



## GOOD NEWS—INFORMATION YOU CAN USE



### YOUR MOST IMPORTANT DECISION

## YOUR MOST IMPORTANT DECISION

By Helen Baratta

We receive calls and emails from people all over the country responding to prompting to lead a First Place for Health group. Some have a passion for wellness and are excited to find a Christ-centered program. Others are like me, feeling unqualified to lead people in an area they've struggled. Bringing a First Place for Health group to your church or community may be the most important decision you make for yourself and those who join your group. Challenge yourself to the following questions:

### Who are you be listening to?

It took me over a year to respond to the prompting to start a First Place for Health group. Trust me, waiting a year was not one of my best decisions. When I finally said "Yes" and embraced God's plan, I took a giant leap of faith. Even though I felt unstoppable, the enemy still spent time distracting me. He reminded me of my many failed attempts at weight loss. He had me questioning why this time would be any different. Thankfully, I had an answer, "Jesus." I stood my ground, spoke the name of Jesus. Our challenge: the enemy will return for the next opportune time. (Luke 4:13) Don't listen to him. It turns out, God's plan is good, pleasing and perfect.

### Who can you partner with?

When I held my first FP4H group meeting, I prayed for 3 people to attend. 23 people showed up. Apparently, I needed extra confirmation that God wanted our church to have a First Place for Health group. I needed help and I needed it fast. The quickest way to burnout as a leader is to do it all yourself. I have a sign on my laptop that reads: "What are you doing that someone else could do?" Someone else could review the Live It Trackers, maintain the records (confidentially), handle the wellness topic, and facilitate the My Discovery or bible study discussions. Rather than focusing on their abilities, the best leaders share the responsibility of allowing others to share their gifts with the group.

### Who are you in community with?

As leaders, we need to surround ourselves with people who will encourage us. Your FP4H group will be your community focused on placing Christ first together. FP4H groups develop close relationships and become tangible catalysts for sustainable change in healthy habits. We need others to lean on when things get tough when we are tempted to be too hard on ourselves, or even when we want to quit. After Christ, our group is the difference maker. Ecclesiastes says a cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Walking hand in hand motivates us, encourages us, and unites us in our journey toward wellness.

As an FP4H leader, we have the honor to see transforming lives. We walk alongside one another on our journey toward freedom – heart, soul, mind, and strength. Leading others to Christ as the only source of true wellness may be your next "right" decision.

*Helen Baratta Director of Development for First Place for Health. She is the author of My Place for Leadership included in the My Place Leader's Kit available at our online bookstore.*

## JANUARY 2019

Your Most Important Decision

~Page 1

Getting Healthy Is Not For the Faint of Heart

~Page 2

Choose Life

~ Page 3

Upcoming Events

~Page 3

Success Story

~Page 4

Recipes

~ Page 5-6

Contact First Place For Health

~ Page 7

Featured Events

~Page 7





## GETTING HEALTHY IS NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART

By Vicki Heath

- I can't memorize verses.
- I can't track my food this way.
- I don't have time to do the study every day.
- I am tired and busy, so I cannot make a meeting every week.
- I did not want others to know my weight, so I can't weigh-in in front of people.
- I have had too many surgeries, so I couldn't exercise; I have physical limitations.
- I worked hard all day; I deserve to eat or to take a break.
- I have a lot of food allergies and I felt deprived of all the things I could not eat, so I ate what I could (and more of it).

These are some of the reasons I have heard why FP4H does not work. There is just too much work involved. It's true, getting healthy will take some major effort on your part. But we are without excuse really.

**The Bible tells us the truth in 1 Peter 1:3-8:**

"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**He is with us every step of the way.**

In order for us to make effective changes in our health, we have to put forth some effort. The bolded scripture above says "make every effort".

The definition of effort is:

- 1: conscious exertion of power
- 2: a vigorous and determined attempt
- 3: something produced by exertion
- 4: effective force as distinguished from the possible resistance

We have to decide to make a vigorous and determined attempt to do our part. Looking at the reasons again why FP4H does not work for so many is almost funny! The truth is the way to success.

- I can't memorize verses: I do know some verses and I must work at memorizing more.
- I can't track my food this way: I need to at least try to track my food before I decide
- I can't. I don't have to get it perfect but at least I need to get something down on my tracker.
- I don't have time to do the study every day: the truth is I do have 15 or 20 minutes
- I can set aside to study God's word. We all waste a lot of time.
- I am tired and busy and don't have time for a meeting every week. Because I am tired and busy I need accountability. If am not accountable my life will soon be out of control.
- I did not want others to know my weight, so I can't weigh-in in front of people: My weight does not define it. It's a number on the scale that reveals good or bad habits.
- I had too many surgeries, so I can't exercise. I have physical limitations: I do have limitations, but I can walk, and I can ride a stationary bike and I can lift weights.
- I didn't like to sweat: Sweat is an offering to God, and I can take a shower.
- I worked hard all day; I deserve to eat, or to take a break: I deserve to be healthy, I deserve to make good choices, so I can serve Jesus because He deserves it.

