

YWM2012

OAC's Inaugural
Your Weight Matters
NATIONAL CONVENTION

EXPLORE. DISCOVER. EMPOWER.

A LOOK BACK...



OAC volunteers welcome attendees to the *Your Weight Matters* Convention.

The OAC National Board of Directors set an organizational goal in January 2012 to host an Annual Convention, set to fill a tremendous gap of the need for evidence-based education for individuals at all stages with excess weight and obesity. The Board also envisioned this event as a place where OAC members could finally come together face-to-face, meet one another and share their personal journeys with excess weight and obesity. Fast-forward to October 2012 and the OAC accomplished just that and a whole lot more at the Inaugural *Your Weight Matters* National Convention - "Explore. Discover. Empower."

The focus of the Convention was to forge unity among OAC members by connecting attendees from across the United States in ground-breaking education and engaging them in personal conversations with the country's leading experts and thought-leaders in weight and health.

For three days in Dallas, more than 275 attendees from 34 different states experienced first-hand ground-breaking unbiased, evidence-based education focusing on weight and health, advocacy, nutrition, exercise, emotional issues and much, much more. The information gained throughout the Convention allowed attendees to "Explore" new concepts, "Discover" new ideas and "Empower" themselves to proactively and positively improve their weight and health.

WELCOMING SESSION

The 2012 *Your Weight Matters* Inaugural Convention educational sessions kicked-off with OAC leadership taking the stage and setting the tone for the meeting. Immediately, every single person in attendance knew what they were about to experience and the important messages that would resonate the entire weekend. Joe Nadglowski, OAC President and CEO, spoke first and gave all 275 attendees a warm welcome and a glimpse of what this effort meant to the OAC. Up next, Robert Kushner, MD, the Convention Program Agenda Subcommittee Co-chair, spoke about how obesity is nobody's fault and it's not about blaming or shaming.

CONVENTION FACTOID:

The Convention welcomed 275 attendees, spanning 34 states and traveling from distant locations such as Alaska, Canada and Maine!

CONVENTION FACTOID:

The OAC live-streamed two sessions of the Convention so that those not able to attend could get a glimpse of what the Convention offers. The two sessions, available via the OAC's YouTube channel, are: "Event Welcome - Explore. Discover. Empower: Why YOUR Weight Matters" and "Leading an Active Lifestyle in a Sedentary World." Visit www.youtube.com/user/ObesityAction to view these two sessions.



Pam Davis, RN, BSN, CBN, OAC Chairperson, then took the stage and eloquently illustrated her undying passion for the OAC, its mission, vision and goals. Pam was careful to let the attendees know the thoughtful detail that the OAC put into creating the perfect environment for the meeting in regards to nutrition, exercise, education and much more. One of Pam's many passions in obesity is in combating weight bias and stigma. While she had the captured attention of all attendees, Pam showed an inspiring video that recently gained much public attention, showcasing a news anchor who publicly addressed a judgmental and stigmatizing viewer letter she received. Pam's tireless fight in weight bias was a strong message that all attendees were able to see and hear.



Dr. Stegemann discussed the importance of a unified voice in the Welcoming session.

After Pam, Lloyd Stegemann, MD, FASMBS, Convention Program Agenda Subcommittee Co-chair, spoke to the crowd not only about the unique education they would receive in Dallas, but also about the important platform that this meeting gives us as voices in the fight against obesity. Dr. Stegemann vividly illustrated to the full-room of attendees how coming together only allows us to be stronger – one of the single most important components in advocacy, and one of the strongest pillars of the OAC.

Lastly, Amber Huett, BS, MPA, OAC Convention Committee Chair, closed

the session to give attendees a glimpse of all the exciting events that were in store and encouraged all attendees to take advantage of this unique opportunity to talk to as many like-minded individuals as possible – including our guest speakers.

