



COMING TOGETHER

by Mckinzie Step, OAC Creative Content and Outreach Coordinator



"Our voices may each sound different, but together they create a powerful and unified action!"
— Joe Nadglowski, OAC President/CEO

The OAC is still riding the wave of celebration that took place at this year's 6th Annual *Your Weight Matters* National Convention this past August. **Upwards of 550 individuals joined together in the heart of New Orleans for the nation's best education, tools, resources and support to guide them along their weight management journeys.** And, while the OAC's National meeting has been coined as a premier event for the everyday individual to come and learn science-based strategies to manage their weight and health, there's something else that has been building which becomes more alive each and every year.

This year's attendees left with something remarkably contagious – a passion to engage deeper with their own health journeys, engage with the OAC and engage with one another as part of a powerful community.

Sure, each and every Convention hosted by the OAC has given individuals a place to join together, but this year was special – because never more did we feel the electrifying sense of community than at the 2017 Convention. It truly was a celebration! Through every educational session, exercise demonstration or simple conversation, feelings of unity and acceptance filled the room. And, while our attendees came from all different backgrounds and experiences, our differences did not divide us, but united us in one powerful community of voices!

If you didn't have the opportunity to attend this year's Convention in New Orleans, we wish you could have been there! But, we want you to take a look back with us at an incredible weekend you can still be a part of throughout the year, and hopefully will get to experience with us at our 2018 Convention in **Denver – July 19-22!**



ENGAGED to Educate

It's not an easy task to find education about weight and health that you can trust, especially when misconceptions about weight and obesity often cloud our ability to do so.

At **YWM2017**, experts from around the country engaged with our community to provide this kind of reliable education. Attendees took away practical, empowering tools and information to guide their weight management journeys now and in the future through popular educational topics and opportunities including:

- The dangers and realities of weight bias
- Medical and surgical treatment options
- Nutrition, exercise and lifestyle tips for a healthier weight management journey
- *Your Weight Matters* Healthy Living EXPO Hall offering beneficial products, services, samples and information
- Chances to engage with experts and address important questions/concerns

And so much more!

When individuals have access to education and resources they can trust, we as a community can do more to inform ourselves and others about health and the understanding that obesity is a complicated disease. Science-based knowledge, free from bias and stigma, is instrumental to finding long-term support and success – and **YWM2017** provided this essential platform.



ENGAGED to Advocate

There's no room for silence when it comes to being proactive about weight, health and access to appropriate care. Advocacy requires a community of individuals who are willing to share their stories, use their voices and make an impact to affect future change for all who are on the journey with weight and health.

Many of our **YWM2017** attendees were inspired to elevate the OAC's mission of reaching local, state and national legislators and advance the future of obesity care. At **YWM2017**, we empowered attendees to recognize and raise their voices with special events such as:

- **OAC's National Advocacy Training** – Offered tools and knowledge for advocating and influencing the legislative process, and hosted mock legislative visits to put newly-learned skills to the test
- **ENGAGE! Discover the Power of Your Voice Training** – Featured information about engaging with the OAC and using powerful stories to impact change, and instructed attendees on all the platforms they can easily use to help us achieve our mission and goals

If we *engage* as a community and unify our message, our advocacy efforts are made stronger and our message is clearer. THANK YOU to our next set of newly-trained and engaged **YWM2017** advocates who are determined to impact the future of health and obesity care!

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ENGAGED to CELEBRATE!

There is always strength in numbers and in coming together, and **YWM2017** offered attendees the opportunity to celebrate each other and our health! There's no doubt that great education and hands-on instruction on various types of advocacy is important, but the Convention also allowed us to celebrate ourselves and one another through key events – which all had an element of “fun” attached! Here's a look at the celebrations we got to have throughout the weekend:

- **Convention Attendee and Exhibitor Welcome Reception** – The official “kick-off” event designed to break the ice and let our attendees meet and mingle with one another alongside our fantastic vendors in the EXPO Hall
- **New Orleans-themed Welcoming Ceremonies Dinner** – A true “celebration” of our attendees and unique OAC community – complete with live entertainment that helped us visually hear and see the power in multiple voices coming together for one common purpose
- **OAC Annual Reception and Awards Ceremony** – A celebration of our outstanding OAC members who have gone above and beyond in advancing the OAC's mission and making **YWM2017** come to life
- **ENGAGE! Celebrating the OAC's Community** – The final “Send-off” to the event that empowered attendees to reflect on the weekend and share themselves in an honest way, and reinforced the value in having a strong and vibrant OAC community

Many often describe *Your Weight Matters* National Conventions as an extension of their home and family life, and as an organization dedicated to our community, the ability for attendees to engage with one another and celebrate our journeys is invaluable. **YWM2017** was a place where barriers were broken down, walls were opened and transparency was possible. It was a place where attendees could be honest with each other, share their stories and honor the authentic presence and experiences of others alongside of them.

No matter where we are on our own weight and health journeys, we **DO** have a reason to celebrate because our community is our foundation! Together, we are empowered and stronger. Together, we can move forward with our journeys one step at a time.



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We also extend our **heartfelt thanks** to each of our YWM2017 sponsors who made it possible to fund, develop and bring the 2017 National Convention to life:

PLATINUM



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A very special
THANK YOU
to our Platinum-level
Sponsor Novo Nordisk
for supporting the
OAC's Community
Building Events at
YWM2017!

For a complete recap of the 2017 *Your Weight Matters* National Convention, including pictures, attendee experiences, educational sessions and more, we encourage you to view our collection of digital memories by visiting: www.Storify.com/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

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