

My Town The Northwest Bands Together to Get Fit. is HEALTHIER than Your Town

BY AYL A ROSE GILBERT

Imagine a scenario where you are trying to get in shape and everywhere you go everyone is behind you. Whether it's your co-workers at work, the school principal when you pick up your children, or the butcher at the butcher shop — everywhere you go, everyone is cheering you on. People are talking about how to be more active, lose weight, and make better choices on how to prevent diseases like diabetes and obesity. Seems hard to believe, but that's just what Oro Valley and Marana are soon to become for those residents who participate in the Healthiest Town in America.

The Healthiest Town in America is, in part, a response to a national movement to promote better health. Mayor Bob Walkup of Tucson and former Surgeon General of the United States Dr. Richard Carmona are part of an effort to educate people about health-related epidemics such as obesity and diabetes. When Mayor Walkup brought the idea home, Dr. Bob Oro and Dr. Debbie Oro, owners of Oro Dental Medicine, offered to lead the charge locally. In January of 2009, Northwest Pima County will witness the kick-off of a community initiative to make Oro Valley and Marana "The Healthiest Towns in America." The launch will come shortly after the start of Northwest Medical Center Oro Valley's "Commit to Be Fit" program, which offers lectures and tracking tools for

people looking to get or remain in shape. Dr. Bob says that he and his wife "have been working for the last 16 years to understand some of the basic needs to become healthier citizens and part of a healthier community." This project seemed a perfect outlet for them to pursue these goals.

Drs. Oro first presented the idea of the Healthiest Town in America initiative to the Oro Valley Town Council in October 2007. After convincing the Council to climb on board Dr. Bob set about getting the whole community to follow suit. To spearhead the movement Dr. Bob, who acts as chairman, formed a committee of various key members in medical, health, and wellness fields, as well as local chamber presidents — and past OVM cover subjects — Ramon Gaanderse and Ed Stolmaker.

But Dr. Bob's passion to "do something about the health care crisis" goes back further than his formation of the Healthiest Town in America initiative. Since 2006, Drs. Oro have been bringing the obvious players together under one umbrella, calling on town councils, chambers of commerce, colleges, hospitals, and many more folks to join the movement "to accept responsibility and recognize that health has to be pillar of our community."

The Healthiest Town in America plan is large in scale, but in practice, quite simple, with each participant agreeing to just three things: to wear a pedometer, track their daily activity and agree to not gain

weight for one year.

As a way to get people excited and encourage them to stick to the program and make good health a priority, the committee plans to have monthly events. Participants will also be able to access all sorts of health and wellness resources through the Healthiest Town Web site. For added support, Drs. Oro are requesting that 150 community "leaders" volunteer to participate in the Healthiest Town and publicly document their progress online. Drs. Oro are no strangers to the program — they have already undertaken it before — and will be participating along side of everyone else. "I've lost 400 pounds in my

life," says Dr. Bob. "It's just been the same 20 pounds 20 times. This time I'm committing to improve my health right along with the rest of my community." It's only a matter of time before towns all around the country look to Oro Valley and Marana for inspiration so that their citizens have no more excuses not to get healthy! ■

+ Healthiest Town in America will kick-off in January 2009. For more information, visit OroDental.com and click on the link for the HTIA. Also, visit, HealthiestTownInAmerica.com, which is scheduled to launch in December.