You could not help but notice the energy in the room. You could see the excitement. And in that moment, the educational sessions of the 2012 *Your Weight Matters* Inaugural Convention began.

ADVOCACY TRAINING

Before the kick-off of the educational sessions, the OAC hosted an Advocacy Training Session on Thursday, October 25. More than 68 Convention attendees took part in this special session, sponsored by Allergan, titled "Advocacy 101 – Spending a Day on Capitol Hill." For five hours, participants learned from the best-of-the-best about all the ins and outs of Capitol Hill, how to effectively communicate with elected officials, and how the advocacy process works. The training was led by OAC President and CEO Joe Nadglowski; Immediate-Past OAC Chairman Barbara Thompson, MLS; and OAC Policy Consultant Chris Gallagher.



Attendees listen closely to Chris Gallagher, OAC Policy Consultant

Once trained, attendees had the opportunity to experience what it is like at an actual Day on Capitol Hill through mock legislative visits. Participants were able to put their new skills to use by sharing their personal stories with the mock legislators along with reacting to a variety of different scenarios and types of elected officials that they potentially could face during a real visit. "I wasn't quite sure what this training would be about. I was nervous at first because advocacy can be intimidating, but once the training got started, I felt very comfortable," said Kelly M. of Boston, MA.

"We absolutely enjoyed doing these trainings. Quite often, individuals who want to visit Capitol Hill are not aware of what they're in store for once on the Hill. This training provided them with real-world experience, which will equip them with the tools needed to effectively advocate on Capitol Hill," said Chris Gallagher, OAC Policy Consultant.

The OAC thanks all those who participated in advocacy training and encourages anyone interested in advocacy to contact the OAC at info@obesityaction.org.

GENERAL AND BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Curious why your weight may plateau? Want to know more about bariatric surgery? Trying to figure out how to incorporate technology into your weight-loss? All of these questions and a whole lot more were answered at the Convention in the 18 general and breakout education sessions.

In putting together the Program Agenda for the Convention, the Program Agenda Subcommittee had one thing in mind – the attendee. Each session topic was carefully designed and crafted to meet the needs of our audience. Never before had attendees had the opportunity to immerse themselves in this type of evidence-based, unbiased education.

In choosing speakers for each session, it was important to find experts who had a passion for their topic and wanted to extend their knowledge and immerse attendees in their respective areas of expertise. None of the 37 speakers for the Convention were provided an honorarium – you can't put a price on the passion to educate others, and in this case, the education was priceless.

"I attended the Losing, Gaining, Maintaining – Is it a Science? session and I honestly was blown away by the presentation. Dr. Kushner not only answered so many of my questions, he also touched on things that help me understand my struggles along my weight-loss journey. I now have some invaluable tools that I can use to help in getting me to where I need to be," said Alicia T. of Dallas, TX.

One core component that the OAC wanted to provide attendees was access to the experts and thought-leaders. Attendees saw first-hand that our speakers were not only there to provide their limitless knowledge in weight management, but they were also there to learn from colleagues and our attendees. It was not uncommon for a number of our guest speakers to participate in the sessions, asking questions and gaining more knowledge and understanding. "I really enjoyed participating in the sessions as an attendee in the audience," said Lloyd Stegemann, MD, FASMBS. Dr. Stegemann continued, "I found this to be a huge benefit. As healthcare professionals, we're always the ones providing the answers and doing most of the talking; however, the Convention gave me the opportunity to grow in my understanding of obesity and ask the important questions that needed to be asked.

CONVENTION FACTOID:

Of the 37 speakers secured for the Convention, not a single was compensated or provided an honorarium. All Convention speakers donated their time and expertise to the OAC and our attendees.



Dr. Robert Kushner presents the second educational session of the Convention.

