

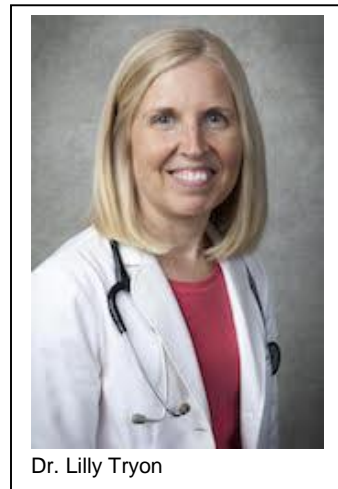


Collaborative Oasis Pilot Changes Lives

July 28, 2017 marked the beginning of a series of four Oasis Pilot Jumpstarts conducted by the nonprofit [Volunteers in Medicine Chattanooga](#) as a part of the PlantPure Communities Oasis Program and a study funded by CVS Health Foundation.

Volunteers in Medicine Chattanooga, Inc. (VIM Chattanooga) is a free full service medical clinic that provides primary and preventive health care to low-income individuals and families who otherwise have no access to public or private health insurance. In response to high rates of diabetes in its patient population, VIM Chattanooga launched a unique Lifestyle Education to Address Diabetes (LEAD) initiative with the first Oasis Pilot Jumpstart to help patients prevent, reverse, and manage diabetes. A key component of LEAD is the 21-day Oasis Jumpstart Program.

The Oasis Jumpstart Program was created by PlantPure Communities (PPC), a 501c3 nonprofit organization, with the goal of empowering participants to learn about the benefits of a plant-based diet, while enabling them to experience firsthand the powerful health impacts. The Oasis Pilots are modeled on the Jumpstarts conducted in Mebane, North Carolina that were documented in the 2015 *PlantPure Nation* film. As part of this Pilot, participants eat whole food, plant-based (WFPB) meals for a Jumpstart period of 21 days.



Dr. Lilly Tryon

VIM Chattanooga received a \$35,000 grant in 2017 from the CVS Health Foundation, a private charitable organization created by CVS Health, that works to build healthier communities, enabling people of all ages to lead healthy, productive lives. VIM Chattanooga is one of 33 clinics across the United States that received grant support from the CVS Health Foundation, as part of their strategic investments to nonprofit partners throughout the U.S., who help increase community-based access to healthcare for underserved populations, create innovative approaches to chronic disease management, and provide tobacco cessation and youth prevention programming. To date, VIM Chattanooga has carried out three Oasis Jumpstarts in 2017, and the final Jumpstart will take place in January 2018. Altogether, approximately 60 people will be involved in the VIM Chattanooga Oasis Pilots.

PPC's partnership with VIM Chattanooga marked the first time PPC conducted an Oasis Pilot Jumpstart with a medical facility, which provided easy access to medical personnel and resources. Through the leadership and expertise of Ashley Evans, VIM Chattanooga's Executive Director, and Dr. Lilly Tryon, who is running the day-to-day program and is also an Associate Professor of Nursing at Southern Adventist University, participants receive life-changing nutrition and lifestyle education.

During the 21 days of the Jumpstart, Dr. Tryon and a team of nurse practitioner students provide participants with nutrition education, cooking demos, twice-weekly meetings, and motivational text messages. Biometric testing is conducted at the beginning and end of the Jumpstart. In addition, each participant's biometric data will be tracked at 3-month intervals for twelve months. Dr. Tryon created a PlantPure Communities Pod to provide the important ongoing support participants need to maintain their new lifestyle.



Dr. James Marcum

During the monthly LEAD Connect Pod meetings, Dr. Tryon conducts film screenings, provides cooking demos, and invites other medical professionals to speak to the group. Participants have benefitted from educational sessions led by Dr. James Marcum, Director of Heartwise Ministries (who also serves on the PPC Board of Advisors), and Dr. Michael Hollie, who serves on the



Dr. Michael Hollie

board of directors of the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies.

Executive Director Ashley Evans recognizes the barriers that often lead to poorer diabetes outcomes for disadvantaged patients and drive healthcare costs even higher. “Underserved populations have been left behind for too long,” she mused. “Healthy lifestyles are difficult to maintain, but by providing a structured diet, nutrition information, and support, the Oasis JumpStart participants are now more than capable of changing their lives.”

Initial outcomes are demonstrating the truth of her statement. Although Danny, aged 63, has 9 stents, he was resistant, and attended the Jumpstart only at the request of his wife, Lynda. However, three days into the Jumpstart, he had already decreased his insulin from 150 units to 75 units daily and announced, “We are never going back to our old



Lynda and Danny

way of eating.” Danny is now down to 20 units daily, and his doctor is transitioning him to oral meds. At the first 3-month biometric screening, Danny discovered that his long-standing elevated triglycerides had dropped to less than 50 (150 is the target) and his A1c dropped from 9.7% to 7.4%. Danny reports that his doctor of over 30 years told him, “you need to keep doing what you’re doing, because I’ve never seen you healthier.” In addition, Danny’s children have lovingly questioned, “You’re not going to stop this are you?” Lynda also experienced dramatic health benefits after changing her diet. Within a few days of eating a low-fat, plant-based, whole-food diet, she could move her hands freely after suffering from years of debilitating

osteoarthritis. By the end of the Jumpstart, her weight was down 6 pounds, fasting blood sugar dropped from 371 to 201, A1c decreased from 9.3% to 7.8%, and her Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) symptoms were gone. “Doctors have told me for years that I needed to lose weight, but this is the first time that someone has showed me how,” said Linda. She and Danny are now passing on this legacy of health to their grandchildren. They also love to share their experiences with new Jumpstart participants.

By the end of the 21-days, all 12 participants in the first Jumpstart saw positive changes in their health. Nearly every



Participants from VIM Jumpstart #1 and Dr. Tryon

participant had a drop in their A1c, with an average of drop of .5%. Together they lost 83 lbs and 6.75 inches from their waistlines. Although the participants joined the program to address diabetes, there have been many other positive outcomes, such as increased energy, improved gastroesophageal reflux symptoms, lower cholesterol levels, and discontinued or decreased blood pressure and diabetes medications. Lisa, a participant who was particularly concerned about developing diabetes, proudly exclaimed, "I was prediabetic--but not anymore!"

Dr. Tryon believes that the most rewarding results are the changes in diet and behavior. One participant stated, "I am eating right for the first time, and I feel good again." Her favorite comment was a text message received from Lynda about two weeks after the Jumpstart ended, "We are doing great and love our new way of eating. Thank you for helping us. It has changed our lives forever." Dr. Tryon is grateful for the support of PPC in making the Oasis Jumpstart a reality at VIM Chattanooga. "We are so pleased with the preliminary results of this collaborative initiative that we plan to carry out a series of several more Jumpstarts in 2018."

"Food-borne chronic disease in underserved neighborhoods is a fixable problem with science-based nutrition education, delicious plant-based recipes and meals, and hands-on learning," pointed out Jody Kass, executive director of PlantPure Communities. Nelson Campbell, founder of PPC, and creator of the vision for the Oasis Program added, "Our goal is to make sure everyone has access to healthy food and nutrition education, regardless of their background, location, or socioeconomic status."



Participants from VIM Jumpstart #2 and Dr. Tryon

For more information about the PPC Oasis Program contact info@plantpurecommunities.org and visit PPC's website: <http://plantpurecommunities.org/programs/>.