

Stepping Together for Health

10,000 Steps® Program



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Co-sponsors Mike Mustille, MD, Lon O'Neil, and
Bernard Tyson, joining KP employees in downtown
Oakland for a walk around Lake Merritt to kick off the
10,000 Steps -- 10,000 People Program on Jan. 10.

In Just Four Days the Spots Were Going, Going, Gone Monday. Tuesday. Wednesday. Thursday. That was it. Four days and 12,000 people later, we had exceeded our goal and our expectations.

It didn't take long for you to respond to our invitation to join Kaiser Permanente's 10,000 Steps® Program. On Dec. 6, Mike Mustille, MD, associate executive director, External Relations, The Permanente Federation; Lon O'Neil, senior vice president and chief human resources officer, and I offered to pay the way for the first 10,000 people to participate in the eight-month-long fitness/weight loss program.

The offer was first-come, first-served, and we set Jan. 31, 2005, as the cutoff date. We weren't quite sure what to expect since we've never done anything like this before. I had every confidence that we were going to fill the majority of the 10,000 spots, just not in the time that we did.

Offer Extended to Another 2,000 People

Within the first day of signups, we saw the numbers climb rapidly and steadily. We knew we had a pleasant dilemma on our hands. How do we cut off at 10,000? The answer was that we didn't. We were happy to extend the number of signups to another 2,000 people and then close it off when that number was reached.

"The 10,000 Steps Program® has helped bring people together," said Laurie Spoon, project manager of Kaiser Permanente's 10,000 Steps – 10,000 People Program. "I could feel the excitement as people got on the elevator and talked to strangers about their pedometers and about the 10,000 Steps® Program. Besides creating a sense of community, it's helped people focus on being healthier and figure out what they need to do to thrive."

I Heard from the People

Following are some of the comments I received about the program:

"... I think the 10,000 Steps® Program is great! I signed up today and I've recently considered joining the Dr. Phil challenge to lose weight. I'm glad to work for an employer who is interested enough to help their employees 'Thrive.' Glad to be part of the Kaiser team where well-being is important."

"The 10,000 Steps Program is a good start. But KP needs to do more internal health promotion. There have been only spotty local efforts to address smoking, diet, and exercise habits among KP employees in the past. And casual observation would suggest that many KP employees would benefit greatly from lifestyle changes. Maybe we could seek out more actively employees who smoke and make them more aware of smoking cessation resources. Maybe we could model better/good nutrition at lunch meetings, cafeterias, group events, conferences, etc. Maybe we could encourage managers to find creative ways to help staff build exercise time into their daily schedules.

"I hope you will continue to support all KP employees in their efforts to personally model the values of the Thrive campaign. It benefits them -- it benefits KP. And it would be a model for the community."

There's Much More to Come

Last Monday, my co-sponsors and I kicked off the 10,000 Steps® Program with a walk around Lake Merritt in Oakland, Calif. Click [here](#) to view a video clip of the event and hear from some of the walk participants.

We hope to have a walk across America in the coming months in which all of the regions and Program Offices participate at the same time. Soon, you'll be invited to join a chat room for Kaiser Permanente's 10,000 Steps® Program. We'd like for this to be a virtual place -- and a fun venue -- where we can support each other in our progress.

Walking the Talk

And finally, I'd like to share a note I received from another Kaiser Permanente colleague: "Thank you for making the 10,000 Steps Program available and for making it free for a limited time. This is really walking the talk."

On behalf of senior leadership, we are committed to walking the talk and supporting one of the three priorities for 2005 -- as outlined by George Halvorson, chairman and CEO, Kaiser Foundation Health Plans and Hospitals, and Jay Crosson, MD, executive director, The Permanente Federation.

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