ATTENDEE Q&A

James Zervios, OAC Director of Communications, had a chance to interview Convention attendee Claire Peters of Texas. Claire was one of the first individuals to register for the Convention and she set the tone immediately for the entire Convention-experience during the second session led by Dr. Kushner. Claire stood up during the question and answer portion not to ask a question but to thank Dr. Kushner publicly and let him know that her entire purpose for coming to the Convention was answered in just the second session. Here is what Claire had to say:



James: What did you think of the Convention?

Claire: The convention was outstanding. I was so impressed with the smoothness of the meeting.

James: What did you think about the quality of the education?

Claire: The education was like layers of an onion. The more you peeled, the more you discovered. The quality of the education was nothing like I've ever experienced. As I became educated, I was able to ask questions. It gave me the ability to know what I didn't know.

James: Did you attend the Advocacy Training and what did you think about it?

Claire: It was absolutely incredible. I don't use that word (incredible) lightly. Advocacy Training was amazing. It was not only a session but also an opportunity to learn. It went beyond advocacy. It was not only educational, but also very moving.



James: Who was your favorite speaker?

Claire: Dr. Kushner was my favorite. What fascinated me was the science of bariatric surgery. I had never looked at it from that perspective, nor had it ever been presented that way. It was a whole new way of understanding what my body has gone through and continues to go through. When his presentation was over, I stood up and went to the microphone in the center of the room and said, "I wasn't sure when I signed-up for the Convention what was important, but after hearing you speak, I now know why I came here."

James: Were there any other speakers or presentations that moved you?

Claire: Dr. Connolly's, he provided STRATEGIES for coping with old behaviors that have a way of returning from time-to-time. These are strategies that never occurred to me, and that I have begun utilizing successfully.

James: What did you think of the food at Convention? The OAC strived to achieve a tasty and healthy balance.

Claire: My feedback would be that I had plenty to eat. I try to follow 99 percent of my eating program and the food fit perfectly with my eating program. It was delicious and appropriate.

James: What did you think of the exhibit hall?

Claire: You could sense a passion in the exhibitors that they weren't just selling something. I hope next year there are more exhibitors. I would like to see more vendors.

James: How did Convention compare to other meetings that you've attended?

Claire: What set *Your Weight Matters* Convention apart from other meetings was that it just flowed. The program book helped me so much. It helped clarify so much for me. We were not herded around like cattle. It was so smooth. Timing was perfect.

James: The OAC wanted to achieve a feeling of "home" for our attendees. Did we achieve that feeling to you?

Claire: Yes, it created unity among everyone. You could just feel the comfort of everyone. It was a good feeling.

James: If you could summarize the Convention in one sentence, what would it be?

Claire: It embraced me. I made so many friends. You all set the perfect atmosphere.

James: Thank you Claire. We hope to see you next year.

Claire: I'll be there.

Thank You

to the **2012**

Your Weight Matters Inaugural Convention National Sponsors

The Convention would not have been possible without the generous support of our National Sponsors. The OAC appreciates the commitment of each of these companies/organizations in providing the needed education surrounding weight and health issues.

Gold:



Bronze:



GEISINGER





Julia Karlstad, MEd, CSCS, leads the JK Cardio Sculpt class with attendees.

EXERCISE SESSIONS

From T'ai Chi to Zumba, the *Your Weight Matters* Convention offered attendees a healthy variety of exercise sessions to take part in each day. Held in the Hilton Anatole's state-of-the-art Verandah Club fitness center, attendees had the opportunity to experience physical activity sessions designed for all fitness levels. OAC Board Member Holly F. Lofton, MD, led the effort in creating the exercise program schedule offered throughout the Convention.

CONVENTION FACTOID:

The Convention offered eight different exercise classes, including T'ai Chi, Zumba, Aquafit, Yoga and much more!

"Gyms are intimidating. Period. I want to do more and exercise, but I am always scared to try new things back home. The OAC did a great job offering these classes in a private setting where you didn't have to be all self-conscious. You could just be you and do your thing," said Melody K. from Los Angeles, CA.

