

MICHIGAN MICH-I-CAN!

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News Release

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Local Teenager Overcomes Obesity in New, Fun Way

The state of Michigan currently ranks fifth in the nation for childhood obesity after recent study revealed that 18.9% of teenagers are considered obese. Two years ago, Sammy McNorman was a one of these teenagers. He struggled with severe obesity for most of his life, which also affected his self-esteem and confidence. He didn't where to begin, but Sammy knew he wanted to make a change. Thanks to the after-school health program Fit for Life, Sammy received the proper training, discipline, and guidance to turn his life around. Today, he is healthy, happy, and motivated to help kids just like him.

“As a mother, it’s the worst feeling in the world”, Sammy’s mom Sandra said. “He would come home from school in tears after being constantly being shamed by other students because of his weight.”

Sammy was never very social as a kid. He spent most of his time alone indoors while other kids played sports and rode their bikes around the neighborhood. At school, most students avoided him because of his quiet and shy nature. The one thing that Sammy did enjoy was eating. Because of his inactive lifestyle, he quickly began to gain weight at an alarming rate.

“I began to notice around sixth grade,” Sammy said, “I didn’t think too much of it until it started to affect my breathing.”

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Sammy was required to take a physical education course in sixth grade. While doing a weekly run around the track, his instructor noticed him struggling to keep up with other students. So, he suggested to Sammy a program that could help improve his physical wellbeing.

“When Sammy first started the Fit for Life program, it was apparent that he is unfamiliar with most of the techniques we teach,” program director Ima Lively said. “We knew this would be a challenge for him, but we were confident he could do it.”

Sammy showed up twice a week to the gym where he began his training. Fit for Life trainers are experienced and knowledgeable educators who are committed to demonstrating healthy and active lifestyles. Each class features a one hour lecture about proper eating strategies followed by a custom workout designed for each participant.

“It wasn’t easy at first,” Sammy said, “It was a lot to take in. The workouts, the eating, it was just all so new to me. I thought about quitting several times, but I knew this was too important to just give up.”

Sammy lost 30 pounds during his time at Fit for Life. He is proud of his accomplishment and plans to continue practicing this healthy lifestyle for the rest of his life. Not only did his physical appearance improve, but so did his mentality and outlook on life. Sammy appreciates everything the program has done for him and would recommend it to anyone looking to improve their life.

Fit for Life is an after-school health program funded by Michigan Mich-I-Can! They were founded in 2006 by Ima Lively. For more information, visit www.michican.gov.