

UNITING A **YWM** 2016 POWERFUL COMMUNITY

by Joe Nadglowski, OAC President and CEO

“Our passions for our health, our future and each other unite us. When we embrace our goals, there is no limit to what we can achieve – and by standing together as a community, our passions ignite and turn into action!”

“**U**nited we stand...inspiring health” was the theme of the OAC’s 5th Annual *Your Weight Matters* National Convention in Washington, DC. Attendees joined together from all across the globe for the best tools, resources and support to guide them on their journeys with weight and health, but they left with something so much bigger – a passion born to unite, connect and challenge their commitment to the OAC.

At this year’s National Convention, an unmistakable fire was kindled throughout the course of the weekend. Individuals from multiple generations, locations and demographics gathered together and formed an incredible sense of community where there was no such thing as a “stranger.” Rather, each attendee – new and old – became part of a diverse, welcoming family where their triumphs, challenges and journeys were not only accepted, but embraced.



YWM 2016 Convention Snapshot

Registrants: **635**

Exhibitors: **32**

Sponsors: **12**

Speakers: **42**

Number of Countries Represented: **4**

Number of States Represented: **36**

Newly-trained OAC volunteers: **46**

Number of Congressional offices visited: **34**

Newly trained legislative advocates: **27**

New and Renewed OAC Members: **156**



Although individuals arrived at YWM2016 for a variety of different reasons and motivations, there was something for everyone to gain and bring back home with them. New friendships, education and inspirations fueled these powerful three days at



Convention, and attendees learned how to unite their own personal goals with the goals of the OAC. With more than 600 registrants in attendance

at YWM2016, the weekend was an unforgettable success where lives were changed, passions were ignited and new visions were created!

INSPIRED THROUGH EDUCATION



It's often difficult to find unbiased, evidence-based education on weight and health, but that was exactly what YWM2016 delivered! With more than 50 topics on the

Program Agenda, attendees had the unique opportunity to learn from leading physicians, dietitians, researchers and scientists from across the industry. All of the diverse education offered at YWM2016 gave individuals the *right* kind of information to guide them on their journeys. This year, topics ranged from the basics of nutrition and available treatment options for weight to behavioral health issues such as food addiction and the science behind willpower. Our guest speakers and experts shared real facts and honest answers that attendees could connect with, and gave them the tools they were seeking to transform their goals and shape their journeys with weight and health!

INSPIRED BY SUPPORT

It goes without saying that having a strong support system is an important part of any journey, and a key component



to managing weight and health. The OAC's National Convention is a unique landing point along this journey because the environment created is not only supportive and empowering, but joins attendees together to support and uplift one another along the way. Even after the

weekend comes to a close, we continue to see attendees connect and inspire each other throughout the year! For many attendees, the environment fostered through Convention even feels like home. We strive to provide a safe and welcoming place for anyone to come – no matter who you are or where you come from. It is only through support that we can truly open up our minds to learning new information, accept ourselves for who we are and help one another along the journey toward improved health. At YWM2016, attendees learned together, laughed together and truly supported one another. More than just a gathering of people, it became a family and a community of individuals who empowered each other and paved the



way for a healthier and stronger future – amongst themselves and with the OAC!

INSPIRED BY HEALTH

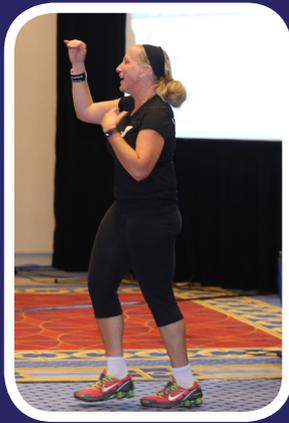
At Convention, health is the central part of all that we do, which is what inspired the creation of this annual event! Everything that YWM2016 provided – from nutrition information, exercise demonstrations, health screenings and more – was done with health in mind. The OAC recognizes that the struggle with weight exists, and understands the importance of having access to reliable healthcare, education, support and resources to improve health one step at a time.

Nutrition – From carefully crafted meals offered throughout the weekend to discussions about the “balance” between food and energy, attendees learned about nutrition in a variety of ways at YWM2016. Understanding the importance of food for our bodies, and learning how to make smart choices that benefit our overall health, was a fundamental takeaway from the Convention.





Exercise – The OAC knows that exercise is a core component of our attendees' health plan. That's why we offered a variety of fitness activities that they could engage with at YWM2016! From organized walks, runs and dance classes to aquafit, Tai Chi and even yoga, our attendees had plenty of opportunities to stay active and try something completely new.