NUTRITION

If you've ever traveled away from home, you know the difficulties of trying to stick to your healthy eating habits. The OAC made following your healthy eating habits easy at the *Your Weight Matters* Convention. OAC member and frequent *Your Weight Matters Magazine* author, Stephanie Deivert, RD, LDN, carefully crafted all the meals for the Convention. She also took this task one step further by labeling each and every meal option with nutrition information – down to each piece of lettuce! This

CONVENTION FACTOID:

Every meal served at Convention was carefully planned with a dietitian and the chef of the Hilton Anatole.

was a huge hit with the attendees, as the menu for each meal offered at the Convention was provided in their attendee bags, along with the nutrition information and a way to track certain measurements.

What's most amazing about the nutrition guide is that Stephanie volunteered her time and spent countless hours working directly with the Hilton Anatole chef, measuring each and every ingredient used in the selections. We would not have asked for any more and are grateful for the time and expertise Stephanie donated to the OAC and the attendees.

EXHIBIT HALL

Throughout the Convention, attendees had the opportunity to visit with some of their favorite vendors and meet some new ones as well. The OAC thanks the following exhibitors for their support of the Convention and the OAC: Allergan; Affiliated Authors; AmeriWell Bariatrics; Bariatric Advantage; Bobby Whisnand's Victory of Life; Celebrate Vitamins; Chike Nutrition; EnteroMedics, Inc.; Ethicon Endo-Surgery; FitRx; It's Food; Mission Pharmaceutical; New Life Bariatric Supplements; Optifast; Slimpressions; TOPS Club; TRI-S Counseling & Education; *Walk from Obesity*; Wellspring at Structure House; and Vivus, Inc.

"I was very impressed with the Exhibit Hall because it had so many of the things I use on a daily basis. Things like vitamins, protein shakes and other stuff. It was nice to see these companies supporting the OAC and the meeting," said Kimberly Q. from Raleigh, NC.

SPECIAL EVENTS

No convention is complete without special events, and the *Your Weight Matters* Convention had no shortage of excitement, engagement and entertainment!

Lunch with the Experts

As with the Convention's general and breakout sessions, the OAC wanted to provide attendees with something



OAC attendees navigate the YWM Convention Exhibit Hall.



Christopher Still, DO, FACN, FACP, leads his Lunch with the Experts table.

very special and rarely found in these types of settings – access to the speakers and thought-leaders. For an additional fee, Convention attendees could attend the Lunch with the Experts session – a special, limited-seating lunch where they had one-on-one access to Convention speakers. The Friday lunch was sponsored by Orexigen Therapeutics and the Saturday lunch was sponsored by Forest Park Medical Center. Special thanks to these companies for their support of this event.

Attendees were able to talk with the leading experts on their specific topic of interest during this session for more than 90 minutes. Attendees sat with experts in a friendly, down-to-earth setting and talked about various topics, such as Tackling Weight Bias – Becoming a Bias Buster, Dumping Syndrome – Getting to the Bottom of it, and so much more.

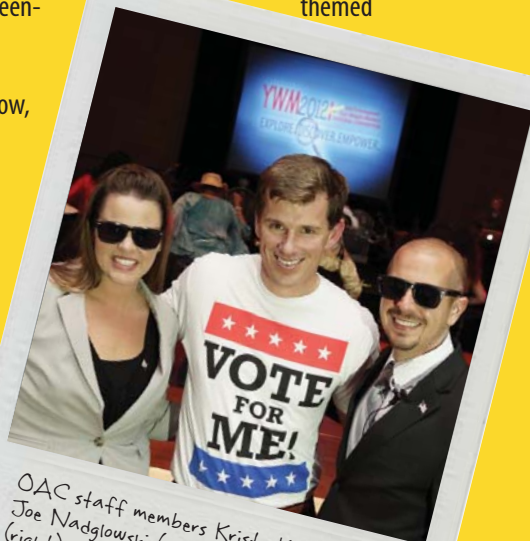
"I've never seen this kind of thing before. I wanted to learn more about some of the new obesity medications, so I decided to sign-up for a table. I thought it'd be something where I just sat there and listened. Wow, was I wrong. I thought this was so cool. I totally want to do it next year," said Steve D. from San Antonio, TX.

