



## **THRIVE! Partner Project: Corporate Wellness and “Water First for Thirst”**

### **What Is “Water First for Thirst”?**

Water First for Thirst (WFFT) is a program created by the Columbus Public Health Department and adopted by the Lorain County General Health District. Its aim is to educate the public about why water should be their first beverage of choice.

### **Why Water?**

- Every serving of sugary drinks a child consumes increases his or her chances of becoming overweight or obese by about 60%.
- Adults who consume one or more sugary soft drinks a day are at 25% greater risk of developing Type II diabetes and becoming overweight.
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks can help reduce cavities and tooth decay.
- Drinking water can boost metabolism and makes you feel fuller longer.
- Drinking water can ease joint pain and can help reduce blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

### **Water First: Part of THRIVE!’s Corporate Wellness Program**

One of THRIVE!’s key goals is to promote wellness among local businesses and organizations. Adopting healthy behaviors not only reduces the risk of disease and its associated costs for employers, but it improves the quality of life for employees.

Retired educator Carol Burke (see “Those Who Inspire”) took on the job of promoting THRIVE!’s Water First program to local groups and businesses. She launched her campaign in January with Deb Lansman’s “Young at Heart” fitness group for older women at Inner Circle Personal Fitness in Wellington.

### **“Water Wednesdays”**

Much to their delight, Carol introduced the women to “Water Wednesdays,” when each week she brought in a three-gallon tank of water that was infused with natural fruits,

vegetables and herbs. One week she served up water that was infused with pineapple, orange and ginger; another week, it was lime, cucumber and mint.

There is no added sugar or sugar substitute in the water.

“The women look for a new and different flavor each week,” says Carol. One major difference some women have reported since drinking more water: “Their skin feels smooth and less dry – almost glowing!” she says.

“Water is important for so many different functions of our bodies. Our goal is to eliminate sugary drinks in our diet, which can contribute to diabetes, obesity and heart disease,” she adds.

### **Inner Circle Personal Fitness**

On March 5, THRIVE! Partner Inner Circle Personal Fitness launched its 2017 Dream Team Commitment Challenge. The gym invited Carol to make a presentation on WFFT as part of the Challenge.

“We’re urging people to drink 8 oz. servings of water eight times a day, for a total of 64 oz. We also want them to eliminate or reduce sugary drinks – those with high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose or dextrose; and drinks with such sugar substitutes as aspartame, NutraSweet, saccharin, Splenda or sucralose,” says Carol.

Challenge participants are given a “Water Score Card” each week to tally their daily scores of water intake.

### **Wellington Schools and LCCC-Wellington**

Recently, Carol was asked to bring a six-week Water Thirst program to the faculty and staff of Wellington schools, beginning April 2017. The schools involved are Westwood Elementary, McCormick Middle School and Wellington High School. Carol will continue with refreshing Water Wednesdays. The program will result in “hydration stations” being installed in schools – stations where people can bring their own water bottles to fill up.

Ultimately, Carol would like to see the program extend to schoolchildren themselves.

While Carol is officially retired, it doesn’t look like she’ll stop working any time soon. She was just contacted by staff at Lorain County Community College-Wellington to implement Water First for Thirst there.

For more information about WFFT, contact Carol at: [thrivewaterfirst@gmail.com](mailto:thrivewaterfirst@gmail.com)