First Place For Health – the hardest best work you will ever do

Vicki is the National Director of First Place for Health, author of the books *My Place*, *Don't Quit Get Fit* and *The Wellness Journey of a Lifetime*, speaker and holds certifications in life coaching as well as fitness.





## CHOOSE LIFE

By Lisa Lewis

My FP4H class is using the Bible study, Balanced Living. One of our scripture memory verses is,

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live. DEUTERONOMY 30:19



We have a choice. Eat the way the world tells us to eat or eat a more healthy way. It doesn't have to be complicated. We don't have to have a degree in nutrition. We can eat the kinds of things people have been eating for a long time: meats, vegetables, fruit, grains. Eating healthy means eating food – real food. We've been told that we're supposed to eat the stuff on the perimeter of the store. Not the stuff in the middle. Some of that isn't even food. It's food-like. Even cereal. It's in the middle of the store and it's telling us how it's going to save us from a heart attack or has all these vitamins and minerals – that they've added. The stuff in the middle is full of claims of this or that trying to get your attention, but there are no health claims in the produce aisle. They don't have packages screaming at you. The quieter your food is, the healthier it is.

Something as simple as eating has become so complicated. Just eat real food. Eat butter. Eat cheese. Eat apples. Eat bananas and cucumbers and yellow peppers and red peppers. Eat all this beautiful color that God has given us. Eat lean meat and fresh bread. Eat real food.

Something as simple as eating has become so complicated.

"...I set before you blessings and curses." On one hand, you have an abundance of fruits and vegetables and on the other, McDonald's. Which do you choose? "... now choose life so that you and your children may live."

Lisa is Chief Operating Officer for First Place for Health and authored *Healthy Happy Cooking*. Her cooking skills have been a part of First Place for Health wellness weeks and other events for many years. She provided recipes for 13 of the First Place for Health Bible studies and is a contributing author in *Better Together* and *Healthy Holiday Living*.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Let's Get Started – MD/DC/VA

January 5, 2018  
Huntington, MD

### Let's Get Started – Nevada

January 7, 2018  
Grass Valley, CA

### Webinar: The Key to Lasting Change

January 7, 2018  
Online

### Fun & Fitness 4 Life Weekend

January 18 – 20, 2019  
North East, MD

### Southern California Wellness Workshop

February 23, 2019  
Lancaster, CA

### Trip to the Holy Land

March 22-30, 2019  
Departures from Houston and New York

### View the Live Q&A on our YouTube Channel

### Nacogdoches Texas Wellness Workshop

April 27, 2019  
Nacogdoches, Texas

### Restore: Experiencing Freedom from Food Strongholds

May 5-7, 2019  
North East, MD

### Summit 2019 – Save the Date!

August 16-17, 2019  
Houston, Texas

Would you like to have an event in your area? Contact Helen Baratta at [helen.baratta@fp4h.com](mailto:helen.baratta@fp4h.com)



# FIRSTplace

FOR HEALTH



## SUCCESS STORY

By Roseanne Chee

I've struggled with weight my whole life. At birth, I weighed 9 lbs. 9 ounces. I was the largest baby with a full head of curly brown hair in the delivery unit, and my dad said that everybody wanted to see me. When I got older, people would tell my mom "Oh, it's just baby fat...she'll lose it someday." But by the time I hit 13 years old, my mom stopped believing that lie and actually had me join my first "real" diet...Weight Watchers.



So, Weight Watchers was my first official "diet" and I've probably quit and re-joined WW about 10 other times throughout my lifetime, not to mention being on every diet known to man, only to lose weight, gain it all back, and then gain some more. I even looked into gastric bypass surgery in 1999, only to be told I was not a candidate. I had Crohn's Disease. And again in 2008 for the Lap-Band surgery, to be told again that I was not a candidate for that either. I was too big!

As I look back now, my health journey really started that year, back in December of 2008. I weighed in at the surgeon's office at my heaviest recorded weight of 454.5 lbs. I

was on 12 different medications each day for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, GERD, depression and anxiety, 55 units of insulin for uncontrolled diabetes, had major mobility issues where I needed to use a cane every day, and ultimately used a wheelchair if I had to go any significant "short" distance.

