

# THIS IS THE PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE.

## A First-hand Look at Residential Weight-loss Programs

### My Journey to Health and Wellness

by Suzanne Sanders

Timing is everything. This is so true when it comes to making a decision to change something in your life. I believe one of the most overwhelming decisions a person can face is to finally decide it is time to get their health in order and do whatever it takes.

As a woman in my early 30's, I have dealt with weight issues most of my life. However, the 20-30 extra pounds recently turned into 80-100 extra pounds. Through the course of a couple major life changes, including the death of my father, a transition with work and the loss of a dear friendship, food became my comfort.



*Suzanne Sanders works out with a FitRx trainer during her stay at the residential weight-loss program.*

I knew I was not in a good place and needed some time to just work on me, as most of my life I have been doing things for others. A friend referred me to a wellness retreat

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(residential weight-loss program) just outside of Nashville, TN. I had always thought I could do what was needed in the comfort of my own home and city. However, to think that I could get away where no one knew me, go somewhere to completely let all of it go and work to find my joy again seemed just the perfect opportunity.

## "Me" Time

I had never before taken time for me, to deal just with me. I was excited about the idea of having a schedule that I did not have to set, but just follow along. All of the meals were taken care of and activities, including behavior therapy, were scheduled. A medical doctor oversaw the entire program. I arranged my schedule and committed to the 28-day program.

It took about three days to get settled in this new routine with people I didn't know. The group was comprised of great people from all throughout the country and we bonded quickly. Every hour of each day was scheduled - exercising, learning about food and learning how the food I was eating could really harm or repair my body. We spent a lot of time learning about our behavior patterns and triggers. We all had to dig deep into some very personal spaces to find out why we turn to food to deal with life, both the good and the bad. I enjoyed this part, as I really wanted to get to the root of why I was making certain decisions regarding food choices and the amount I was consuming.

"To go away, and stop all of the movement around you from your normal daily life allows you to gain a perspective that I believe is hard to find when you are living out your day-to-day routine."

## Not Your Same-old Nutrition and Exercise Routine

Through the course of my stay, I learned how to cook in a new way. Some of the food I was eating on a regular basis was fine, but needed to be prepared differently so the caloric and fat intake was less. I was taught about the foods I had to avoid. I was introduced to new foods that I had never heard of, some that would help to heal the body and repair the damage I had caused. Learning what is out there so I can

make an informed decision in my daily living was one of my favorite parts of the program.

Training everyday made me feel so alive. It cleared my mind and I felt strong. We were trained by an Olympic athlete who took the time to teach us. All of the trainers were patient and supportive. I worked out on my own and with trainers through various seasons of my life; however, this time around I learned new methods and basic training. I was introduced to water aerobics and hot yoga – certainly not your standard "go to the gym and lift weights" routine I was accustomed to. To end each week, we all received a full hour-long massage.

## Behavioral Breakthroughs

The behavior therapy was essential for me. There were so many enlightening moments through our times of discussion. I was able to think back and see the patterns in my life that had put me in the position I was in. I became aware of myself and the choices I would normally make. I cannot continue to numb feelings with food or for that matter, even celebrate feelings with food. This is still a work in process but getting better.

Finally, the blood work panel that was collected prior to my arrival showed a couple deficiencies in certain areas that were tied to some of my weight gain. The medical director got me started right away on a protocol that within a couple weeks, we could see notable change.

## Coming Full-circle

To go away, and stop all of the movement around you from your normal daily life allows you to gain a perspective that I believe is hard to find when you are living out your day-to-day routine. Attending this wellness retreat was the best decision I could have made to help me get on the road to total wellness. I received the tools necessary to make permanent change in my life.

Included in my graduation package were a total fitness assessment, customized diet plan, medical evaluation and personal health dossier. I am so grateful to the team that circled around me and supported me every step of the way. I have plans to go back once a quarter and stay for a week or two, which will help keep me accountable and on track.

### **About the Author:**

*Suzanne Sanders is a 33 year old single woman who owns her own business. She enjoys traveling around the world, playing tennis and sailing.*



# OAC Membership

*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.

There are a variety of ways that you can make a difference, but the first-step is to become an OAC Member. The great thing about OAC Membership is that you can be as involved as you would like. Simply being a member contributes 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, membership is what gives the OAC its strong voice.

**JOIN  
NOW**

Complete the below application now!  
For more information, visit the OAC Web site at [www.obesityaction.org](http://www.obesityaction.org).

## Membership Categories and Benefits

The OAC wants **YOU** to be a part of what we do. No matter how you're impacted, having individuals join our efforts who believe in making a difference is essential. That's why the OAC offers various member categories, so you can get involved at your desired level.

Several valuable benefits also accompany your OAC membership. Each membership category offers something different. Here are some of the core benefits to membership:

- Official welcome letter and membership card
- Annual subscription to the OAC's magazine
- Subscription to the OAC's members-only monthly electronic newsletter
- Periodic member alerts informing you of issues that need action/attention
- Ability to lend your voice to the cause
- Representation through advocacy

# Membership Application

**Yes!** I would like to join the OAC's efforts. I would like to join as a/an:

- Individual Member: \$20/year
- Professional Member: \$50/year
- Physician Member: \$150/year
- Institutional Member: \$500/year
- Chairman's Council: \$1,000 and up/year

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

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment Information

Enclosed is my check (payable to the OAC) for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Please charge my credit card for my membership fee:

Discover®  MasterCard®  Visa®  Amex®

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_