



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Health Department Promotes Women's Heart Health

February is American Heart Month

For Immediate Release: Feb. 14, 2013
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BURLINGTON – An epiphany for Teresa Raymond, who never used to read food labels, was the concept of "energy in versus energy out" and the daily balance between calories consumed and calories expended.

Raymond viewed her participation in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention led YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program as a discovery process. Her program was paid for by the Health Department and forever changed her approach to nutrition and physical activity to keep her heart strong and healthy.

Throughout February, American Heart Month, the Health Department is celebrating every member of Ladies First who is taking care of her heart.

"It was never a burden for me to get to class each week, and I didn't miss even once," Raymond said. "There was a lot of camaraderie, it was very nonjudgmental and I appreciated the people, the stories, and the support."

Ladies First removes financial barriers that prevent many women from being screened for heart disease. The program offers screening services for blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes/blood sugar, and Body Mass Index (BMI). Ladies First also provides support on nutrition and weight loss, ways to increase physical activity, and resources that help women quit smoking.

Heart disease is the second leading cause of death in Vermont and accounts for 23 percent of all deaths among women in the state. One third of all Vermonters report that they have high blood pressure, and less than half believe their condition is under control. High blood pressure is one of the most significant risks for heart disease.

Raymond plans to continue to have an annual screening for heart disease and still uses her calorie counting book nearly on a daily basis. Now when she finds herself tempted to go into an "unhealthy choices" aisle in the grocery store, she moves over to the next row.

"I will never go there again," she said.

To find out if you qualify for Ladies First visit healthvermont.gov, follow us on [Twitter](#) and join us on [Facebook](#) for up-to-date news, alerts, and health information.

To learn how to reduce your risk for heart disease go to My Life Check and learn more about Life's Simple 7 at <http://mylifecheck.heart.org/>.

For more information about the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program contact Susan Marx, diabetes prevention program coordinator at smarx@gbymca.org. The YMCA program is a 12-month lifestyle behavior intervention comprised of 16 weekly core sessions, followed by monthly maintenance sessions, offered in partnership with the Department of Vermont Health Access

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