Welcoming Ceremonies Dinner

On Friday night of Convention, the OAC hosted a "spooktacular" Halloween-Welcoming Ceremonies Dinner complete with a costume contest and show, which many attendees felt was "Politically Correct." A Jedi knight, Princess Leia, Yoda, a devil, angels, a scarecrow and more were in attendance for the event. Oh, and most important of all, a presidential candidate. Those in attendance witnessed the rise and fall of a potential presidential candidate accompanied by a fleet of Secret Service agents. The presidential candidate was none other than OAC President and CEO Joe Nadglowski, outfitted with a "Vote for Me" t-shirt. His Secret Service team was comprised of OAC staff members complete with ear pieces and black sunglasses.

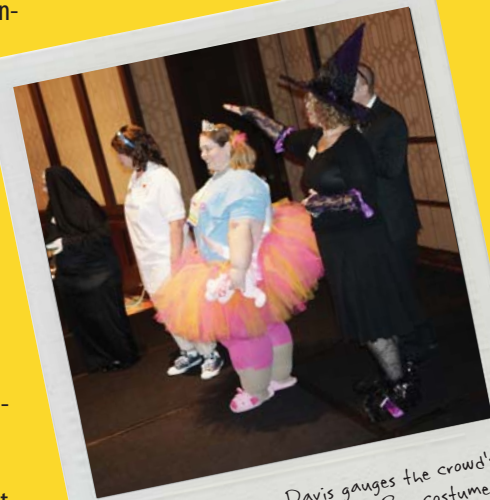
After both a "positive" and "negative" video featuring presidential candidate "Nadglowski," Joe formally addressed the crowd and delivered the OAC State of the Association to all those in attendance. Joe reminded the attendees that all the successes the OAC experienced throughout the past seven years were due in large part to one thing – their support as OAC members.

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OAC staff members Kristy Kuna (left), Joe Nadglowski (center) and James Zervios (right) pose in their Halloween costumes.

And, what Halloween-themed costume party would be complete without a costume contest? Later in the evening, OAC Chairman Pam Davis and Drs. Stegemann and Kushner helped judge a costume contest emceed by OAC staff members. The winner of the contest was Sarah Bramlette dressed as TLC's *Honey Boo Boo*. Sarah took home the grand prize of a free registration to the 2013 YWM Convention. From pirates to a genie, attendees had a howling good time and connected with other members from across the country.



OAC Chairman Pam Davis gauges the crowd's applause for Sarah's Honey Boo Boo costume.

1st Annual OAC Awards Dinner

As OAC's President and CEO echoed in his state-of-the-association on Friday evening, the OAC built itself on the strength, determination and dedication of OAC members. As a way to honor outstanding members for their efforts above and beyond the norm, the OAC hosted its first Annual Awards Dinner. A total of six awards were given out that evening, with each award honoring an exemplary OAC member. The recipients of the OAC's prestigious awards during the 1st Annual OAC Awards Dinner were:



Ted Kyle, RPh, MBA, (left) poses with Pam Davis, OAC Chairman (center), and Joe Nadglowski, OAC President and CEO (right), while accepting the OAC Member of the Year award.

- **OAC Advocate of the Year** – Beth Sheldon Badore
- **Community Leader of the Year** – Tammy Beaumont, BSN, RN, BC, CBN
- **Outstanding Membership Recruitment by an OAC Member** – Michelle Vicari
- **Outstanding Membership Recruitment by a Physician** – Rocky Mountain Associated Physicians
- **Bias Buster of the Year** – Rebecca Puhl, PhD
- **OAC Member of the Year** – Ted Kyle, RPh, MBA

"The OAC Annual Awards are a chance for the organization to give back to its members and recognize those that have exemplified the OAC's mission, vision and goals. From combating weight bias to increasing the strength of the OAC's voice through membership recruitment, all the award recipients have helped the OAC continue along a path of great success," said Joe Nadglowski, OAC President and CEO.