Community Health Outreach Day – On the Saturday of the Convention, we opened the doors of our *Your Weight Matters* Healthy Living EXPO Hall to the local DC community in celebration of our Community Health Outreach Day!

In partnership with the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington and B'More Fit for Healthy Babies, our Community Health Outreach Day offered the general public a chance to explore



a variety of health-focused exhibitors from across the industry. Featuring more than 30 hand-selected vendor booths, the EXPO offered attendees many different products, services and even a free health screening to help individuals along their journeys toward improved health. This was an excellent opportunity for the OAC to engage the community with our belief in health awareness and education, and we were more than excited to meet and connect with brand new faces!

THANK YOU

to Our 2016 National Convention Sponsors

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INSPIRED THROUGH ADVOCACY

Weight and health aren't always easy subjects to talk about, and that can often lead to silence. Those who struggle along their own journeys toward improved health may not feel that they can open up about their personal stories and challenges or seek help – and those who have the tools and resources to help may not understand how important their actions and activism really are for those individuals who struggle with weight on a daily basis.

That's why the *Your Weight Matters* National Convention made advocacy one of many core focuses throughout the weekend. AT YWM2016, attendees learned a variety of ways to raise their voices and advocate for a stronger, healthier future – whether it be through specialized educational training sessions, a visit to Capitol Hill where the legislative process takes place or a community march around the Convention site to learn more about how to engage with the OAC. The weekend made sure to stress that no matter where you are or what resources are available to you, there's always a way for you to raise your voice and make a difference on behalf of what you're passionate about!

At YWM2016, those inspirations caught on fire. Attendees, OAC staff and board members alike felt the passion to do more and be more for our futures. Although our journeys may take us through triumphs, roadblocks and hurdles, we have to stand together and look ahead.

WE HAVE TO THINK BIG!

INSPIRED BY A NEW WAY OF THINKING

In order for our dreams to grow into reality, they require commitment. Every step forward that we take brings us closer to our goals, so it's important that we keep striving for progress – one opportunity at a time! In fact, commitment takes us beyond our hopes – beyond our interests – and molds our visions into our future. We can't reach our dreams without it!



This larger vision became a brand new way of thinking at YWM2016. How hard were we willing to work to do more and to be more? What steps could we take to grow as individuals and to grow together? Throughout the weekend, these were the kinds of questions that our passions inspired – and it led us to one revelation: we were inspired to be ENGAGED!

Engaged with our health – YWM2016 showed us that we have the power to transform our lives by improving our health. By deciding to manage our weight and to make health a priority, we've already taken a very important first step! Now, how can we keep improving? What can we do to gradually become the best version of ourselves?

Engaged as a community – There is strength in numbers and power in the act of coming together. The Convention showed us that no obstacle is too big if we have the support of a community! How could we continue to encourage and uplift one another when Convention was over? In what ways can we stay connected, stay accountable and stay united?

Engaged with the OAC – A strong foundation is important for success – both individually and collectively – and that is exactly what the OAC aims to provide. We strive to educate, support and advocate for individuals affected by obesity. We want to elevate the conversation about weight and health and fight the discrimination that makes that conversation difficult. How can we grow stronger and increase our visibility? What more can we do to involve our members, volunteers and supporters with the work that we are a part of?



Our time together at the OAC's National Convention was nothing short of powerful. It is our hope that you felt inspired by this weekend of community in Washington, DC even if you weren't there, because the impact of Convention stretches beyond our attendees – it is meant to showcase our passion for anyone who wants to be involved with the OAC in some way. We encourage you to stamp your commitment by joining us in becoming ENGAGED!

Will you mark your attendance for next year's Convention? Will you be a part of your vision? We want YOU!

ENGAGE! WITH OAC

Whether or not you were able to join us for our 2016 Convention, **YOU** are an integral part of our future! Our members and supporters are the key to bringing the OAC's work to even more people. Creating an **ENGAGED** community is a priority for the OAC.

We want to give you the opportunity to become more involved in our work, and show you that there are many ways you can **ENGAGE with OAC!** Here are just a few ways YOU can be part of OAC's efforts:

JOIN THE FIGHT in combating weight bias

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY of Smart Patients at www.SmartPatients.com/OAC

HELP PROMOTE OAC events and educational opportunities

SPREAD THE WORD about OAC education

For more details on how **YOU** can **ENGAGE WITH OAC** and to make your commitment, visit www.ObesityAction.org/engage!



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

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