The surgeon said if I was able to lose a decent amount of weight, then he might re-consider the lap band surgery. So, with limited mobility, on 12 medications, and severe metabolic issues, and the only way to lose any significant weight was by being put on a medically supervised modified liquid diet consisting of 750 to 900 calories per day. I managed to lose 50 pounds during that 12-week protocol. After that, I had to transition to an "all foods in moderation" group and lost another 25 lbs. or so.

It was during this same time, in March of 2009, that I attended a Spiritual Life Weekend at my church where we had a guest speaker. By the end of the weekend, I was so moved by what was being preached, that I walked up to the guest speaker and said..."Pastor Judy, I really believe that God wants to use me in a big way helping others lose weight, but I have no idea what that even looks like." She said four words to me, "First Place for Health", then proceeded to say that she didn't know much about this ministry, but that her mom had been active in it and had lost 75 lbs.

So, I went home at the end of that weekend feeling a little more hopeful and immediately got on the computer and researched what FP4H was all about. I liked what I read, and as I was a Deacon for Women Ministries at my church, I ordered the leader's kit with the intention of starting this ministry at my church. By the time the leaders kit came in, I was so overwhelmed with all its contents, I packed it all back up, where it sat on my shelf for the next 7 months.

I did, however, manage to find an active FP4H group in my area and I contacted the local leader. Eventually, I started their next session, and before you knew it, I was taking a 6-hour road trip with a bunch of women I didn't know to Pittsburgh, PA, attending an "FP4H Change Your Life Event".

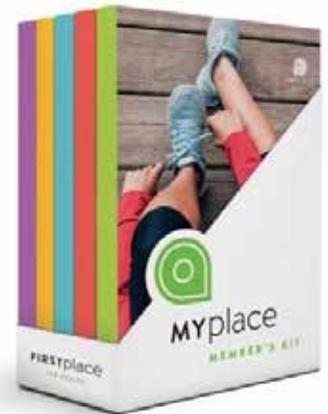
So, by January of 2010, I launched this ministry at my church. I had already lost about 75 lbs. on the medically supervised plans and was excited to lose even more weight. Well, I led this ministry at my church for three years, and I never lost another pound! You see, God had other plans and needed to do a much bigger work in me. The miracle, though, was that I was able to maintain what I had lost. God knew what He was doing because I needed to be in that leadership role. It kept me transparent, accountable, plus I had to show up each week. I was the leader - so I had to show up.

My life verse during those years was Matthew 11:28-30 - "Come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." I held on to this verse so tightly...every word.

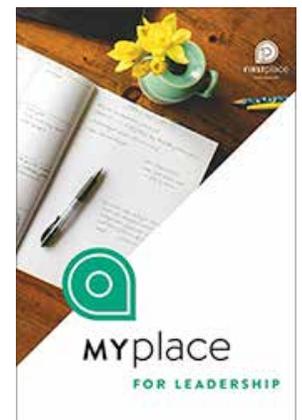
FP4H got me through witnessing my sister battle tons of weight-related diseases, which ultimately cost her, her life. She was my best friend and biggest cheerleader in life. I snapped. I had reached the end of my rope. I no longer had the strength, hope, or capability to lead FP4H, and no one else in my group felt the call to continue with the ministry. So, after three years, it ended. In the midst of such great grief and loss of hope, the weight started rapidly coming back on - once again reaching well over 400 lbs. I was completely broken. I had given up on any hope of recovery from my own major health issues, and sadly, I also gave up on God's promises. I just got bigger and bigger plummeting back up to 417 lbs.

(Continued on Page 5)

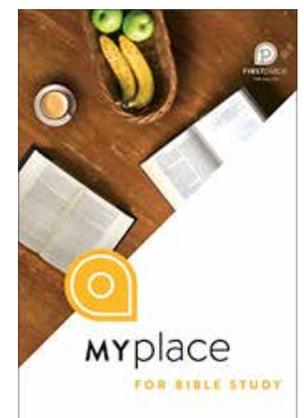
## SHOP ONLINE!



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# FIRSTplace

FOR HEALTH



## SUCCESS STORY

(Continued from Page 4)

One day, in the summer of 2016 while sitting at my desk, I came across a short paragraph in my local newspaper. The surgeon that I had inquired weight loss surgery twice in the past was working in conjunction with our local hospital to open up a new Weight & Wellness program. I read there was an upcoming information session, and even though I knew I didn't qualify for surgery, I still wanted to go and see if the surgeon would remember me from the past.

Well, he didn't remember me, but at this meeting, I learned about a newer, less invasive bariatric surgery that was being performed. One that I would actually be a candidate for. After this meeting, I remember sitting in the parking lot of the hospital for what seemed like an eternity and cried and cried. This time, though, the tears were because for the first time in a long time, I had a glimmer of hope.