The awards ceremony finished with a heart-warming look back at the 2012 *Your Weight Matters* Convention with a special video picture slide-show. With each passing picture, OAC members throughout the ballroom felt a sense of "togetherness," "family" and "strength."

WALK FROM OBESITY

Finishing out the *Your Weight Matters* Convention, the exquisite Hilton Anatole Sculpture Park played host to the Dallas *Walk from Obesity* on a chilly 38 degree morning in the Lone Star state. Bundled up in their warmest workout gear, more than 250 walkers navigated the quarter mile track snaking through the Anatole Sculpture Park.

With each quarter mile, walkers were given beads signifying one lap around the track. As walkers picked up the pace, more and more folks donned bright red, green and blue beads marking each lap. At the end of the Walk, each walker received a medal signifying completion of the *Walk from Obesity*.

"I've never done anything like this. Truthfully, I never thought I could do anything like this. Coming out here today, I felt the ability to pull on the strength of others and from within myself to walk the track not once, but a total of seven times," proudly said George P. from Atlanta, GA.

Overall, the Walk raised more than \$24,000 to further the independent missions of the ASMBS Foundation and the OAC. "I am extremely proud of all those who participated in the *Walk from Obesity*. A great deal of the *Your Weight Matters* Convention was focused on the importance of weight and health, and it was great to see so many individuals out there walking and improving their health one step at a time," said Joe Nadglowski, OAC President and CEO.

CONCLUSION

The OAC set out to accomplish a few different goals with the *Your Weight Matters* Convention. First, the OAC wanted to provide the needed education to its members and the public on the importance of weight as it impacts their health. The OAC also wanted to introduce its members to the OAC – they wanted members to know the OAC on a "first name basis" so-to-speak. The Convention was also about connecting members, making members feel like family – like home. And lastly, the OAC not only wanted to provide evidence-based education, but education lead by experts and thought-leaders in the healthcare field. But the OAC didn't want speakers to talk at attendees. The OAC wanted them to speak with attendees – connecting with OAC members on many levels.

Looking back at the 2012 *Your Weight Matters* Inaugural Convention, we confidently feel that our goals were accomplished. The date and location of the 2013 *Your Weight Matters* Convention will be released soon. Please visit us at www.YwmConvention.com or join us on Facebook and Twitter for the latest Convention information. We greatly look forward to seeing all of you at the 2013 YWM Convention!

An Attendee's Viewpoint

by Jeanette Marsh

I greatly enjoyed attending the Your Weight Matters Convention. The educational sessions were informative and all of the education was really good. I really enjoyed listening to Tammy Beaumont, Julia Karlstad and Merrill Littleberry.



Jeanette and Jack Marsh pose for a picture during the Welcoming Ceremonies Dinner.

One of my favorite parts of Convention was the Advocacy Training session. At first, I was scared, but in the end, the session alleviated a lot of my fears about advocating. I feel prepared now to advocate.

To me, the reason why I enjoyed Convention so much was because of the comfort my husband, Jack, and I found there. We felt safe. Everyone understood my weight-loss, and as a new surgery patient, that was very important to me. It just felt like home and there was this overwhelming positive sense of family. We enjoyed meeting so many new people and making so many new friends.

WANT TO SEE MORE OF THE YWM CONVENTION?

To see all the photos from the YWM Convention, visit the OAC's Flickr account at www.flickr.com/photos/obesityactioncoalition/. To see the Convention picture slide show video, visit www.youtube.com/user/ObesityAction.





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](https://obesityaction.org/join)

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