

Working mom's healthy path extends to kids

BY LOU CORSARO

When Penn United Technologies Inc. went to an incentives-based wellness program about five years ago, Tabatha Bachman felt compelled to go along with it.

"Since I pay for our health care for our family — my husband and our girls — we decided to partake for financial reasons," said Bachman, a carbide quoter in the customer service department.

It led, however, to a greater awareness of her health and motivation to change her lifestyle. A biometric screening found a high cholesterol level, something she has been able to control through her diet, and she started taking advantage of the lunch-and-learns and classes offered to employees.

In those five years, however, she also gave birth to her two daughters, Kaylee, 5, and Madison, 2. Being a mom and working full-time has made focusing on her health a work in progress.

Earlier this year, however, she recommitted herself and is determined to stay on a better path.

"I realized it was just time," Bachman said. "I was beginning to feel so tired, and I knew that where I was at and the path I was taking wasn't going to benefit anyone."

And, as she has gone down that road, she's taken her family with her. Her girls have taken part in the company's 5K walk, and the family is making better choices when it comes to eating.

"One thing I'm focusing on with my girls — we don't talk



JOE WOJCIK

Tabatha Bachman, a carbide quoter at Penn United Technologies Inc., makes frequent use of the treadmills and other exercise equipment the company provides at its campuses.

about weight," Bachman said. "I just say, 'Mommy's becoming healthier and trying to make smarter, healthier decisions.'"

The snack options are now limited and fruit is always in the house instead of cookies and brownies. And even when the family goes out for dinner, more thought is put into what they order. A recent trip to Kennywood included a stop for subs so they could avoid the less healthy options at the amusement park.

Bachman is grateful for Penn United's wellness program, as it makes it much easier for her to

be committed to a life change. And the company affirmed its commitment, she said, with the purchase of new treadmills and elliptical machines last year.

"Having those has just been wonderful," she said. "The new ones are more dependable, more accurate and have more options."

In fact, Penn United committed about \$40,000 to purchase 10 elliptical machines, 10 treadmills and four exercise bikes, according to Esther Locke, the company's occupational health nurse who spearheads the wellness effort.

"Our senior management is so supportive of wellness here that they wanted to get them," she said. "We had machines that were old, breaking down and needed a lot of maintenance."

Having the machines on-site, which Penn United does at each of its three campuses, allows a working mother of two like Bachman to squeeze in more time to exercise. Some mornings, even if she's running late, can still squeeze in five to 10 minutes on the machines before work.

"I've learned that, even though a half-hour to an hour

Penn United Technologies Inc.
Provides high-precision metal manufacturing solutions

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 565

WEBSITE:
www.pennunited.com

KEY COMPONENTS OF WELLNESS PROGRAM: Incentives-based program includes biometric screenings, preventive exams, programs and activities, on-site nurse and gym, flu shots and healthy choices at employee cafeterias.

RESULTS FROM WELLNESS PROGRAM: Biometric screenings have led to early detection of heart disease, diabetes and other issues. Follow-up health care treatment has improved health scores. Employees have become more aware of health issues and ways to prevent diseases.

is ideal, having just three to five minutes here, 10 minutes there, 15 minutes — all of it works together," Bachman said.

While Bachman understands a physical transformation won't happen overnight, she feels confident about her new direction.

"Mentally, I'm in the right frame of mind, taking actions that I need to take," she said. "It's not just about weight loss. For me, that's one of the points of it. It's definitely about just being healthier so I can be a positive role model to the girls."

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