The first thing I did when I got home from the meeting that day was call my pastor for spiritual guidance and prayer. The second thing I did was sit my family down and explain to them this new surgical procedure and wanted to know if they would support me with this decision. My family was completely on board, and my oldest daughter said to me, "Mom, I've watched too many family members die, and I don't want to watch you die too." So, I proceeded forward with Vertical Gastric Sleeve surgery on October 28, 2016.

Not quite a year later, I was approached by one of the women from my old FP4H group. She felt God's calling to re-launch the FP4H ministry at our church again and wanted to make sure I would be OK with that. I think I totally surprised her, because I was so excited about it, and told her that I would love the opportunity to assist and co-lead with her.

One thing I need to stress, and honestly it sometimes still bothers me today, there are some people that say I took the easy way out. But I need to attest that surgery is certainly not the easy way out. Everyone has to walk their own path and for me, that path was bariatric surgery, completely orchestrated in God's perfect timing.

Well, Vicki Health contacted me and asked if I'd be willing to start a new virtual group meeting geared toward post-bariatric patients. They had made a decision to branch out the ministry in this new initiative, which will launch in January of 2019.

Let's face it, we ALL need Jesus...and for me, I know that I cannot continue to live this life without Him being in first place. I am excited and anticipating to see how God will continue His work, and I am truly blessed to be a part of this new initiative. I give Him all the glory

## HEALTHY RECIPES

### CREAMY FETTUCINI

This recipe is so quick and easy. You can have dinner on the table in 15 minutes. Add grilled or rotisserie chicken for a meatier dish.

1 8-oz. package low-fat cream cheese

½ cup milk

2 tbsp. butter

¼ cup grated parmesan

2 tsp. garlic salt

1 12-oz. package fettuccini noodles

Cook noodles as directed. While noodles are cooking, put remaining ingredients in small saucepan and heat, stirring frequently, until mixed and melted. Serve over fettuccini noodles. Garnish with shaved parmesan. Serves 4.



Serving Options: Roast or steam some broccoli or asparagus for a wonderful vegetable fettuccini alfredo.

NUTRITION: 321 calories; 10g fat (29.4% calories from fat); 11g protein; 45g carbohydrates; 2g dietary fiber; 28mg cholesterol; 1245mg sodium.

LIVE IT TRACKER: 3 oz.-eq. grain, ½ oz.-eq. meat

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## SOCIAL MEDIA





## HEALTHY RECIPES

### QUINOA SALAD WITH TOASTED ALMONDS

This salad is packed with protein and fiber that will leave you fueled up for the rest of the day.

- 1/4 cup slivered almonds
- 1/2 cup (3 ounces) quinoa
- 4 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 yellow bell pepper, ribs, and seeds discarded, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1/8 teaspoon red-pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 medium zucchini, halved lengthwise and sliced 1/2-inch thick
- 1 large celery stalk, diced
- 1 lime, halved



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Toast almonds until crisp, lightly browned, and fragrant, about 7 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside. Meanwhile, place quinoa in a fine sieve and rinse under cold running water until the water runs clear; drain well. In a medium saucepan, heat 2 teaspoons olive oil over medium heat. Add yellow pepper, garlic, scallions, and red-pepper flakes; cook until the pepper is crisp-tender, about 5 minutes.

Stir in quinoa, thyme, 1 cup water, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook 7 minutes. Stir in zucchini, cover, and cook until quinoa is tender but not mushy, 5 to 8 minutes longer. Remove the saucepan from heat. Stir in celery, almonds, and remaining 2 teaspoons oil, season with salt, and fluff with a fork. Cool to room temperature before packing into two containers and refrigerating. When ready to eat, squeeze lime over salad, if desired. Serves 2

Nutritional Information: 368 calories; 11 g protein; 19 g fat; 44 g carb; 7 g fiber



### BROCCOLI & FETA OMELET

- Cooking spray
- 1 cup chopped broccoli
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons low fat feta cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 teaspoon dried dill

Coat a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add broccoli, and cook 3 minutes. Combine egg, feta, and dill in a small bowl. Add egg mixture to pan. Cook 3 to 4 minutes; flip the omelet and cook 2 minutes or until cooked through. Serve with toast. Serves 1

Nutrition Information: 390 Calories, 19g fat, 23g protein, 35g carbohydrates, 6g fiber, 440mg cholesterol, 550mg sodium

Tracker: 2 oz.-eq meat, 1 cup vegetables, 1/4 cup dairy

# Restore



*Experiencing Freedom from Food Strongholds*

May 5-7, 2019

Sandy Cove Retreat

North East, MD



*Featuring Jennifer Kennedy Dean, author, speaker and Executive Director of The Praying Life Foundation*

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Us!

Trip to

# ISRAEL

March 21-30, 2019

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