. My gastric band surgery is just one example.

For my whole life, I've been judged by family members. I've struggled with obesity since childhood, and I've always faced jokes and judgement. Because of this, I've motivated myself each and every day to set new goals and to work

hard to meet them so that I can improve my life. I made the decision to find improved health. So, I began to research bariatric surgery and attended a seminar for bariatric procedures. Then, I decided to undergo gastric band surgery. Before my procedure, I stopped smoking, lost 25 pounds and started exercising by walking every day. Then, on September 2, 2015 at the age of 33, I had bariatric surgery at Virtua Voorhees Hospital in Marlton, New Jersey with my amazing surgeon – Adam Goldstein, DO, FACS.

I am 5' 6" tall and before my surgery, I weighed 267 pounds, was very inactive, smoked heavily, had sleep apnea among other health issues, and was told by my doctor that I might not live to be 35 if I continued on the same path. My dad died at the age of 50, so my doctor's words were a wake-up call for me. I was also told by people that I wasn't a good role model. That has also motivated me each and every day.

I truly believe that I made the right decision because my surgery gave me my life back. I have always strictly followed my doctor's orders and cautions as a post-op patient, and after six months, all of my medical issues were resolved. I no longer had sleep apnea, high blood pressure, hypertension or a bad back. I also exercise five days a week at my local YMCA, and I completed three 5K runs – something I could have never done before.

As of today, I have lost 88 pounds. I follow a specific exercise program and strictly adhere to all of the dietary guidelines I was given following gastric band surgery. I have become my own success story! I would formally like to thank Dr. Goldstein, my bariatric nurse Joann, my nutritional and cultural counselors Cheri and Aly, my bariatric nurse coordinator Melissa, and my receptionist Cristin for giving me my life back and helping me throughout this entire process.

On September 10, 2016, I – along with other men and women who had successful bariatric procedures – participated in a fashion show at Cherry Hill Mall in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, to talk about bariatric procedures as a treatment for obesity. Then, on December 14, 2016, I had plastic surgery to remove the excess skin that resulted from my significant weight-loss.

As of today, I speak at one of the doctors' seminars to individuals who are beginning their own process with obesity treatment and bariatric surgery. Through this journey, I have become a bariatric support group leader and a bariatric "back on track" facilitator. I am also taking more classes so that I can help individuals just like me within the bariatric community. These days, I feel so positive and I'm always motivated to help others through their unique weight-loss journeys by sharing my own experiences, enthusiasm and



Jason poses for a picture with OAC Board Member Michelle Vicari at the 2016 *Your Weight Matters* National Convention.

knowledge. If I can help change just one person's life for the better, I will feel like I've made a difference in the world.

It's nice to run around with my five-year-old nephew, not to be out of breath and to become healthier so that I am around to see him grow up. I have also gained many new friends throughout this process, including all of my friends who I have met through the OAC.

Before my surgery, I felt that some people didn't believe that I could go through this process of improving my health. Now, it feels awesome that I proved them wrong! After I made the decision to change my lifestyle, many of my friends whom I had not spoken to in years saw my posts on social media and contacted me to tell me that they went through similar processes or are beginning their own healthier journeys because they've seen my success. People now tell me that I am their role model, and the OAC continues to help me find support and be that support for others!



# ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

## LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

### Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
  - Community Discussion Forum
  - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



**JOIN TODAY: GO TO [OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN](http://OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN)**

[info@obesityaction.org](mailto:info@obesityaction.org)

(800) 717-3117 | (813) 872-7835 | Fax: (813) 873-7838



@ObesityActionCoalition

@ObesityAction