

Living with Diabetes

# My journey to becoming healthy

by Marcia Soliz

I am sharing my bariatric journey—surgery to close off part of my stomach—to support those individuals who are thinking about having this weight loss procedure, or who have already had it.

During my 67 years of life, I had many doctor appointments at IHS. I had medical referrals for numerous health concerns, and several surgeries.

I was prescribed a wide variety of medications and pain medications. I was a diabetic for 14 years, having to use insulin and pills.

I was obese. I was an unhealthy person getting more and more miserable and depressed.

I felt like a bother, and constantly in pain.

One of my referrals was because my liver was acting up and enlarged.

The doctor I was referred to was very up front and honest about my obesity being a primary cause leading to my bad diabetes impacting my liver.

He strongly recommended bariatric surgery. At that time I was unaware that the tribal Managed Care program had never approved this type of procedure to be covered for payment, or that I was the first Warm Springs Native persons to have bariatric surgery.

When I realized this I thought about it and decided I had to be successful so that others could get approved to have this oppor-

tunity to become healthier.

It was stressful at first. In order to see the surgeon I was required to complete a 564 question psychological evaluation, attend classes on diet, and go to the Sleep Center.

I also had appointments with a dietitian and a psychologist.

I learned a lot, and everything my mom tried to teach me was absolutely reinforced.

I was told I had to lose 20 pounds so the liver could shrink and other organs would be okay for surgery. I had to do this so the three surgical instruments would be able to get to where they needed to be. This was a huge challenge because I never tried to diet before.

All along, as a bigger woman, I walked 15 laps around the old grade school track, and continued to do this to keep my heart and lungs strong for the surgery.

The okay came for surgery, and I was ready as I could be.

I was only in for one and a half days at Good Samaritan in Portland. I went back to work after a week. By then the weight had already started coming off.

It was really hard responding to people's curious questions. I was continually asked, "Are you sick?" When really it was the complete opposite: I was getting better.

The other question was, "How much are you going to lose?"

This was impossible to answer, because only my body



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would know when it had lost enough.

There were a lot of days when I didn't want to see anybody, but had to go to work. Every couple weeks, I had to try to find a size or two smaller clothes, so I shopped at Goodwill, one of my favorite stores.

Within six and a half months I had lost 120 pounds. At one point there was concern about muscle loss due to the quick volume of weight loss.

It has now been 6 years and eight months.

As much as my mind tells me I am hungry, my body system says No, and doesn't allow me to overeat.

I take vitamins now, drink water, sneak a diet soda from time to time, and stay active.

I sleeps better, so I have lots of energy. I eat healthier foods and eat a lot less.

My diabetes no longer exists. It was gone a few days after surgery. My blood pressure is great (106/62), A1c is 5.3, and I still have my

marbles upstairs.

For a time I was the only one in Warm Springs who had gone through this surgery. So there were no other patients to draw support from. Now, there should be enough to start a support group.

If you're thinking about getting healthier, you can do it when you put your mind to it and are persistent.

Everyone has someone who is counting on them—kids, spouse, brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, friends, employers—and these are excellent reasons to start taking better care of yourself.

I have no regrets about my decision to become healthier and doing the bariatric surgery. Don't procrastinate any longer.

For those in the health medical field, Please be honest and progressive with your patients about obesity and the impacts.

Somehow, at age 60 I finally made my decision to get healthier.

Please, don't wait that long, although it does go to show it is never too late to take better care of yourself.

I thank my kids Dorian and Rebecca, Dr. Creelman, Dr. Irma, Dr. Patterson, tribal surgery authorizers, tribal bill payers, and the others involved in my surgery. Thank you for being there and standing with me along the way.

*(This article was made possible by the IHS Warm Springs Model Diabetes Program.)*

## Prevention training

Prevention Special Certification Training is coming up in Warm Springs this month, and in April.

The session 1 course will be on Thursday and Friday, March 23-24, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Greeley Heights community building, 2776 Quail Trail Rd.

This session will cover introduction to CPS, Risk/Protector Factors, Accesses, Trauma Informed Care, I.O.M, Social Determinants, Behavioral Health, and CSAP Strategies. Trainers will be Health and Human Services general manager Caroline Cruz,

and the Confederated Tribes Prevention Team.

Session 2 of the course is planned for Thursday and Friday, April 20-21 at the Fire Management training center, 4207 Holliday St., Warm Springs.

This session will cover Mental Health, Promotion, Conscious Discipline, and Culture Diversity. Trainers are Caroline Cruz and Chastain & Associates.

To sign up, please email Buffy Hurtado at Health and Human Services:

buffy@wstribes.org  
Please include your name, title, and organization of the person who will be attending.

## Beymer join FSA committee

Pinky Beymer of Warm Springs was elected to the Central Oregon Farm Service Agency County Committee. The administrative area of the committee includes the Warm Springs Reservation.

The FSA is an agency of

the United State Department of Agriculture. The FSA committees oversee activities in multi-county areas, such as Jefferson, Deschutes and Crook.

Pinky was elected to a three-year term on the Central Oregon committee.

## Spring youth track meet

Warm Springs Recreation will host the spring 2017 Youth Track Meet on Friday, March 31. The meet will be at the Warm Springs k-8 Academy.

The event is for youth ages 6-12; or grades k-6. Reg-

istration will begin at 1 p.m. on March 31, and the meet starts at 1:30, ending around 4:30. For more information contact Recreation at the Community Center, 541-553-3243.

## Native writers at festival

Native American authors Sherman Alexie and Elizabeth Woody will give readings in April at the American Indian Cultural Festival at The Dalles.

The festival is on April 13.

All students are invited.

A featured speaker will be Oregon Poet Laureate and Warm Springs tribal member Elizabeth Woody, who will read at The Dalles Wasco County Public Library.

## A note to valued shoppers

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Thank again for your patronage. **Downs family and staff.**

## Howlak Tichum

Yvonne Victoria Arthur, 1942 ~ 2017

Yvonne Victoria Arthur was born to mother Geraldine Arthur on January 30, 1942.

She passed away peacefully on February 20, 2017, at her home in Warm Springs, surrounded by her loved ones. She was 75.

Yvonne is survived by

her two daughters, Jolene Soto and Joy Ramirez.

Yvonne was an amazing grandmother and great grandmother to all her littles, and great aunt to all those she had a hand in raising.

She was employed many years as a medical records tech with IHS, then worked along with lifelong friends at the Tectronix plant, tribal

clothing factory, and also as the Warm Springs gift shop retail clerk.

Yvonne was well known for many amazing floral and eagle pieces of beadwork that she made along with her children and grandchildren with the family run business, 3WSGenerationsBeadwork.

She was baptized in the

1910 Indian Shaker Church as a young girl.

She was preceded in death by her mother Geraldine Arthur, her two sons Giovanni Soto and Freddie Soto Jr.

Yvonne was laid to rest in Simnasho on February 23, 2017 with her Arthur family.

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